

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE LATINX MENTOR AND THE ROLE OF  
COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH

by

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my husband Mario, my mother, father, my sister, and future son. In addition, to those who have supported me during this journey and to the lifelong friends from Cohort 14 that I have made in this process. Thank you for always believing in me and never letting me let go of this dream.

For the dreamers, always be yourself, do not forget to lead with your heart, find your courage, never stop learning, and let your inner light burn as bright as your desires. The light that you shine will be the guide for others to follow.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
ACT	American College Testing Exam
CCW	Community Cultural Wealth
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
GPA	Grade Point Average
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math
THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative research study explored the phenomena that surrounds the Latinx mentor and the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) six forms of capital (Yosso, 2005) utilized in mentoring relationships. The six forms of capital (Yosso, 2005) serve as a platform for cultural knowledge, abilities, and experiences that assist in the psychosocial and academic enrichment of the Latinx college student. Utilizing phenomenology as the study's design illuminated the voice of the Latinx mentor and contributed to the existing body of knowledge surrounding academic persistence and resiliency of Latinx college students.

The main research questions that guided this study are: (1) What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students? (2) How can the experiences of these Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning? (3) What role does Community Cultural Wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship? Data collection sources for this study included two 60-to-90-minute individual interviews with eight Latinx mentors, archival data, a researcher's journal, and field notes. Taylor Powell and Renner's (2003) and Hatch's (2002) typological analysis methodologies for analyzing qualitative data served as my guide for analyzing data. Utilizing thick rich descriptions, bracketing my own subjectivity, relying on triangulation methods, and implementing member checks, is how I established trustworthiness. The study provided detailed descriptions into the mentoring

experiences of eight Latinx mentor participants. Key findings indicated that Yosso's (2005) CCW framework played a significant role in the Latinx mentoring relationship. In addition to Yosso's (2005) six forms of capital, a single new form of capital, Relational Capital, emerged which added depth to the existing CCW framework. Relational Capital includes the following three characteristics Compassion, Experiential, and Generativity and eight tools utilized by Latinx mentors in their mentoring relationships. Because of the emergent theme, a new framework was developed. This framework materialized utilizing the concepts originated from Yosso's (2005) CCW model, the new form of capital, and characteristics and tools that emerged from the analysis of data.

## **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

A wide variety of college coaching and mentoring programs piloted in geographically diverse locations across the U.S. and Canada demonstrate potential to increase college enrollment, particularly among students from disadvantaged groups (The College Board, 2014, p. 8).

*Growing up as a first-generation college student from a low socio-economic setting, my high school guidance counselor told me that, statistically I would probably never succeed in college and that I should start considering all my options, including joining the military or selecting a vocation. However, I knew she was wrong. I was destined for more in my life; I was not going to let her beliefs limit my future, or ultimately my worth. My parents, both high school graduates, always pushed me to go to college but never had advice on how to begin the process. As a result, during my senior year, I visited the school library every day before tennis practice to work on college entrance applications and essays. In May of 2000, as I lined up to walk across the graduation stage and receive my high school diploma, I envisioned just how different my life would be in just a few short months. As I walked across the stage, the principal paused then proceeded to say, “Blanca Ursula Juarez, she will be attending The University of Texas at Austin,” and at that very moment, I knew that the rest of my life was just beginning.*

*As a young woman that never had a formal mentor to guide me, I had to figure college out on my own. As a first-generation college student, who was far from home, college proved to be a challenge than I had ever expected. I did not have anyone to rely on and it was up to me, to figure out how to negotiate the bureaucracy of college.*

*As a pre-pharmacy major, I was required to take nine hours of science outside of my major. I elected to take astronomy to learn about the stars because I thought it would be an easy A. In a class with 249 peers, I found the subject to be intriguing. I recall reading chapters and taking copious notes during lectures. Upon examination day, I walked into the large auditorium with a certain confidence and arrogance, knowing I was ready for the test. The exam contained 50 questions that were in multiple-choice format, and I finished the test within 20 minutes. I walked out of the auditorium and immediately phoned my mom to let her know I just took my first college exam. With enthusiasm in her voice, she gleefully said, “Aye mijia (daughter), I am so proud of you.”*

*About a week later, I had the results of my exam. Surprisingly, I had failed. I felt sad, embarrassed, and especially scared. I knew that I could not call my parents to tell them for fear of disappointment. At that moment, I realized that I did not have anyone to whom I could turn to for guidance. My parents never went to college. They had no idea what it felt like to fail a college exam. They were not able to offer guidance to better prepare me for the next exam. As a result, I muddled through my college courses, switched majors, found tutoring resources, and eventually graduated with my Bachelor of Science degree in Advertising.*

This particular experience taught me a lot who about who I am, who I want to be, my hidden resilience, and my ability to persist. Although I struggled during my undergraduate days, I did not see my experience as a deficit but as an asset. As a first-generation college student, I considered myself lucky to be able to experience failing, to learn from my mistakes, to grow my knowledge, and most importantly to earn my degree. I also thought that if I could, I should, one day find a way to help other students that were

just like me. It was not long before I started to volunteer, share my experiences, and mentor those students who I saw to be much like me as a freshman.

Outside of my professional role as an assistant director, I volunteer my time to serve as a formal mentor for high school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students. As a STEM mentor with a local engineering chapter for women, I work with minority high school females who are interested in pursuing a degree in the STEM fields. I provide these young women with guidance, support, and encouragement to continue their pursuit towards a STEM-related degree and eventually career within one of the STEM fields. As their mentor, I have the opportunity to share some of my own STEM experiences that I encountered in college, in my professional role, and I help to guide and narrow their path for college and major selection. As a high school mentor, I am able to provide that additional guidance that is often time missing in the teacher/student role.

In addition, as a mentor for a university mentoring program, I mentor college freshmen whom are not in good standing academically and therefore placed on academic probation during the spring semester of their first year of college. As their mentor, I build a supportive relationship that focuses on creating and sustaining college skills such as time management, goal-setting, internal motivation, and successful self-management. As their mentor, I am able to relate to these students through my own experiences and help them navigate an often times unfamiliar environment.

My journey through life thus far has lead me down the road of mentoring which continues to be transformative and experiential. The journey I have been lucky to experience has contributed to my growing love of and passion for mentoring. Mentoring has served as a way to give back to my communities and positively affect those lives

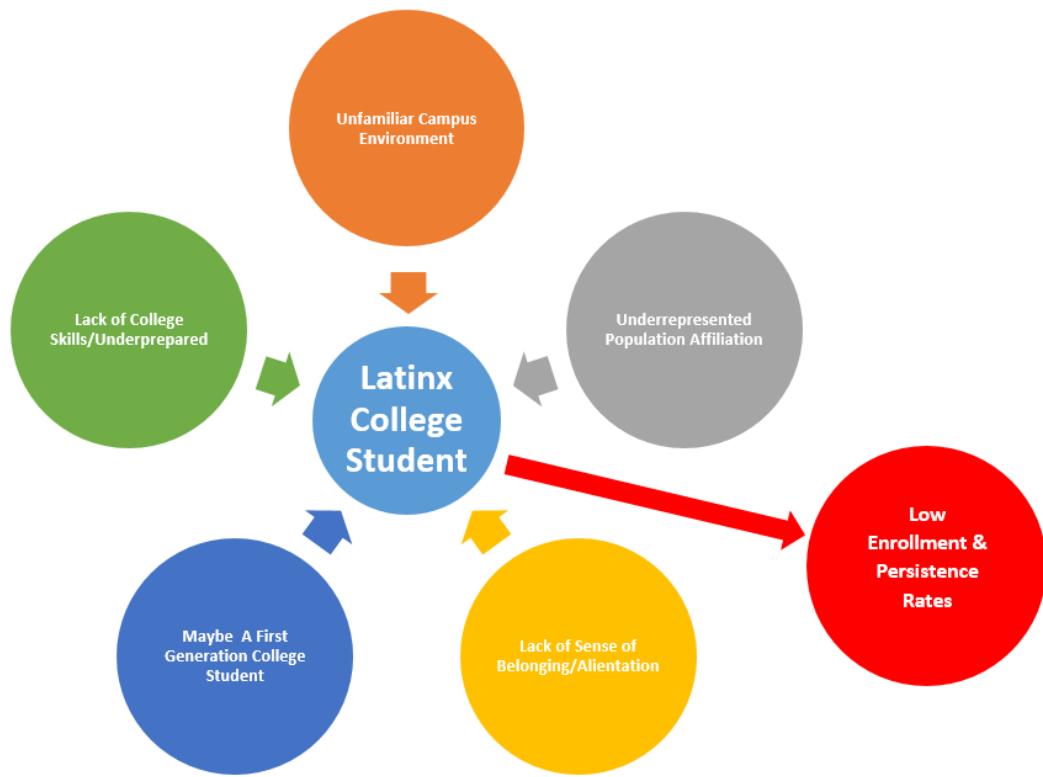
around me. As I continue to make forward progress in my life, my mentoring experiences have lead me to focus my dissertation on mentoring, specifically to better understand the experiences of those who like me, mentor and give back to their communities in order to help others around them succeed.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the United States, postsecondary mentoring has become more relevant as initiatives including national grants and awards that recognize mentoring programs and individuals who mentor continue to be announced (Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2007). As recent as January 2016, former President Barack Obama signed a mentoring initiative proclamation that declared January as the national month for mentoring. Because of this proclamation, mentoring became a national priority (Earnest, 2015) and has increased attention concerning the retention and persistence of college students, especially those representing underrepresented populations. It is estimated that nearly 30 percent of college students drop out during their first year of college (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004; National Student Clearinghouse, 2014). In particular, Latinx<sup>1</sup> college students face many barriers when enrolling in college (see Figure 1.1), which have resulted in low enrollment and persistence rates over the years (Campos, Phinney, Perez-Brena, Kim, Ornelas, Nemanim, Kalleymeyn, Michecoby, & Ramirez, 2009; Rudolph, Castillo, Garcia, Martinez, & Navarro, 2015; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Latinx” can be used interchangeably with the term “Hispanic” and “Latino/a” when possible. The term is an inclusive gender-neutral umbrella term for individuals of any Latin descent and accounts for the intersection of social identities including gender, race, and class (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2015).



*Figure 1.1 College Enrollment Barriers for Latinx Students*

In an effort to address the low enrollment and persistence rates, many postsecondary institutions have begun to implement mentoring programs that aim to increase retention and address challenges that many students face, particularly for underrepresented student populations. These mentoring services are a way to address and improve campus environments, serve as an essential function to assist with student needs, and a way to increase a sense of belonging (Nora & Crisp, 2008; Sinanan, 2016; Tinto, 1993; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006). In particular, for the Latinx student population, mentoring has the potential to address institutional and cultural racism by having mentors who reflect their<sup>2</sup> own culture (Hernandez, Carranza, & Almedia, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> Gender-neutral singular pronoun “they and their” to be used purposely for gender-inclusive language.

Postsecondary mentoring programs are critical to the success of underrepresented student populations and according to a qualitative study conducted by Zalaquett, Gallardo, and Castellanos (2004), Latinx students find that having a mentor is beneficial as the mentor is able to show them how to navigate the college system. The study analyzed personal narratives from students that met the study's criteria including barriers, challenges, and sources of support for Latinx students. Utilizing an inductive methodology, the study captured and analyzed narratives that provided postsecondary institutions with a method for facilitating the educational success of its Latinx student population. Studies like this provide supporting evidence to the benefits of mentoring as the mentor relationship can help diminish the barriers and challenges perceived by many underrepresented student populations.

The lived experiences of the Latinx mentor remain invisible in the discourse surrounding Latinx academic persistence and resiliency. When addressing the needs of the Latinx college student, much research focuses on the deficits surrounding the education of this population (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Miller & Garcia, 2004; Nora & Crisp, 2009; Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). In addition, the current research explores the experiences of the Latinx mentee (Campos, et al., 2009; Crisp & Cruz, 2010) and how institutions continue to invest in various preventative resources despite the ever-changing cultural and academic landscape (Sáenz, Ponjuan, Segovia, Del Real Viramontes, 2015; Tovar, 2014; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007). Currently, a dearth in the literature surrounding the phenomenon of the Latinx mentor and the assets that they use in order to cultivate successful mentoring relationships exist.

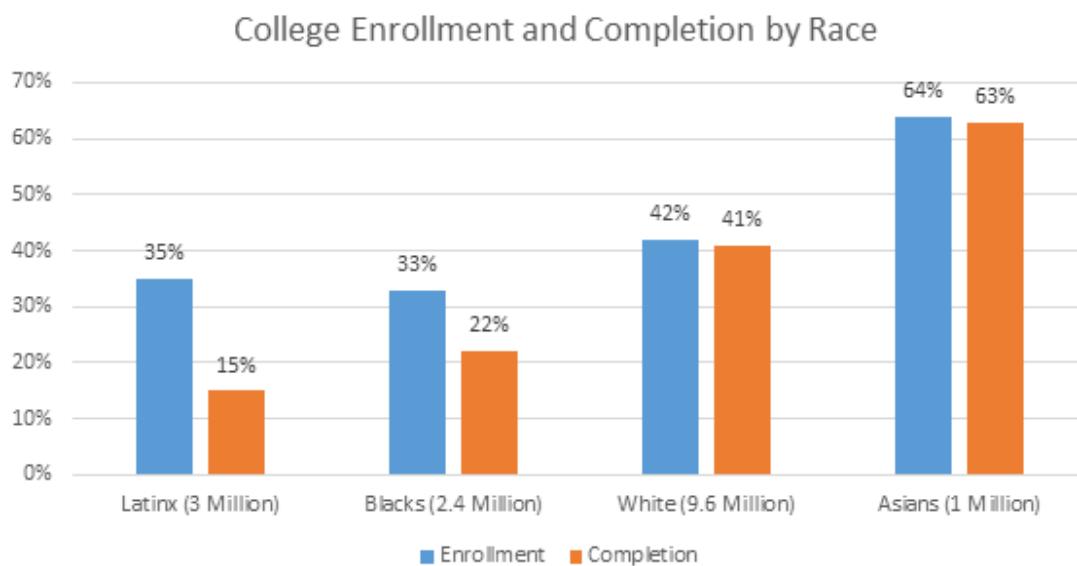
In the United States, Latinxs represent the second largest and fastest growing racial population (Excelencia in Education, 2011). According to the United States Census (2014), in 2060 the Latinx population will comprise 31 percent of the population. Yet, according to the U.S. Senate Congressional Joint Economic Committee Democratic Staff (2013), Latinxs in the United States still face poverty, education inequalities, and health insurance coverage challenges. In terms of percentages in workforce and education, Latinxs are perceived to be some of the most unemployed and least educated in the country. Therefore, the projected growth of the Latinx population in the United States will continue to have a major impact on the economy and educational system. In particular, disparities in education and the educational outcomes for Latinxs when compared to other racial groups emerge as early as preschool (Pew Hispanic Center, 2005). As a result, by the time Latinxs reach college, they are many times considered to be at the “periphery of the educational enterprise” (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006, p. xvi). As Latinxs, educators assume that they are not ready to attend college nor enroll in college preparatory coursework (Castellanos, et al., 2006) and as a result are underprepared for college (Nora & Crisp, 2009).

Although there has been a steady increase in Latinx college enrollment over the past decade (see Table 1.1), research indicates that Latinxs still trail behind other racial and ethnic populations (Krogstad, 2016). Latinxs often find themselves at odds with an unfamiliar and culturally diverse landscape that they may not know how to navigate. As a result, feelings of unfamiliarity and alienation can form and begin to lead to decreased retention rates which cause substantial labor market inequalities such as an overrepresentation within the low-skill, low income, and high turnover occupations over

time (Nora & Crisp, 2009). Therefore, obtaining a postsecondary degree is of critical importance to the Latinx population and as of 2014 (see Table 1.1), only 15 percent of the Latinx population received a bachelor's degree in comparison to other racial groups, 41 percent of Whites, 22 percent of Blacks, and 63 percent of Asians received a bachelor's degree during this time (Krogstad, 2016). In particular, this graph represents that although Latinxs are enrolling in college in larger numbers than before, a disproportionality still exists in college completion rates among Latinxs as they still lag behind other ethnicities.

**Table 1.1**

*College Enrollment and Completion by Race adapted from (Krogstad, 2016; NCES, 2016)*



If the economic strength of a country depends on the educational attainment of its population, then as a result, the educational disparity of Latinxs should be of an economic, moral, and social concern in order to meet future societal and workforce needs (Cohn, 1979; McGlynn, 2011; Vernez & Mizell, 2001). If there is not a significant increase in Latinx college graduation rates, poverty and unemployment will continue to

rise and the noted disparities will continue to negatively affect the Latinx population and United States economic vitality (Nora & Crisp, 2009). For these reasons, it is more imperative than ever, that educators and policy makers begin to focus more intently on educational issues surrounding the Latinx population so that ways to address such issues are identified (Chlup, Gonzalez, Gonzalez, Aldape, Guerra, Lagunas, Yu, Manzano, & Zorn, 2016).

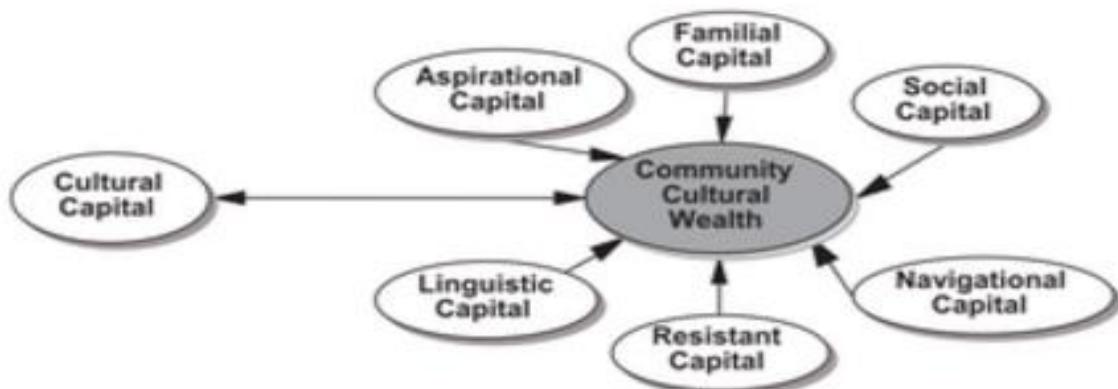
### **Purpose of the Study**

Latinx professionals who serve as formal mentors to Latinx college students was the focus of this study. Utilizing a phenomenological qualitative approach as my methodology (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990), I sought to make meaning from the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor and better understand how the role of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) (Yosso, 2005) affected their mentoring relationships. Research suggests that mentoring is important in the success of college students (Cox, Yang, Dicke-Bohmann, 2014; Gross, Zerquera, Inge, & Berry, 2014; Rudolph, et. al., 2015; Sáenz, et. al., 2015; Salas, Aragon, Alandejani, & Timpson, 2014; Tovar, 2014; Treviño, Hite, Hallam, & Ferrin 2014). In particular, the absence of a Latinx mentor can negatively affect the educational outcomes of Latinx college students (Campbell, 2007; Sanchez, et al., 2008; Trevino, et al., 2014). Understanding the motivations related to mentoring were also important to consider as they provided insight as to why the Latinx professional had decided to become a mentor. Through this study, the participants were given the opportunity to share their experiences as formal mentors and how through these unique experiences, they were able to help Latinx college students persist.

## Theoretical Framework

A brief discussion of the theoretical framework and its tenets are included in this section. Chapter II provides a more thorough review and discussion of the framework and tenets. The theoretical framework used for this study will be CCW. CCW is a theory that first developed by Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera in 2005 and modeled after Solorzano and Villalpando's work (1998) regarding marginalized groups of people who use their status as a form of empowerment.

Yosso (2005) further refined the concept by developing and defining the forms of capital for Communities of Color. This framework consists of six forms of capital (see Figure 1.3) that comprise an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by Communities of Color in order to combat oppression. The CCW framework forms of capital include Aspirational, Linguistic, Familial, Social, Navigational, and Resistant (Yosso, 2005). As discussed by Yosso (2005), it is important to note that these forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or necessarily exhaustive of each other and can exist alone or in combination.



*Figure 1.2* Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model

## **Forms of Capital**

- 1.) Aspirational Capital “refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).
- 2.) Linguistic Capital refers to “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78).
- 3.) Familial Capital refers to “cultural knowledge’s nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).
- 4.) Social Capital refers to the “networks of people and community resources” that an individual utilizes to navigate social institutions (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).
- 5.) Navigational Capital refers to the “skills of maneuvering through social institutions” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).
- 6.) Resistant Capital refers to “those knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

At its broadest level, this framework claims that Communities of Color leverage a variety of personal and social characteristics that prepare these communities to engage with their environments. In this study, utilizing the CCW framework as a guide, I sought to identify which forms of CCW emerged from the analysis of data and that contributed to the success of the mentors in their mentoring relationships.

## **Researcher’s Perspective**

As the transportation assistant director at a large public university campus located in Central Texas, as an ethics college instructor, and as a formal mentor of nearly ten

years, I have a firm belief that mentoring can be instrumental in the academic success of college students. I perceive mentoring to be a tool that helps keep the student engaged, accountable, and committed to completing their degrees. As a formal mentor, I also know the positive impacts that mentoring can have on students academically, socially, and personally. Serving as a mentor has provided me with many benefits including the ability to grow my mentoring craft. By growing my craft, I am now better able to serve my mentees through much stronger and reciprocal relationships. In addition, mentoring has allowed me to watch my mentees grown into better students who are able to achieve their goals and eventually graduate. Mentoring although rewarding is still incredibly challenging work and my own personal experiences as a mentor have taught me that the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

As a mentor, I have faced many challenges along the way. However, these challenges helped me to refine my mentoring skills and to become a better mentor overall. Through my experiences, I have learned that my mentees each have a unique background and story and that each mentee deserves different and tailored treatment based on their backgrounds. As a result, I have learned that each mentee has so much more going on in their lives that could be affecting their academic aspirations. Identifying and addressing such issues is critical to the success of the mentoring relationship. Mentoring has afforded me the opportunity to learn that active listening is incredibly important in building trust with your mentee. Active listening has allowed me to learn how to read non-verbal cues when there is difficulty verbally expressing issues. A challenge that I am still working towards resolving is that I have to continue to work on separating myself emotionally from my mentees so that my judgment remains clear. In

doing this, I am starting to learn that I cannot save each mentee but if I can make a small change in each, then I have done my job.

### **Research Questions**

To explore the experiences of Latinx mentors who mentor Latinx college students, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students?
2. How can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning?
3. What role does Community Cultural Wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship?

### **Significance of the Study**

This dissertation contributed to scholarship in several ways: (1) Illuminated the experiences of Latinx mentors; (2) Provided insight into how Latinx mentors perceive their impact on the lives of their mentees; (3) Deciphered how Latinx mentors leverage their CCW in their mentoring relationships; and (4) Provided insight into policy and research that develops and guides mentoring programs. Through these paths, postsecondary practitioners and policymakers have the opportunity to inform themselves of strategies that improve the overall academic persistence of Latinx students. For practitioners, the findings of this study provide critical information about the Latinx mentor and their role in working with Latinx college students. Specifically, through

examination of how these mentors interpret their mentoring experiences provides the ability to assist postsecondary institutions develop first year programs that focus on student experiences, retention, and persistence while retaining and attracting Latinx mentors.

This study provided an understanding of how the Latinx mentor makes meaning from their mentoring experiences. Additionally, this study contributed to the literature by identifying and developing new insights into how Latinx mentors construct and employ their mentoring strategies. The findings were able to shed light on barriers faced by Latinx college students, their academic goals, and persistence, through the perspectives of their Latinx mentors. Identifying shared experiences among Latinx mentors provided information regarding the barriers Latinx college students face and the strategies that assist in overcoming those barriers.

### **Definition of Terms**

The adoption of specific terminology allows for a contextual understanding of the proposed study. Therefore, this particular study will use a list of terms and formally defined definitions.

1. *Community Cultural Wealth*-A theoretical framework that acknowledges six forms of cultural capital particularly evident among Communities of Color including Aspirational, Navigational, Social, Linguistic, Familial, and Resistance. This framework allows researchers to see how marginalized communities utilize these various forms of capital to access and experience education (Yosso, 2005).

2. *Educational Debt*-A result of non-investment in low-income and minority children that creates disparities that lead to social problems including crime, low productivity, and low wages. Debt encompasses historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral (Ladson-Billings, 2006).
3. *Latinx*- An inclusive gender-neutral term that refers to individuals of any Latin descent and accounts for the intersection of social identities including gender, race, and class (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2015).
4. *Lived Experience*-A term used in phenomenological studies to describe the individual experiences of a person(s) or phenomenon that is being studied (Moustakas, 1994).
5. *Mentor*-An experienced individual that provides guidance and counsel to another individual in order to further grow and develop the other individual's skills and abilities (Hobson, 2012).
6. *Mentee*- An individual who receives guidance and counsel from the mentor in order to further grow and develop their skills and abilities (Mullen, 2012).
7. *Mentoring*- A formalized long term professional relationship in which an experienced individual supports and encourages development and growth of skills and abilities in another, often younger or more novice, individual through guidance and counsel over a long period of time (Varney, 2009).
8. *Persistence*- For the purpose of this study, persistence is defined as students “who complete a bachelor's degree at that institution within a specific time period” (Camara, 2003, p.1).

9. *Resiliency*- An individual's ability to cope with adversity and challenges

(Hassinger & Plourde, 2005). In the context of this study, resiliency will demonstrate a mentee's ability to overcome any type of institutional challenges that one might face.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter I of this dissertation introduced the study, my personal mentoring experience, and reason why I chose to focus my research on this topic. Additionally, this chapter included the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, a brief discussion of the theoretical framework, the researcher's perspective, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the definitions of the terms. Chapter II provides a review of the literature as it pertains to Latinx mentors. The section will include a discussion concerning the postsecondary educational access of Latinxs in the United States and Texas. In addition, this chapter includes a discussion surrounding the educational debt for Latinxs, the role of mentoring, mentoring relationship characteristics, mentoring support structures, Latinx mentors and the academic success of Latinx college students, Yosso's (2005) model of CCW, and the forms of capital used by Latinx mentors. Chapter III focuses on the methodology and the research design used in this study. In addition, the chapter includes a discussion on phenomenology, the role of the researcher, the study setting, the research participants, the data collection procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness, delimitations and limitations, and ethical considerations. Chapter IV provides a detailed description of the eight participants and their experiences as mentors. Chapter V documents the findings as they relate to Yosso's (2005) six forms of capital, the additional form of capital that emerged, Relational Capital including its

characteristics Compassion, Experiential, and Generativity, and the tools related to each subtheme. Chapter VI presents a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, implications as they relate to practice, research, and policy, and recommendations for future research.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Creswell (2009) asserts, “When reviewing the literature, the researcher should include conceptual articles or thought pieces that provide frameworks for thinking about topics” (p. 29). Creswell (2016) further affirms that a review of literature allows for the researcher to “share the results of other studies, relates the study to a larger dialogue in literature, creates a link between your study and the research that has already been conducted, and provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study” (p. 58). Thus, in order to create a context to better the review of literature, a thematic approach is used. The selected themes represent the six key areas that are critical to the proposed research design: postsecondary educational access of Latinxs in the United States, postsecondary educational access of Latinxs in Texas, educational debt for Latinxs, mentoring as a support structure, Latinx mentors and the academic success of Latinx college students, and Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework. By utilizing a thematic approach, I was able to focus my review of literature on the most critical aspects of the phenomenon that I researched.

### **Review Method**

Upon beginning the review of literature, a keyword search was conducted utilizing multiple scholarly databases: ProQuest, EBSCO, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. A keyword search is important as it allows one to identify words that help in learning about a proposed study (Creswell, 2016). The keywords used for the review included a combination of two or more terms in order to generate results that are more specific to the proposed study. The keyword combinations included any of the following terms: mentor, mentoring, first generation, persistence, resilience, academic support, Hispanic, Latino/a,

Latin@, Latinx, academic support programs, CCW, forms of capital, apprenticeship, and phenomenological/phenomenology.

### **Criteria for Inclusion**

A solid review of the literature requires that the researcher identify at least 50 or more articles, books, or other scholarly sources (Creswell, 2016). Collectively, these 50 sources will provide the researcher with “a substantial base from which to begin your review” (Creswell, 2016, p. 60). For the purpose of this study, scholarly literature that addressed issues concerning mentoring and the Latinx college population were included.

The following parameters guided the search for this literature review:

1. Articles/studies that focus on the Latinx population and postsecondary education;
2. Articles/studies that focus on the experiences/perceptions of the Latinx mentor and mentee;
3. Articles/studies that utilize Yosso’s (2005) framework to investigate the experiences and persistence of Latinx college students and/or mentors;
4. Postsecondary and critical race theory articles/studies that utilize only a phenomenological approach to their methodology.

Literature related to the experiences of the Latinx mentee has evolved greatly throughout the past decade. However, there currently is a dearth in the literature as it relates to the experiences of the Latinx mentor. Many studies either focus on the effects of mentoring and mentoring from a deficit perspective.

### **Postsecondary Educational Access of Latinxs in the United States**

If Latinos aren’t part of the success story, then the U.S. itself does not have a success story. It will be impossible for the U.S. to meet its future societal and

workforce goals if Latinos' educational attainment is not substantially improved. (Jones, 2012, p.2)

Over the past decades, the United States has begun to experience radical change in demographics. Estimates show that by the year 2060, the Latinx population<sup>3</sup> will become the largest minority racial ethnic population in the United States and will constitute 31 percent (128.8 million) of the population (Excelencia in Education, 2011; U.S Census Bureau, 2014). The United States Census Bureau (2014) asserts that Latinxs constitute 17 percent (54 million) of the United States' population, and as this community continues to grow, the expectation that Latinx enrollment at institutions of higher education will increase as well (Liu, 2011). However, their growth in population is not reflective of their representation in the United States education system. According to the conditions of Latinos in Education Fact Book (Excelencia in Education, 2015), during 2012, Latinxs only represented 24 percent of the United States' population enrolled in K-12 schools, 46 percent of community college enrollment, and 16 percent of four-year postsecondary enrollment.

While Latinxs have continued to demonstrate improvement in educational preparation over the years, Latinxs are still at the "periphery of the educational enterprise" (Castellanos, et al., 2006, p. xv) as the educational system has failed to meet the needs of the Latinx community. As discussed by San Miguel and Donato (2010), schools that serve marginalized populations serve a "reproductive function and sought to ensure that they remained a subordinate group by providing them with only limited

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<sup>3</sup> Latinx population in the United States is comprised of any person whose heritage can be traced to Spanish speaking nation including but not limited to: Mexico, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Columbia, Spain, Honduras, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, and Argentina (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, Cuddington, 2013)

access to separate, inferior, subtractive and non-academic instruction” (p. 29).

Historically, the placement of Latinx students in inferior educational systems that purposely choose not to educate but instead reproduce some of the same social inequalities that continue to exist in the United States. Due to this inferiority and subpar educational class system burdening Latinx students’ the continuous exposure to higher levels of poverty results in negative effects in educational aspiration of Latinx students when compared to their White counterparts (Bartlett and García, 2011).

Beginning with the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the 1960’s Civil Rights Movement, the Latinx population has worked towards gaining equal access and opportunity to higher education (MacDonald, Botti, & Clark, 2007). During the 1960’s and 1970’s, movements such as the Chicano and Puerto Rican Youth Movement called for curriculum to address the needs of a diversified student demographic, the identification of Latinx faculty members to serve as role models to Latinx students, the creation of cultural and research centers, and additional financial programs for Latinxs to access postsecondary institutions. In addition, the creation of the Federal TRIO programs including Upward Bound helped to increase educational opportunities for Latinxs who come from low socioeconomic statuses. However, during the 1980s the Latinx progress toward postsecondary access came to a halt, mostly due to federal funding allocation changes made by the Reagan administration that affected lower income Latinx students (MacDonald, et al., 2007).

The deficit perception of Latinx students has been prevalent throughout the last two centuries. However, over the past few years, the discourse surrounding Latinxs and education has shifted with increased postsecondary enrollment statistics. According to the

NCES (2015), Latinxs were more likely to enroll in community college versus a four-year institution as Latinxs represented the second highest ethnic group enrolled in community college, with 24.3 percent enrollment rate. The growing enrollment rate of Latinxs in community college stems from various factors including, the financial affordability of community college, open enrollment policies, and geography, as Texas has one of the largest community college systems in the United States (Krogstad & Fry, 2015). Although there is a growing number of Latinxs enrolling in community college, there continues to be a disproportionate number of Latinxs enrolling in four-year institutions (Krogstad, 2016) and attaining bachelor degrees. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014), Latinxs lag behind their White, African American, and Asian American counterparts in the number of four-year degrees attained (see Table 2.1). This underrepresentation should be a cause for concern for the economic future of the United States (Gutierrez, 2002; Miller & Garcia, 2004; Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004).

**Table 2.1**

*Educational Attainment in the U.S. by Race and Degree Conferred*

Degree Level	African American	Asian American	Latino	White
<b>Associates Degree</b>	32.40%	60.40%	22.70%	42.80%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	22.50%	53.90%	15.50%	32.80%
<b>Advanced Degree</b>	8.20%	21.40%	4.70%	12.10%

*Source.* U.S. Census Bureau, (2014). Educational Attainment in the United States.

As education continues to be the primary means of economic and social mobility, the low levels of educational achievement among Latinxs has become apparent. The lack of educational preparation among Latinxs has resulted in their limited ability to access and complete a postsecondary education, seek substantial higher paid employment, and

become agents of social change within their communities, all of which will affect their ability to meet the challenges of the future (Cardenas & Kerby, 2012; Gloria, 1998; Hernandez, 2000). As a result, Latinxs continue to maintain 75 percent of the nation's growth in the labor market between 2010 and 2020 and will continue to be the majority of workers who take lower paying employment opportunities (Santiago & Soliz, 2012). Without strong college retention policies and strategies that prioritize underrepresented populations, Latinx students will continue to have some of the lowest postsecondary graduation rates in the United States (Solorzano, et al., 2005; Santiago & Soliz, 2012). At the national, state, local and institutional level, there is a moral obligation to assist Communities of Color so that they prepare for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and becoming agents of social change.

### **Postsecondary Educational Access of Latinxs in Texas**

The U.S Census Bureau (2014) asserted that there are approximately 10 million Latinxs living in the state of Texas and of that 10 million, 48 percent represent the K-12 population. Additionally, as indicated by Census data, the significant growth in the population of Texas alone has unique challenges that addresses societal remedies to prevent jeopardizing the welfare of the state. The educational success of the Latinx population will have a direct impact on the strength of each state's workforce and economy. In Texas, the Latinx population comprises nearly 20 percent of the Latinx college student population and as the population continues to grow, institutions must plan so that they ensure Latinx college students succeed and obtain a degree (Liu, 2011). If there continues to be a rapid growth in the Latinx population in Texas, then the current educational problems will likely continue to increase. According to Jeanty, Zey,

Murdock, Cline, and Perez, (2015) between 2000 and 2060 the Texas public school enrollment will see a 99.3 percent increase in Latinx children. As Latinxs continue to be the largest minority ethnic group in the State of Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), there is a noticeable gap forming between educational attainment and their socioeconomic representation. In the State of Texas, this noticeable gap can affect the economic future as Texas continues to become increasingly reliant on the educational attainment of Latinxs in higher education (Murdock, 2006). Should the enrollment and degree attainment rate for postsecondary education remain constant among the Latinx population, the economic prosperity for Texas may be at jeopardy in the near future (Murdock, et al., 2003).

If “education remains the best predictor of economic success” as espoused by former State of Texas Demographer, Steve Murdock (Scharrer, 2012, p. 1), then the State of Texas has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the Latinx population is adequately represented in degree attainment. The slow increase in Latinx participation in higher education at both the national level and state level has drawn national attention over the years. In 1983, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund carried out a federal suit against the State of Texas for its failure to desegregate the Latinx student population at postsecondary institutions. In this federal suit, The Office of Civil Rights found that the State of Texas was in fact in direct violation of Section 601 of Title VI Civils Rights Act pertaining to higher education desegregation regulations (MacDonald et al., 2007).

In 1996, the Latinx Texan population incurred another educational setback. The United States 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals concluded that postsecondary institutions in the State of Texas could no longer use race and ethnicity selection criteria for the purpose of

recruitment, enrollment, and scholarship opportunities (MacDonald, et al., 2007). The *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) suit resulted in the State of Texas restructuring its race and ethnicity policies. Since 1996, the State of Texas has passed several bills that aimed to remedy the current state of educational reform. Starting with the Texas Top 10 percent rule, which offered automatic public university admission to any Texas high school graduation senior who graduated in the top 10 percent of their class (Texas State Legislature-HB 588, 1997). This bill attempted to address the sharp decline identified in the rate of minority student enrollment and graduation at postsecondary institutions.

In 2000, the Texas Legislatures charged the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop an initiative that would improve accessibility and the quality of education for such a diverse population. Because of this charge, The Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan was created (THECB-Closing the Gaps Plan, 2000). This plan developed four major goals that address participation, success, excellence, and research. Goal I, close the gaps in participation, focused on increasing enrollment in postsecondary institutions across Texas by 500,000 by the year 2015. Goal II, close the gaps in success, focused on increasing the number of degrees, professional certifications and other postsecondary student successes by 50 percent by the year 2015. Goal III, close the gap in excellence, focused on increasing the number of nationally recognized postsecondary programs by 2015. Goal IV, close the gaps in research, focused on increasing the level of federal funding for science and engineering at postsecondary institutions in Texas by 50 percent by the year 2015 (THECB-Closing the Gaps Plan, 2000).

The Closing the Gaps Plan (2000), has resulted in Texas developing several postsecondary initiatives to improve the educational outcomes for its population. The postsecondary initiatives that Texas has adopted includes the Texas Higher Education Accountability System (THECB-Texas Higher Education Accountability System, 2008) that required the THECB and each postsecondary institution to collaborate and produce information that demonstrates the quality and effectiveness of the education provided to the students. Another initiative that was critical to the success of the Closing the Gaps Plan (THECB-Closing the Gaps Plan, 2000) was the development of Education Research Centers (THECB-Education Research Centers, 2008). The Education Research Centers conducted research related to education in Texas and produced a comprehensive data warehouse pertaining to public education in Texas. The Higher Education Policy Institute was another initiative that focused on student outcomes, developmental education, and Hispanic student success (THECB-Higher Education Policy Institute, 2008). The P-16 Council (THECB-P-16 Council, 2003) aimed to help public education (P-12) and postsecondary education institutions collaborate, develop educational improvements, and career readiness initiatives for the State of Texas. Go Center Collaborations (THECB-Go Centers, 2008), a local and community managed program aimed to create an environment for prospective college students that promoted postsecondary education and awareness. Lastly, the Achieving the Dream initiative (THECB-Achieve the Dream Initiatives, 2008) was a strategy that focused on improving the success of community college students who were identified as having faced barriers towards success in education.

Proceeding the THECB-Closing the Gaps plan (2000), the State of Texas developed a new higher education plan, 60X30TX, which focuses on the goal of

achieving “60 percent of the 25-to-34-year-old Texas population to hold a certificate or degree by 2030” (THECB-60x 30TX, 2015). This education plan is supported by four goals including, 60x30, completion, marketable skills, and student debt. Goal I aims to have at least 60 percent of Texans receive a degree or professional certificate by 2030. Goal II aims to have at least 550,000 students earn a two-year, four-year, master’s degree, or professional certificate from a postsecondary institution. Goal III aims to have all students who graduated from a postsecondary institution in Texas develop marketable skills to use in the workforce. Goal IV aims to reduce postsecondary educational student debt so that it does not exceed 60 percent of an individual’s first year wage (THECB-60x 30TX, 2015). Other initiatives enacted by the THECB include GenTx (THECB-GenTx, 2010) which is a Texas initiative that recognizes high school seniors on their postsecondary plans and encourages families to begin to prepare for the postsecondary journey. The Work-Study Student Mentorship program also referred to as G-Force is another THECB initiative that aims to provide high school students with college mentors who help in college selection processes, completing admissions paperwork including financial aid and scholarships, and assists students in planning visits to postsecondary institutions (THECB-Work-Study Student Mentorship Program, 1989). Advise TX works to increase the enrollment of first generation, low income and marginalized high school students who earn a postsecondary degree by using near-peer advisers (THECB-Advise TX, 2010). The Comprehensive Student Success Program, another initiative that aims to improve student postsecondary success through the implementation of support strategies including enhanced faculty training and the increase of completion rates for entry-level, gatekeeper courses (THECB-Comprehensive Student Success Program, 2011). Lastly,

the Texas Legislature House Bill 400 (2001) relates to meeting the goals outlined in the THECB Closing the Gaps Plan (2000). House Bill 400 (2001) requires that high schools with the lowest percentage of postsecondary enrollments collaborate with public postsecondary institutions to increase the high school's enrollment rates (THECB-HB400, 2001).

### **Educational Debt for Latinxs**

The educational achievement gap refers to the identified disparity found in underrepresented groups of students when compared to their White counterparts. These disparities include historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral elements found in Communities of Color (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Various forms identify most achievement gaps and include standardized tests scores, dropout rates, college enrollment, and persistence rates and as a result, closing these gaps has become centric to education reform. Ladson-Billings (2006) argues that this alleged achievement gap is in actuality an educational debt. She takes on the problem in a critical, systemic, and responsive way. More specifically, Ladson-Billings (2006) reframes an argument that the national achievement gap is really an educational debt. The term achievement gaps are inaccurate and refers to assigning blame to those that are historically marginalized, underserved by educational institutions because of wealth and belonging to a community of color. The achievement gap refers only to educational outcomes and not those conditions that led and is in consequence of the educational outcome. Therefore, Ladson-Billings (2006) suggest that the focus be on the educational debt that Communities of Color have endured. The focus from an achievement gap lens to an educational debt perspective removes blame and brings attention on the systems that is the root of this cause. She goes

further to cite her consultation with the University of Wisconsin's Professor Emeritus Robert Haverman regarding her theory of the education debt. Dr. Haverman stated,

The education debt is the foregone schooling resources that we could have (should have) been investing in (primarily) low income kids, which deficit leads to a variety of social problems (e.g. crime, low productivity, low wages, low labor force participation) that require on-going public investment. This required investment sucks away resources that could go to reducing the achievement gap.

Without the education debt, we could narrow the achievement debt. (p. 2)

Historical debt centers on the lack of access and opportunity to a formal public education for Communities of Color. Ladson-Billings (2006) identifies this debt through such historical acts as the denial of educational access during the period of enslavement for African Americans, assimilation of American Indians through education, and Latinxs who experienced large disparities in their educational endeavors. These disparities are due to the denial to access public education since 1848. Economic debt centers on the inequalities surrounding school funding, education affordability, and wealth disparities. Schools with large populations of Communities of Color have historically received less funding than schools with a predominately-White student population (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The economic disparity has resulted in patterns that reflect the idea that more education results in higher earnings causing wealth gaps. The sociopolitical debt refers to the disenfranchisement of Communities of Color at local, state, and national levels resulting in underrepresentation in civic processes while the white population still has less restricted access to those governing political and legal systems. Lastly, moral debt

refers to the disparity found in what we as a people know is right and what we as a people do with this new knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2016).

Studying the educational debt owed to Latinx students is important, as it will allow for a better understanding of the argument surrounding education disparities found in the Communities of Color and the call to action that collectively we solve the problems by not just closing the gap but by looking at the larger picture. Ladson-Billings (2006) further goes on to state that society must address the educational debt for the following reasons

- (a) The impact the debt has on present education progress,
- (b) The value of understanding the debt in relation to past education research findings, and
- (c) The potential for forging a better educational future.

(p. 9)

Strengthening this argument, Harrell and Forney (2003) assert, “If equity is truly an important goal of education, something must be done to increase the enrollment and retention of Hispanics in higher education” (p. 148).

### **Precollege Barriers for Latinxs**

Various barriers at the K-12 level have been identified that affect the postsecondary educational achievement of Latinxs such as tax-based imbalances between school districts, which result in fewer resources including inadequate academic advising, access to technology, and other educational resources (Contreras & Gandara, 2006). Additionally, academic preparation influenced by rigorous coursework affects student progress. Providing an academic foundation that includes advanced algebra, biology,

chemistry, and physics can better prepare students for college (The College Board, 2015).

Other factors that have been attributed to college barriers include a non-supportive climate where there is a lack of cultural understanding, and tracking policies that automatically perceive Latinx students as English language learners, hindering their academic potential (Nevarez & Rico, 2007).

College entrance exams pose another challenge for Latinxs, as poor exam scores are indicative of students being underprepared (Harrell & Forney, 2003; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Rodriguez & Arrellano, 2016). Opponents of college entrance exams as other high stakes test argue that these exams do not fairly assess a student's educational achievement by producing modest results (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004) and can ultimately result much bigger unintended consequences including higher dropout rates (Rodriguez & Arrellano, 2016). In addition, The Education Trust (2014b) suggested that the educational gap is apparent in national and state standardized tests for Latinx high school students when compared to their White peers. This is most prominent in high school Latinx students who took the American College Testing (ACT) Exam. Statistics show the average test score for Latinxs decreased over the past 10 years (ACT, 2016). While the government worked towards implementing educational initiatives to ensure that all students have equal access to education, this does not address the educational debt endured by Communities of Color and only offers short-term solutions that will not address the underlying problem. Academic grades, standardized test scores, advance placement, and honors courses most reflect this debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Federal education accountability measures such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act which challenge the U.S. to adopt

educational standards that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace have resulted in increased awareness to the educational gaps (Editorial Projects in Education Research, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). However, these policies have also resulted in increased high-stakes accountability measures that have posed a completely new set of issues that again only offers short-term solutions while not addressing the problem at its root.

Lastly, family demographics are another potential educational barrier for many Latinxs, particularly those who come from first generation college families. Harrell and Forney (2003) assert that a parent's educational level directly affects a student's persistence. Crisp and Cruz (2010) further affirm this by stating,

Although Hispanic students may be provided emotional support to attend college, in many cases Hispanic parents are unable to provide their children with cultural capital, knowledge on how to navigate the collegiate system, or assistance with coursework because of a lack of proficiency with English, a lack of exposure to the American Education System, or work demands. (p. 233)

As suggested by Hernandez and Lopez (2004), postsecondary institutions should work towards engaging families in programs that assist parents in becoming more comfortable and knowledgeable about the postsecondary institutions policies and processes. These programs can aid in building a rapport among families and institutional agents that allows parents to understand the academic rigor of a postsecondary education. The parental perspective presented views Latinx parents through a deficit lens due to the lack of formal education and/or the necessary knowledge on how to navigate the postsecondary environment. Other scholars have thus begun to focus on the assets that Latinx parents

can bring despite having limited formal education. Nonetheless, limited formal education is still a barrier. By addressing the precollege barriers identified by Latinxs, the transition to a postsecondary institution will become less of a challenge.

### **Undergraduate Barriers for Latinxs**

Various barriers account for the challenges faced by Latinx college students and include financing a postsecondary education (Cuellar, 2015; Gross, et al., 2014, Núñez, et al., 2013) and racial isolation (Saenz, 2016; Salas, et al., 2014; Sinanam, 2016). Income stratifies access to college (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013) and the burden of paying for college continues to be a major factor for Latinx students and their families when deciding whether and where a student will attend college. Latinxs who come from low-income families do not have the same opportunities as other students with higher family incomes concerning financing college. Gándara and Contreras (2009) stated “the economic situation of parents, their schooling history, and neighborhoods into which children are born and raised-all have powerful effects on children’s aspirations and preparation for schooling before they even step inside a classroom” (p.250).

In many instances, Latinx college students are responsible for financing their own education. As a result of financing their own education coupled with the dwindling pool of financial aid and grants made available (Gross, et al., 2014), Latinx students’ inability to pay for tuition has been linked to higher levels of stress and has a direct correlation to their quality of life (Hernandez, 2000; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). The reported impact on the quality of life for Latinx college students stems from working while in college, working longer hours, and dropping out of their respective institutions when they are not able to afford tuition. In addition, many Latinxs face additional

financial burdens of who will pay for their tuition and those that have their finances tied to familial obligations (Longerbeam, et al., 2004). The indirect and direct effects that finances have on Latinx students directly influences their ability to persist and involve themselves in their own academic endeavors (Hernandez, 2000; Núñez, et al., 2013). As discussed, the limited access to financial means to finance college has presented a challenge that has negatively affected the decision for Latinx college students to limit their studies or not enroll in college altogether.

Another barrier that the Latinx college student often faces is racial isolation as Latinxs are a minority population among campus population (Castellanos, et al., 2006). The lack of minority/cultural mentors, faculty, and support programs often times leads to adverse conditions of marginality, isolation, and a lack of or poor support systems (Campos, et al., 2009; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Núñez, et. al., 2013). These adverse conditions result in a diminished sense of belonging to campus and ultimately impede their ability to adjust academically and socially (Andrade, 2007; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Nora & Crisp, 2008; Salas, et al., 2014; Sinanam, 2016; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006;). In 2006, researchers Lopez-Mulnix and Mulnix conducted a qualitative in-depth study at select universities that focused on the commonalities shared between institutions that developed multicultural outreach programs and if their culture and leadership had any positive impacts on multicultural programming. The researchers found that universities who serve their community holistically develop an inclusive culture that embodies being open minded, decentralized, collaborative and innovative in their approaches toward the campus community. The study (Lopez-Mulnix & Mulnix, 2006) recognized narratives from participants such as,

Central to our institutional commitment and highest calling to provide Penn students the best possible education. My instincts and experience as an educator tell me that we learn much and frequently learn best from those who are different than we are in race, culture and beliefs. (p. 18)

Arguably, having this type of campus climate allows students to begin to overcome certain perceived barriers and create a more inclusive environment that represents a diverse population (Lopez-Mulnix & Mulnix, 2006; Núñez, et al., 2013). Addressing underrepresentation is critical to the overall success of the Latinx college student. When the Latinx college student graduates, it is imperative that they leave with a sense of empowerment that will position them for success in the society (Cuellar, 2015).

Research indicates that there is a steady increase in the discrepancy between the enrollment of Latinxs in higher education and their graduation rates (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Saenz, 2016). A longitudinal study (2004) conducted by the Educational Policy Institute and the PEW Hispanic Research Center reported that Latinx students have less of an opportunity to access higher education due to barriers such as under preparedness and financing an education (Swail, et al., 2004). Additionally, for those that attend a four-year institution, the enrollment rate is nearly half the rate of white students and of those who enroll, less than 25 percent will receive a degree (Swail, et al., 2004).

### **The Role of Mentoring**

The role of mentoring in academic retention in college is a complex issue (Tinto, 2007). In previous years, institutions of higher education believed that retention comes from the student's abilities and their skills. Because of this belief, institutions believe that it was the fault of the student and not the institution if the student did not succeed in

persisting to degree attainment (Tinto, 2007). As institutions continue to research academic retention, they realized that they have a critical role in the success of the student and can be part of the solution. One way institutions addressed persistence is through the implementation of mentoring programs.

Mentoring addresses several issues related to postsecondary persistence by supporting a student's academic and social integration into the collegiate environment (Ceballo, 2004; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007). According to Wilson, et al., (2012), several qualitative studies indicate that undergraduate students who participate in mentoring programs have higher GPAs and increased retention rates in comparison to their counterparts who forgo mentoring. In addition, Wilson, et al. (2012) indicates that the undergraduate students who pursue mentoring opportunities have improved student identities and integration into the academic environment. The mentoring environment is process oriented that develops a relationship which enhances personal and academic competencies (Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007). Mentoring can be formal or informal. Formal mentoring programs include well-defined procedures, policies, timelines, training, and goals. Informal mentoring is less involved as the mentor and the mentee take on the initiative to develop a relationship (Tyler, 2004; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007). The role of the mentor to a Latinx college student is significant, the mentor can provide guidance in navigating a new, and complex educational environment, teach coping skills that address everyday pressures, provide resources for accessing and staying in college, and provide socialization skills through the meaningful connection made in the mentoring relationship (Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007). Descriptions of mentoring relationship characteristics follow

in the next section with a special emphasis placed on Latinx mentoring characteristics later in the chapter.

### **Mentoring Relationship Characteristics**

Mentoring relationships necessitate several characteristics in order for the relationship to thrive. According to a mixed method study (2015) that utilized thematic analysis, students, prefer an academic mentor that has a strong professional ethic, is genuine, knowledgeable and well connected in their respective fields, can provide guidance, and who has experience as a mentor (Rudolph, et al., 2015). Rudolph et al., (2015) further suggest that mentors need to have similar interests and a challenging attitude that push the mentee while collaborating and supporting the mentee. Additionally, students generally prefer a mentor that is open, shares common values, is trustworthy, available, and is committed to the relationship (Rudolph et al., 2015). Commitment is one of the characteristics most important to the success of the mentor/mentee relationship. Additional research demonstrates that mentees that were in committed mentoring relationships were more satisfied with their mentor (Cox, et al., 2014; Poteat, et al., 2009).

In addition, a longitudinal qualitative study (2011), which focused on the outcomes of mentoring programs for Latinx college students, suggested that mentors who provide an experience rich in listening, encouragement, and empathy are more successful than those without. The mentors who are able to build a relationship with their mentees have a much more positive impact on the mentee's academic performance (Phinney, et al., 2011). Lastly, mentors who exhibited the characteristics described above were able to better connect with campus community, improve confidence, and increase their chances

to be more successful in their academic pursuits (Torres & Hernandez, 2009).

Postsecondary institutions have increased their focus on mentoring program designs that facilitate formal and informal mentoring relationships. Depending on the structure of the mentoring programs, postsecondary institutions often adopt cross-age peer mentoring, group mentoring, E-mentoring, and/or intergenerational mentoring approaches (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006). Cross-age peer mentoring programs involve “an older and wiser” individual who serves as the mentor and the mentoring relationship is one more focused on relationship building. In educational institutions, fellow students act as peer mentors and provide a supportive peer environment in which both parties benefit (Karcher, et al., 2006, p. 712). Group mentoring programs involve relationship building and “group processes as a primary means of targeting developmental achievements among group participants” (Karcher, et al., 2006, p. 713). In this form of mentoring, educational institutions group six to ten students into a mentoring group whom then meet with one mentor or a team of mentors. In this environment, the mentor and mentees can achieve social skills training and group goals. E-mentoring programs involve the creation of a less formal, friendship-based mentoring relationship that centers on meeting via the Internet or phone instead of face-to-face encounters (Karcher, et al., 2006). This form of mentoring achieves specific learning related goals. Lastly, intergenerational mentoring involves pairing a much younger individual with a mentor that is significantly older and can impart both “practical experience and wisdom” (Karcher, et al., 2006, p. 713).

## **Mentoring Support Structures**

For postsecondary institutions, the act of mentoring is a way to minimize negative experiences of college by focusing on college transition and success factors (Torres & Hernandez, 2009). Through mentoring, the mentor is creating an internal connection that will nurture students' lifelong learning endeavors by providing support. The ability to provide college students with support through mentoring leads to greater academic persistence amongst students (Campos, et al., 2014; Gross, et. al., 2014; Núñez, et al., 2013, Rudolph, et al., 2015; Sáenz, et al., 2015; Salas, et al., 2014; Tovar, 2014; Treviño, et al., 2014). In this instance, the support structures that are provided through mentoring can be categorized into supportive themes including: academic, emotional, and social (Avery & Daly, 2010; Garringer, 2014; Salas, et al., 2014; Treviño, et al., 2014).

Academic support structures provided through mentoring can include advising, tutoring, degree and career support. Emotional support structures include listening, moral support, and encouragement. Social support structures include socialization into professional and academic settings and actively participating in academic discourse (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

## **Academic Support Structures**

In order to help Latinx students persist in college, institutions should consider what type of mentoring support systems are in place. In a qualitative study conducted by Gloria, et al., (2005), examining the mentoring support structures of 99 Latinx college students found that Latinx students who perceived that they had educational support structures in place had a decrease in non-persistent decisions. The study looked at non-persistent behaviors and the correlation of attrition due to mentoring which positively affected students' decisions and behaviors to persist. Mentoring behaviors in this study

included more personal and engaging interaction styles as well as educational support and direction from formal Latinx faculty and staff mentors.

The literature suggests universities that practice providing academic support through mentoring programs have demonstrated a student persistence rate much higher than those that do not, specifically through student retention rates (Campos, et al., 2009). For instance, the qualitative pilot study conducted by Campos, et al., (2009), affirms that their research supported the concept that mentoring programs provide a platform for academic intervention among identified high-risk Latinx college students. In the study (Campos, et al., 2009), pilot mentoring program successfully provided the participants with support structures that made the transition to college successful. These structures aided in the academic progress of participants who shared similar sentiments such as, “I was glad my mentor was able to help me to understand the system better and guide me through things I would never have found out on my own” (p. 169). The study (Campos, et al., 2009) illustrated specific ways that academic support structures found in mentoring programs are able to promote positive outcomes for Latinx college students.

### **Emotional Support Structures**

Emotional support practices are critical to the success of the mentor/mentee relationship. The emotional support factors include the establishment of a mentoring relationship characterized by listening, moral support, assistance identifying problems, addressing issues related to academic success, and providing encouragement (Treviño, et al., 2014). Emotional support provided in mentoring relationships has demonstrated its positive effects on students as affirmed by a qualitative study conducted by Treviño, et al., (2014), which examined the perspectives of Latinx students who participated in an

educational mentorship programs for Latino educators of tomorrow. The study highlighted the perceptions of mentees whose mentors supported them by being role models and by providing educational and career support. Further, students indicated that by participating in a mentorship program they gained critical success skills and knowledge to achieve their academic goals (Treviño et al., 2014). In the study (Treviño, et al., 2014), students indicated that the mentors were able to provide emotional support in their mentoring relationships,

The mentors encouraged me when I told them I didn't feel like I was smart enough to succeed in college. They shared stories of how they worked really hard in their studies when they were in school. I felt like they gave me a lot of moral support. (p. 210)

The actions the mentors took in this study resulted in positive outcomes for the mentee, which influenced their abilities to persist in school. Mentoring practices that utilize emotional support structures are important when developing a framework that identifies a mentee's strengths and their weaknesses as it relates to academic persistence (Crisp & Cruz, 2010).

### **Social Support Structures**

Lastly, social support structures have a critical role in the persistence decisions among Latinx college students (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005). Findings from a qualitative study conducted by Salas, et al., (2014) indicate that many students perceived mentoring as a "home away from home" and an important relationship in their lives that contributed to their sense of belonging on campus. Students also felt that within the mentoring environment there was a "sense of community" which was seen as a significant benefit to

the students (Salas, et al., 2014). The emergence of the “sense of community” found in mentoring programs is derived from common participant’s experiences such as

My overall experiences in the mentoring program were very, very positive. It was great to establish relationships with like-minded people, people who were also involved on campus...It got to give me some positive role models to look up [to]...I saw what they were doing, I saw what they were accomplishing, and I saw that they were involved in and that really allowed for me to participate in those same things. (Salsa, et. al., 2014, p. 238)

Identified in many mentoring programs, this “sense of community” and “home away from home” represented a space for the students that promoted inclusion and belonging. Findings from a qualitative study conducted by Avery and Daly (2010), suggested that the fostering student engagement practices is critical to the academic success of college students. In particular, the researchers’ findings suggest that postsecondary institutions that assume a more active role by fostering supportive relationships between faculty, staff, and students, resulted in increased rates of persistence and degree attainment.

Support for these findings are found in the participant narratives such as,

She took me in and taught me everything I needed to know about research, and I wouldn’t know anything about going on [to graduate school] without her...Dr. C. found me a job at the time when my fiancé passed away. I had a job, but it was a little too stressful for me at the time, and she had connections everywhere. She told me to join a summer internship program. Just things I wouldn’t have known as a normal undergraduate student. (Avery & Daly, 2010, p. 61)

The importance of these studies strengthens the argument that social support while in college is critical to the persistence of college students.

Training and supporting mentors are critical to the success of mentoring programs (Herrera, et al., 2008). Providing sufficient training and support ensures that the mentors are able to develop approaches and skills as previously discussed in this chapter that aid in establishing their mentoring relationships. In addition, support services ensure that the mentor is comfortable seeking assistance should they encounter problems or issues that require additional input. Providing training and support to mentors also decreases the possibility of mentors engaging in negative behaviors that can affect their mentees (Garringer & MacRae, 2008). As discussed by Garringer (2014), empowering mentors with tools and strategies can build a mindset that provides the needed foundation for successful mentoring relationships. By providing mentors with initial and ongoing support regarding effective communication, mentoring relationship skills, mentoring ethics, and best practices that promote academic competencies is vital for mentors.

### **Latinx Mentors and the Academic Success of Latinx College Students**

#### **The Latinx Mentor**

Many institutions of higher education have recognized the challenges associated with Communities of Color and have instituted academic mentoring programs as a way to ensure success through matriculation and completion. As affirmed by Zalaquett and Lopez (2007), their research suggests that,

Mentoring and sponsorship may address the specific needs of Latino students from a variety of backgrounds who have different levels of support in the home, school and community environment. (p. 350)

Adopting and implementing mentoring strategies that identify and focus on the needs of Latinx students, universities can then begin to improve persistence rates (Campos, et al., 2009; Hu, & Ma, 2010; Reyes, 2011; Rudolph, et al., 2015). In academia, mentoring is an important retention tool (Jacobi, 1991) and for Latinx students, mentoring is influential in their educational persistence. Successful mentoring programs take into account the socioeconomic, cultural background, and life experiences of the Latinx student (Laden, 1999) and utilize Latinx mentors, who are able to provide cultural and educational guidance (Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007).

Through the review of the literature, it has become evident that the discourse surrounding mentoring has centered mainly on the experiences of the mentee, best practices by mentors, and the benefits associated with mentoring. There is a consensus that the mentor should be experienced, knowledgeable, and able to provide support and guidance in order to achieve success. For mentors, especially those found in Communities of Color, it is important to identify where experience, knowledge, and guidance can emerge, and if the CCW framework (Yosso, 2005) has a significant impact on their mentoring relationships.

### **Yosso's (2005) Model of Community Cultural Wealth**

Yosso's (2005) model of CCW is a framework that challenges Bourdieu and Passeson's (1977) theory that dominant groups determine which forms of capital are valuable. In particular, Bourdieu and Passeson's (1977) theory utilizes a Critical Race Theory lens and focuses on the understanding Communities of Color forms of empowerment and deficit thinking. This theory affects Communities of Color who have their own forms of capital, which are not viewed as valuable by dominant groups making

Communities of Color culturally deficient. According to Bourdieu and Passerson (1977), capital has three guises in which it presents itself. The first guise, Economic Capital has the ability to convert into money or property rights. The second guise, Cultural Capital has the ability to convert into educational assets. The third guise, is Social Capital, in which social connections lead to title and nobility.

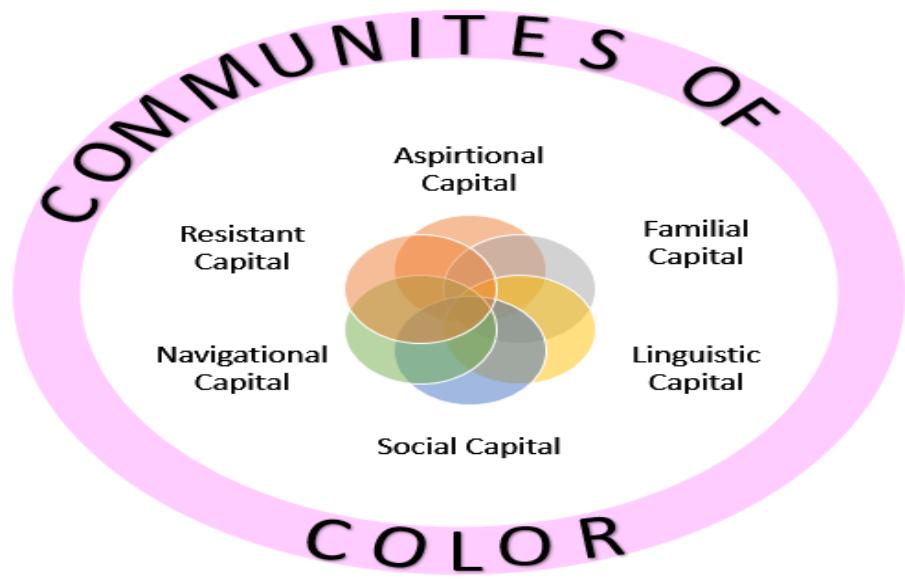
Bourdieu and Passeson's (1977) base their theories on these specific forms of capital with an understanding that although Communities of Color have capital these specific forms of capital are not necessarily valued outside of their respective communities. Their theories provide a better understanding of the connection between life choices, opportunities, and material resources. The theories developed by Bourdieu and Passerson (1977) conclude that underrepresented groups suffer economic and social inequalities such as wealth and access to certain networks that provide social and economic resources. Yosso (2005) furthered Bourdieu and Passeson's theory (1977) and created a framework that recognizes Communities of Color as having forms of capital that translate into educational assets in order for students to thrive.

Building on Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory on capital and Communities of Color, CCW is a theory that Solorzano, et al., developed in 2005, modeled after their work published in 1998 regarding marginalized groups of people who use their status as a form of empowerment. In their research, Solorzano, et al., (2005) use Critical Race Theory as a framework in order to analyze the educational inequalities that Latinx students experience when attending a postsecondary institution. The research focuses on the impacts derived from the inequalities and their impact on Latinxs educational resiliency and persistence. Because of their findings, they suggest critical race theory

practices and approaches that use these barriers as a way to empower and enhance the successes of Latinx college students (Sólorzano et al., 2005). Further building on this theory, Yosso (2005) established that this theory could apply to the educational setting as well. In this model, CCW is defined as a framework that,

Shifts the view from a deficit perspective to the assets that Communities of Color acquire. In contrast, the current educational policies stem from deeply embedded assimilationist practices that continue to place Latino students at an educational disadvantage and view students and their families as intellectually and culturally inferior. (Luna & Martinez, 2012, p. 2)

Specifically focusing on educational attainment and proving a way to survive institutional neglect, Yosso (2005) refined the CCW model by developing and defining various forms of capital for Communities of Color through a Critical Race Theory lens. It is important to note that these forms of capital are not exhaustive and/or mutually exclusive of each other. These forms of capital often times present themselves in tandem as illustrated in Figure 2.4.



*Figure 2.4 Connected Forms of Capital*

Aspirational Capital “refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). This form of capital “nurtures a culture of possibility” for college success that families have for their children’s future regardless of their inequities. The ability to maintain one’s hopes and dreams for the future despite the obstacles that they are facing is considered a form of aspiration and is what some consider a positive force in people (Harwood, 2015). Through the validation of students’ aspirations, increased resiliency, and affirmation that a student has the ability to achieve their hopes and dreams in a way to apply this form of capital. As a mentor, one should instill the culture of possibility into the mentee. For instance, in a qualitative study utilizing the analysis of interviews from Chicana high school students, Ceja (2004) affirmed that the culture of possibility gave students the ability to “reinterpret the meaning behind their current realities, from one of dismay and misfortune to one of strength and motivation” (p. 357). Utilizing Aspirational Capital as a

strength and motivation allows the mentor to “nurture a culture of possibility” alongside support from families that have educational aspirations for their children’s future regardless of their inequities (Yosso, 2005, p.77). In addition, affirming the culture of possibility in the mentee and support of their curricular endeavors is another way the mentor can employ this form of capital.

Linguistic Capital refers to “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). This form of capital identifies the various ways in which families communicate including language and storytelling referred to as *cuentos* (stories) and *dichos* (sayings) specific to the Latinx community such as the retelling a familial folk tale or the use of a family saying. For other Communities of Color, linguistic capital comes in the form of oral histories, parables, stories, and proverbs. This form of capital confirms that when a student arrives at college, they are equipped with various forms of communication skills and talents needed for success. For Latinxs who benefitted from *cuentos* (stories) and *dichos* (sayings) in their upbringing, they have built the skills necessary for success. At home or in their communities, students are able to learn through a variety of language and communication skills. Linguistic Capital provides students with the opportunities to listen, recount, and/or memorize *cuentos* (stories) and *dichos* (sayings) and practice critical linguistic skills such as vocabulary, audience awareness, and social maturity (Yosso, 2005). As a mentor, Linguistic Capital can be utilized to improve the mentee’s critical thinking skills is a way to connect to and strengthen their community ties to education.

Familial Capital “refers to cultural knowledge nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Through one’s extended family, one is able to establish a connection to the community and its resources. This form of Social Capital is all inclusive of those in a person’s network including immediate, extended, deceased members, and spaces in the community (Burciaga & Eberstein, 2010). Through funds of knowledge that emerge from networking, students are able to connect with others in order to minimize feelings of isolation. As a mentor, the ability to offer guidance and reflection in the form of *consejos* (advice) from one’s own lived experiences in college can impart educational success and development ideologies (Yosso, 2005). The process of building a sense of belonging or community that supports the mentee and as a result, the mentor becomes essentially part of the student’s larger familial network.

Social Capital refers to the “networks of people and community resources” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). This form of capital comes in the form of instrumental and emotional support from the community utilized to navigate a society. Social Capital comes in the form of instrumental and emotional support from the community utilized to navigate a society. Mentors have the ability to create supportive environments for their mentees and as a result increase persistence. With a focus on social networks, social capital leverages resources and relationships to gain access (Dyce, Albord, & Long, 2012; Reddick & Young, 2012). In an interpretive phenomenological study conducted by Salas, et al., (2014), the researchers argue that university mentorship positively affected Latinx students, as they were able to learn how to network, build professional relationships, and better navigate their college experiences. In addition, the results of the study

demonstrated that mentoring provided a foundation for Social Capital to emerge and positively affect the students' persistence (Salas, et al., 2014). Introducing the mentee to environments that support social and cultural integration is another way mentors can utilize Social Capital.

Navigational Capital refers to the "skills of maneuvering through social institutions" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Navigational Capital allows Communities of Color to maneuver through institutions that may present stressful situations, or conditions that can affect Communities of Color negatively. For many Communities of Color, the educational journey includes challenging barriers such as racially hostile environments that can place the student at risk of doing poorly or not persisting. Some of these barriers can be difficult to overcome and can lead to withdrawal in various forms including school (Terrion, 2012). According to Terrion (2012), the mentor "provides the support and direction necessary for the student to arrive intact at his or her destination" (p. 392). The mentor is the individual who supports the student in their ability to persist. As Terrion (2012) states, for "those students needing a mentor can thrive under the gentle but confident leadership of their guide who assist with the crucial navigation among intimidating and at times frightening path through higher education" (p. 393). Guiding the mentee along unfamiliar paths set by institutions is another way mentors can use navigational capital in their mentoring relationships.

Resistant Capital refers to "those knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). This form of capital allows Communities of Color to engage in behaviors that challenge the status quo and inequalities. Racism, capitalism, and patriarchy emerge from this form of capital.

Resistant Capital allows students to oppose oppressive structures such as racism and patriarchy and transform cultural knowledge. Actively opposing challenges and resisting societal obstacles that impeded one's path to success is a form of resistant capital. Quite often, underrepresented students find themselves opposing assumptions and misconceptions regarding their gender, race, ethnicity, or even socioeconomic statuses. For those that have this form of capital, they are able to "articulate a vision for rethinking misconceptions" (Burciaga & Eberstein, 2010, p. 8). Helping the mentee understand how to adapt and respond to their environments when faced with micro aggressions is another way mentors can use this form of capital. Additionally, through the process of adopting oppositional behavioral patterns that challenge various forms of racism and by assuming leadership positions in student organizations that nurture and promote change, resistant capital can emerge within the mentee. The mentor can help the mentee refine their own resistant capital to fuel their own motivations to persist.

Utilizing the CCW theory (Yosso, 2005) as my framework will provide me with a unique perspective when analyzing the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor and the role of capital in their mentoring relationships. Specifically, this framework will allow me the opportunity to interpret their experiences, barriers, and successes (Salas et al., 2014) from a lens that focuses on their forms of capital as assets.

### **Chapter Summary**

The review of literature suggests that there is a need for more research regarding how Latinx mentors make meaning from their mentoring experiences. This chapter provided an overview of the topic, a contextual view of the impact that Latinx mentors have on their mentees, and the role that CCW has in their mentoring decisions.

Examining the experiences of Latinx mentors provides critical insights into Latinx college students and mentoring experiences influence on persistence. This is important because it provides an avenue to identify and develop strategies to increase college retention and graduation rates. Latinx mentors provide insights and experiences related to the college experiences because they have already navigated their own academic environments, have understood and dealt with feelings of isolation, self-doubt, alienation, familial obligations, and financial stress.

Current research provides knowledge of literature regarding the experiences of the Latinx mentee. However, there is a gap in the literature surrounding the experiences of the Latinx mentor, specifically their mentoring practices. Although most of the research surrounds the critical insights of the mentees and their perspectives, it is beneficial to begin to understand the experiences and perspectives of the mentor due to the uniqueness of the mentoring relationship. Through the examination of the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor, educational goals of Latinx college students, policy recommendations, and educational standards, practices for mentoring can develop.

Lastly, this chapter covered the educational debt that Latinxs face while in school. Educational debt stems from a lack of educational preparation starting in preschool and through college. Currently, there is a concern that Latinxs are and continue to be underprepared when entering college. This underprepares has led to increased persistence rates. All of the information provided in this chapter serves as a foundation for this dissertation study. In addition, the studies discussed in this chapter inform and guide the methodology used for this study. The following chapter provides a detailed description of the dissertation study design and includes a discussion of data collection procedures,

trustworthiness, data analysis, delimitations and limitations, ethical considerations, and confidentiality to provide an in-depth understanding of the dissertation study.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides an overview of the qualitative methodology design. The chapter provides justification as to why a qualitative methodology was best suited to answer the research questions: 1.) What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students? 2.) How can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning? 3.) What role does community cultural wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship?

In addition, this chapter also describes the specific phenomenological approach that frames the study in order to capture the experiences of professional Latinx individuals who are mentors at institutions of higher education. According to Max van Manen (1990), phenomenological research allows the researcher to begin to think in such a way, that the participant's experiences become lived realities through narrative documentation and examination. A phenomenological approach allowed me to capture the participants' experiences through narrative, which resulted in the emergence of common themes among the mentors.

Lastly, this chapter also includes a discussion on how the forms of capital found in Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model is used in the data collection and analysis process. In addition, this chapter provides a discussion regarding the researcher's role, study setting, the recruitment of research participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical issues, and the significance of the research.

## **Qualitative Research Design**

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of the Latinx mentors and how the role of CCW in their mentoring relationships. As presented in Chapter I, statistics from the United States Census Bureau (2014) and Excelencia in Education (2011) indicate that the Latinx population continues to be the fastest growing population in the United States, and thus will continue to have a significant impact on the socio-economic climate and educational system. Yet, the Latinx student population continues to fall behind the national average of other ethnic populations in degree attainment (Excelencia in Education, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Marginalization, belonging, integration, and finances are institutional challenges faced by Latinx college students. These challenges have led to decreased retention rates, increased dropout rates, and substantial labor market inequalities (Nora & Crisp, 2009). As institutions continue to make advancements in retention strategies, mentoring continues to play a critical role in addressing such issues (Avery, Howell, & Page, 2014).

As a researcher, I was able to discern how Latinx mentors perceived their roles and how they utilized CCW in their mentoring relationships with Latinx students. With this in mind, I documented their narratives and extrapolated from their experiences the data that would ultimately define their perceptions and the role of CCW. Phenomenology was the appropriate methodology due to my interest in exploring the individual and common experiences of the Latinx mentors. The individual and collective experiences of Latinx mentors was able to shed light on their valuable role as a formal academic support structure for the Latinx college student as well as the role of CCW in their mentoring relationships.

## **Phenomenology**

Rooted deep in the scholarly writings of such philosophers as Kant and Hegel, phenomenology emerged at the start of the 20th century. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, strived to turn the philosophy into a science to direct attention towards meaning so that researchers are able to connect experiences (Guignon, 2006).

Phenomenology is most prominent in the fields of psychology and education (Creswell, 2007) and illustrates how meaning emerges from direct experiences (Merriam, 2002).

The role of selecting a methodology in research is to identify a lens that is able to understand the phenomena that the researcher intends to study. The research used a form of interpretive inquiry known as hermeneutic phenomenology (Crotty, 1998). The selection of this stance allows the qualitative design of the study to capture the essence of the phenomenon in question, or in this case the Latinx mentoring experience from the perspective of the mentor. By using thick descriptions and close analysis, the researcher is able to better understand the lived experiences of those experiencing the phenomena and see how meaning is created about the phenomenon by the participants (van Manen, 1990; Starks & Brown-Trinidad, 2007). van Manen (1990) explains the hermeneutic phenomenological approach as involving six activities:

- 1) Turning to a phenomenon that seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- 2) Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
- 3) Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- 4) Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;

- 5) Manipulating a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;

- 6) Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

(p. 30-31)

Utilizing these steps was necessary in order to allow participants lived experiences to emerge from the study. Additionally, the use of phenomenology as an approach to the study, I was able to address the main inquiry questions that ask, What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences of this phenomenon for this person or group of people? How people experience some phenomenon- how they perceive it, describe it, feel it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. (Patton, 2002, p. 115)

The decision to study the experiences of Latinx mentors stems from my personal belief that Latinx mentoring is critically important in higher education. In addition, Latinx mentoring has the potential to make differences in the lives of Latinx college students by fostering and nurturing resiliency and persistence among them. As discussed by Andrada (2007), a correlation is present between student persistence and a sense of belonging. When educators recognize this correlation, they have the opportunity to identify and provide support systems that enable students to feel part of the community. According to van Manen (1990), hermeneutic phenomenology is “a philosophy of action always in a personal and situated sense. A person who turns toward phenomenological reflection does so out of personal engagement,” in order to gain a better understanding of the experiences conscientiously (p.154).

### **Pilot Study**

To inform my study, a pilot was conducted in fall 2016 to determine the relevance of my dissertation data collection procedures. According to Seidman (2006), pilot studies are encouraged, as they will assist the researcher in determining if the research structure is appropriate. My particular pilot afforded me the opportunity to employ various validity techniques suggested by Creswell (2009) and collect data that was used to better guide the research questions and interview protocol for my dissertation study. The pilot study provided me the opportunity to explore utilizing open-ended semi-structured interview questions and to determine if my interview technique would support or detract from my dissertation study's objectives. By doing so, my findings yielded responses that provided me with an in-depth understanding of my participants' unique experiences and how CCW was instrumental in their mentoring relationships. The findings of the study suggested that Aspirational, Familial, and Social capital were the most utilized forms of CCW found in the mentoring relationship. In addition, the findings allowed me to probe into areas that were not considered before and helped to assist me in the development of much richer questions. Lastly, the pilot provided me with the ability to identify my biases and practice bracketing, prior to interpreting the data. Identifying and understanding these biases prior to conducting my dissertation study afforded me the opportunity to improve my skills as an interviewer and researcher.

### **Researcher's Role**

This dissertation study provided me with the unique opportunity to become part of the research. As the researcher, I considered myself the “primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.16). Conversely and as suggested

Merriam (1998) as the primary instrument limited me limited by being human, in that, I was susceptible to mistakes, missing opportunities, and allowing biases to manipulate the research.

A qualitative researcher's goal is to understand and make meaning from the data, then as a human instrument, I adapted to circumstances that emerged during the study including finding additional participants, rescheduling interviews, and adjusting interview questions as needed. In addition, as the researcher, I had the advantage to expand my understanding of the participants lived experiences through nonverbal communication; processing, clarifying, and summarizing information quickly; accurately checking data with subjects, and the ability to explore unusual responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.16).

The research design reflects the awareness of myself as the primary researcher for this study. A critical piece to understanding my positionality as a primary researcher presented itself in the selection of methods that facilitated the collection of data. The research questions and phenomena within this study linked to the selected methodology. Bracketing my biases played a critical role during the study and as the researcher. The necessary steps that I took to bracket my own subjectivity are explained later in this section.

### **Study Setting**

As the researcher, I purposefully chose my study sites, a decision informed by previous research on higher education mentoring programs. Given the purpose of the study to examine the lived experiences of Latinx mentors who mentor Latinx college students, the criteria for selecting the research sites included, four-year, public, higher

education institutions located in Texas that have functioning and sustainable mentoring programs. The identified mentoring programs have been in operation for at least five years and were able to demonstrate program achievement through documented academic student retention and persistence rates of Latinx students who have participated in the mentoring programs. The total number of Texas universities who met the proposed study's requirements are four including, Alpha University, Bravo University, Charlie University, and Delta University (pseudonyms used for anonymity purposes).

### **Research Participants**

In order to achieve data saturation (Seidman, 2006), I proposed that the targeted participants consist of eight professional Latinxs who serve as mentors for Latinx college students outside of their work profession. Data saturation also known as “redundancy” is vital to data collection and informs the researcher of when to conclude collecting data when no new information emerges (Seidman, 2006; Williams & Marrow, 2009). As the researcher, I utilized a purposeful criteria-sampling technique to identify the research participants. According to Patton (2002), purposive criterion sampling allows the researcher to identify the specific characteristics of interest that are unique or atypical within the phenomena. In order to collect the sample needed for this research, I drafted and sent an e-mail to the coordinators (see Appendix B) of the mentoring programs at universities who have Latinx mentors and Latinx college students as participants in their respective programs and who would be willing to take part in this study. Based on responses received, I then proceeded to e-mail an invitation to the identified participants (see Appendix C) to participate in the study. The identified participants were instructed to complete a qualifying and demographic online survey (see Appendix D). After review of

the completed qualifying and demographic online survey, the participants were then e-mailed to schedule their initial interview.

Considering the focus of the study, participants were selected from various universities in Texas who met the primary criteria for study inclusion. The study criteria included: (a) identified as a Latinx professional at a postsecondary institution who is a formal mentor outside of their professional role; (b) formal mentor for five or more consecutive years; (c) served as a formal mentor at their respective institutions; (d) mentored Latinx college students; and (e) willing to participate in the study and share their experiences. By ensuring that the selected participants met the criteria, I was able to collect rich information and gain additional insight through the data (Patton, 2002) as well as ensure the purpose of the study was met (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Of the eight participants selected to participate in the study, the researcher previously knew three. Table 3.1 provides demographic information regarding the study's participants (pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants). In addition, periodic elements were chosen as pseudonyms to represent the significant bonds created between mentors and mentees. A more detailed description of each participant is presented in Chapter IV.

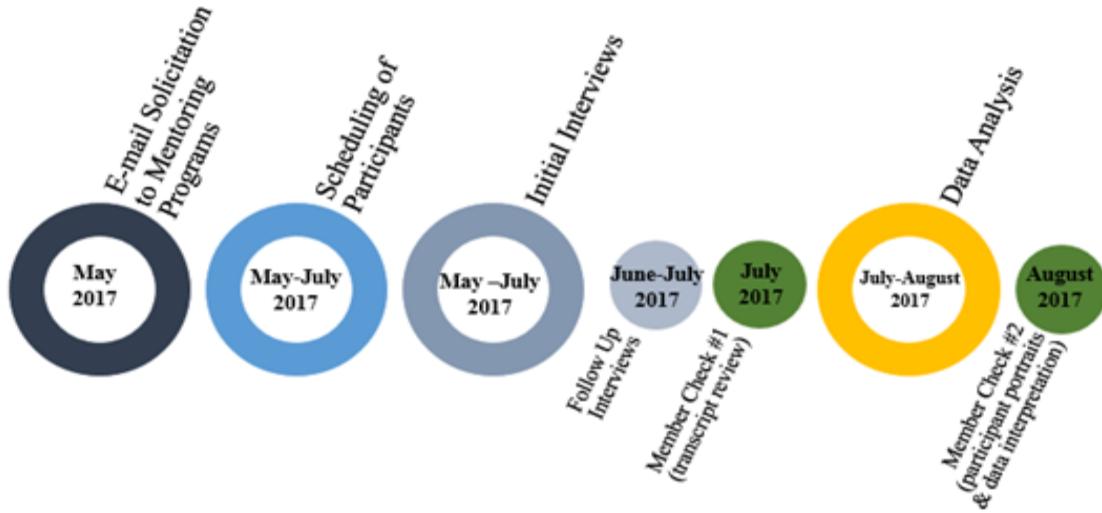
**Table 3.1**

*Study Participants (pseudonyms) Demographic Information*

<b>Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Professional Title</b>
Br-Bromine	Male	26-30	Program Coordinator
He-Helium	Female	31-35	Student Affairs Specialist
Li-Lithium	Female	41-45	Advisor
N-Nitrogen	Male	35-40	Grant Officer
F-Fluorine	Female	31-35	Student Affairs Specialist
Be-Beryllium	Female	-	Program Director
H-Hydrogen	Male	26-30	Researcher
C-Carbon	Male	35-40	Program Coordinator

### **Instrumentation and Preparation for Data Collection**

As discussed by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative researchers are interested in how people make meaning from their experiences and how they construct their worlds (p. 6). Therefore, in order to collect the information needed to interpret the participants' experiences it was necessary to collect data through various techniques including semi-structured individual interviews (two for each participant), archival records, field notes, and a researcher's journal. Data collection began in spring 2017, immediately following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix A for IRB approval letter) and ended summer 2017. Figure 3.1 provides a detailed timeline of my data collection steps.



*Figure 3.1 Detailed Timeline for Data Collection*

### **Interview Site Selection**

Participants were provided with the option to schedule the time and place for their interviews. Keeping in mind schedules, I proposed that interviews take place at the participant's office or in a more naturalistic setting that "balances the needs of the participant and the needs of the researcher" (Morgan, 1997, p.54). To accommodate increasingly busy schedules, participants had the option to schedule interviews in person, over the phone, and via Skype. Two participants chose to interview by phone for the initial meeting while the rest interviewed in person. Initial interviews were scheduled at office locations and/or other quiet private meeting spaces. Follow up interviews were scheduled at office locations as well as over the telephone to accommodate certain participants' schedules.

## **Interviews**

As Merriam (2014) suggests, interviews are especially crucial as they provide the researcher with the opportunity to collect information that is not directly observable. Additionally, in the field of education, interviewing is one of the most common forms of qualitative data collection (Merriam, 2009). As stated by Creswell (2007), interviews may “help the researcher to understand and put into larger context the interpersonal, social, and cultural aspects of the environment” (p.85). The initial and second interview consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the participants to engage in sharing their experiences. According to Patton (2002),

Open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people’s experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. Data consist of verbatim quotations with sufficient context to be interpretable. (p. 4)

Utilizing semi-structured interviews for data collection is important as it represents the “person-to-person” encounter that allows information elicitation (Merriam, 2009, p. 88).

In addition, another advantage of open-ended questions as described by Patton (2002) is that open-ended responses oftentimes provide detailed responses that allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participant’s world. The ability to guide the interview with open-ended questions allows for flexibility if any questions should arise due to the responses of the participants (Merriam, 2009). Table 3.2 illustrates how data collection procedures were used to answer the research questions guided by Yosso’s (2005) framework.

Each interview (see Appendix F for the interview guide) lasted no more than 90 minutes, which assisted the participants in providing thoughtful responses and not

becoming burnt out from being interviewed. According to Seidman (2006), interviewing longer than 90 minutes could result in burnout and possibly effect results negatively through diminished responses and “unraveling the interview process” (p. 21). Due to the nature of the focused interview, I met with the participants over the course of three months. Each of the two interviews followed an interview guide derived from the phenomenon researched (Yin, 2009). Both the initial and follow up interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and stored as searchable electronic data using a self-created template in Excel for the purposes of data coding and analysis.

**Initial interview.** Initial interviews began in summer of 2017, immediately following participant recruitment. Initial interviews were conducted through mid-summer. Prior to the initial interview, the participants received an e-mail containing a pre-interview handout (see Appendix E) that served as a guide to understanding Yosso’s (2005) CCW model. The handout asked that each participant review and reflect on the forms of capital and what each form of capital meant to the participant and their practice. The purpose of the initial interview was to establish the context of the participant’s experience as a mentor and to reconstruct details of his or her experiences (Seidman, 2006).

**Follow up interview.** The follow up interview was necessary in order to capture any remaining, missed, or new thoughts, to ask new questions that had emerged from the initial interview, and to serve as a member check. For the purpose of the follow up interview, I transcribed the initial interview and analyzed the data before arranging the follow up interview. Participants were then asked to clarify and expand on responses from the initial interview. Questions included in the follow up interview centered on

strengths, weaknesses, and ideologies regarding their specific mentoring environment.

### **Archival Records**

Archival records are considered to be documents that are stable, unobtrusive, have broad coverage, are precise (Yin, 2009), and constitute sources of information that already exist outside of the proposed research study (Patton, 2002). According to Yin (2009), archival records can include service records, organizational records and survey data. I collected archival records for the purpose of adding an additional layer of analysis and to provide a better understanding of the mentoring programs from which the participants participated in. The collection of archival records provided a description of the mentoring programs, statistical information regarding student success rates, and allowed me to gain additional insight into certain mentoring experiences in relation to the participants. In addition, to make best use of the collected records, I utilized memo writing (Yin, 2009) to write comments and thoughts about the collected material. These comments and thoughts were used later as a method of triangulation in connection with my interviews. All archival records were collected from program websites as well as office visits and included booklets, flyers, and informational packets.

### **Field Notes**

I incorporated field notes as a part of my research. All notes were taken after each interview while the information was fresh. Field notes are considered another source of data collection in a naturalistic setting (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). According to Patton (2002), “field notes provide a description of observations” (p. 302) and are descriptive which allow the researcher to return to an observation later. My notes provided me with detailed information related to the context, setting, and what occurred

while interviewing participants including nonverbal communication and body language (Patton, 2002). Additionally, the notes provided clarity when reviewing the audio recordings and transcripts and served as a critical reference tool that allowed me the opportunity to revisit interviews when questions or concerns arose.

### **Researcher's Journal**

A researcher's journal is another instrument I elected to use during this dissertation study. The purpose of the researcher's journal is to document steps taken during the research process and capture descriptions of thoughts and questions that will arise during my interviews with the research participants, while making steps in the research process visible to the reader. According to Ortlipp (2008), the researcher's journal serves as a reflexive approach to qualitative data to make the researcher's experiences and thoughts visible during the analysis. The researcher's journal provided me with a method to document informal feedback, questions to consider for the follow up interviews, reflect and gauge my feelings regarding interviews and the study, ensured that my own opinions were minimized, and enhanced my ability to make informed decisions about the research process. As the researcher, I elected to reflect and write once a week as I visited and revisited my collected data. This practice allowed me to become more methodical and reflective as a researcher as well as to keep in mind the big picture as it related to the emergent themes and patterns.

**Table 3.2***Data Collection Methods Relationship to Research Questions*

<b>Data Collected</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	
Individual and follow up interviews, field notes, and researcher's journal	<b>RQ1:</b> What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students?	
	<b>Theoretical Framework/Purpose</b>	
Individual and follow up interviews, archival records, field notes, and researcher's journal	Community Cultural Wealth Forms of capital brought by the mentee and utilized to support mentoring relationships (Yosso, 2005)	1.) Describe mentor's mentoring background 2.) Describe mentoring experiences 3.) Discuss the six forms of capital
	<b>RQ2:</b> How can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning?	
Individual and follow up interviews, field notes, and researcher's journal	<b>Purpose</b>	
	Forms of capital used as tools identified in interviews, records, and notes that may not be apparent.	
Individual and follow up interviews, field notes, and researcher's journal	<b>RQ3:</b> What role does Community Cultural Wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship?	
	<b>Purpose</b>	
	Forms of capital used as tools identified in interviews and field notes that may not be apparent.	

**Trustworthiness**

In order to strengthen the validity of the research, Creswell (2009) provides eight different strategies that can be employed including: triangulation, member checks, utilization of rich descriptions to convey one's findings, clarifying the researcher's subjectivity, presenting negative information, use of prolonged time in the field, use of a peer debriefing, and use of an external auditor to check data. For this study, thick rich

descriptions, bracketing, triangulation, and member checks were used to ensure trustworthiness.

### **Thick, Rich Descriptions**

Thick, rich descriptions provide readers the opportunity of study transferability due to the detailed descriptions provided about the participants and setting (Creswell, 2013). Given that my primary source of data collection for this study was participant interviews, the utilization of thick, rich descriptions became my primary tool for ensuring trustworthiness. This was accomplished by providing complete mentoring descriptions of each participant. In addition, I described in detail each subtheme and tool that emerged from the analysis. I then made connections between subthemes, tools, and participants by using their statements to support my interpretations of the data. This allows the reader the opportunity to decide whether the results have the ability to become transferable to other circumstances. Since I maintained detailed field notes and a researcher's journal, I was able to provide thorough descriptions, which enhanced the transferability of my findings.

### **Bracketing**

Trustworthiness was also established by bracketing my own subjectivity. Given my previous history with various community and academic mentoring programs, I felt that bracketing was necessary since I have a wealth of knowledge pertaining to the field. This previous knowledge afforded me the opportunity to bring a different perspective to the study, which is affirmed by Creswell (2009) as he states, "good qualitative research contains comments by the researchers about how their interpretation of the findings is shaped by their background such as gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin" (p.192). I identified and bracketed out my preconceived perceptions in order to ensure

authenticity and accuracy of the data collected. Bracketing ensured that I was able to represent the experiences of the participants and not my own. This was achieved by bracketing regularly through my researcher's journal entries that I revisited weekly. Following and applying the steps identified by Ahern (1999) to my researcher's journal entries, I bracketed by identifying my research interests that are taken for granted; clarified and acknowledged my personal value systems, identified areas of role conflict; identified gate keepers and their interests; recognized my own feelings that can cause a lack of neutrality; asked myself if there was something new or surprising in the data that I had collected or analyzed; recognized road blocks and created a backup plan to work around those blocks; reflected on the data analysis write up; reviewed the literature and checked if the supporting evidence in the literature supported the findings; and reanalyzed the transcripts and data analysis once biases were recognized.

### **Triangulation**

Creswell (2009) posits that researchers use triangulation, or draw on multiple sources and methods, to confirm and support the data findings. To confirm trustworthiness, I used triangulation, which was achieved by drawing from the following forms of data: audio-recorded interviews, interview transcripts, archival records, field notes, and my researcher's journal (see figure 3.2). Sources were compared against each other to validate findings, which emerged from the data.

One-on-One Semi-structured Interview	Archival Records	Researcher's Journal	Field Notes
2 60-to-90 minute individual interviews 	Collected prior to the interviews 	Record important notes, ideas, and reflections revisited once a week 	Taken after completion of each interview 
Audio recorded 	Printouts 	Digital file (computer) 	Non digital file (notebook) 

*Figure 3.2 Detailed Illustration of Data Collected for Triangulation*

### **Member Checks**

According to Erlandson et al. (1993), member checks allow the participant to verify that both the data and interpretation of the data is valid. Member checks were used to ensure accuracy of transcripts and to ensure the credibility of the participants' experiences. I provided each participant with a copy of their individual transcript from the initial interview by e-mail along with instructions to review the transcript to ensure accuracy and to respond with comments and feedback so that I was able to appropriately represent their experiences in the study. All eight participants responded. Five of the participants had no additional feedback and confirmed that the transcript information was correct. The remaining three participants provided only minor edits, which were discussed during the follow up interview to ensure that I accurately represented their experiences.

In addition to the initial member check, a secondary check was conducted after all data analysis and interpretation of the results had been completed. Participants were e-mailed their participant profile as well as their individual emerging themes identified in the study. The participants were asked to review the participant portraits, emergent

theme, and characteristics to ensure accuracy of the interpretation of data I presented. All of the eight participants agreed with their participant portraits and individual data interpretation. Only one provided minor edits to their participant profile.

### **Data Analysis**

Immersing myself in the data was essential to the qualitative research process (Patton, 2002). All collected data from initial interviews and follow up interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed. In addition, all archival records, researcher journal entries, and field notes were digitally stored and used for additional layers of analysis and understanding. Following Taylor Powell and Renner's (2003) method for qualitative data analysis, I familiarized and completely immersed myself in the collected data by transcribing all interviews, reading and rereading through the transcripts; reviewing the collected archival records, my researcher's journal, and my field notes. From this process, themes began to emerge with the initial reading and rereading of each transcript and as suggested by Creswell (2007):

Data analysis in the qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., as transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. (p. 148)

Data immersion became critical to this phenomenological study as it provided me with the ability to methodically read, reflect, and write about the lived experiences so that the data begins to transform textually and the essence of their experiences are captured (van Manen, 1990). Through the immersion of data, I was able to gain a better insight into the

lived experiences of the Latinx mentors and therefore accurately capture the essence of their experiences.

Following the data immersion, I drew upon my conceptual framework in order to focus my analysis. Known as a typological analysis (Hatch, 2002), I utilized an open coding procedure and divided the data into categories based on the predetermined six forms of capital typologies. The division of data by typology, allowed me to review all responses and identify consistencies and differences among participants. Once I completed the data focus and typology coding, I began to assign meaning to the data by documenting common themes that were related to the interview questions and the forms of capital identified in the responses of the participants, archival material collected, and notes taken during interviews. Table 3.3 provides a representation of the initial coding analysis matrix used for individual responses.

**Table 3.3***Example of Initial Coding Matrix for Individual Responses*

	A Capital	B Q#	C Question	D Quote	E Coding Categories
1	ASPIRATIONAL	Q1	When you read about aspirational capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?	I think this one shows up a lot when working with my DACA students. What are their <u>hopes</u> and <u>dreams</u> for their education and future. Um we talk a lot about plan b and plan c if things happen in order for them to be able to realize some sort of dream. There is a dream we know if this happens we can't do that but what if this happens. Granted if the dream means I just want to remain in the states or if the dream is I want to <u>progress</u> in my education you are going to have to <u>set up those processes in place to continue your education.</u> (207-212)	Hope (H); Dreams (D); Motivation (M)
2				We talk about <u>hopes</u> and <u>dreams</u> and um <u>we go hard on outlining different plans that will help them get there</u> so they don't feel like their spirit is diminished. (214-216)	Hope (H); Dreams (D); Motivation (M)
3		Q2	Tell me how the role of aspirational capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all.	I think part of it is um its interesting because people also ask me about my style when I mentor its <u>intrusive</u> and <u>aggressive</u> . There are moments and times my mentees realize the nature of the society we live in and its very different when I was in college but its very different. (212-214)	Intrusive(IN); Aggressive (AG)
4		Q3	Are there certain aspirational type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?		

I continued this intensive process until all subthemes emerged from the data for each participant. Once all individual subthemes emerged, I then collectively grouped (Hatch, 2002) the subthemes into categories that represented connections and patterns within and between each subtheme. These aggregated categories ultimately became the overarching theme of the study. Table 3.4 provides a representation of the final coding analysis matrix used for the collective responses.

**Table 3.4***Example of Final Coding Matrix for Collective Responses*

A	B	C	D	E	F
1 Capital	Q#	Question	Coding Categories	Emerging Subthemes	Overarching Theme/Super Categories
2 ASPIRATIONAL	Q1	When you read about aspirational capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?	Positivity (P); Encouragement (E); Inspiration (I); Hope (H); Dreams (D); Progress (PR); Motivation (M); Support (S)	Positivity (P); Hope (H);	Compassion Capital
	Q2	Tell me how the role of aspirational capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all.	Inspiration (I); Positivity (P); Hope (H); Progress (PR); Hope (H); Inspiration (I); Hope (H); Dreams (D); Hope (H); Progress (P)		
	Q3	Are there certain aspirational type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?	Hope (H); Positivity (P); Resources (RS); Motivation (M); Relateable (R); Hope (H); Dreams (D); Hope (H); Resources (RS); Motivation (M); Intrusive (IN); Aggressive (AG)		
	Q4	Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital?	Positivity (P)		
	Q5	Do you consider your aspirational capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe.	Encouragement (E); Inspiration (I); Resources (RS); Relateable (R); Inspiration (I)		

The last step in the analysis process was for me to interpret the data and use my emergent overarching themes to explain my findings by utilizing excerpts to support the analysis (Taylor Powell & Renner, 2003). I utilized verbatim quotes however, conversational fillers such as “um,” “uh,” and “like” were omitted.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Several delimitations and limitations did arise during the course of this study. Specifically, four delimitations emerged from this study and two limitations. The following sections describe both the delimitations and limitations in detail.

## **Delimitations**

**Participants.** As discussed by Creswell (2009), delimitations establish the boundaries for a qualitative study and limit the study to only those participants who meet the specific criteria of the study. The intent of this study was to capture the lived experiences of Latinx mentors from public, postsecondary institutions and the role of CCW in their mentoring relationships with Latinx college students. Therefore, ensuring that I delimited my research to those who meet the stated criteria (as previously noted in the participant selection section) ensured that I, as the researcher controlled the sample population (Mauch & Birch, 1993). Results had the potential to vary in the study if participants were selected from private or small universities.

**Institutional difference.** In relation to university degree offerings, another factor to consider is that I delimited the study to only four-year public institutions. Had I considered community colleges, vocational schools, or other types of continuing education institutions for this particular study, the results may have varied.

**Location of the study.** In addition, another delimitation found is this study was the location in which the study occurred, that being Central Texas. Had I delimited the study to all of Texas, another region of the state, or nationwide, results had the potential to vary due to the changing demographic.

**Theoretical framework.** Lastly, the theoretical lens in which I selected delimited my study. Had I chosen a different lens to view the experiences of the Latinx mentor, the study may have yielded different findings.

## **Limitations**

**Length of the interview.** I chose to interview participants for 60-to-90 minutes. In doing so, I needed to remain conscientious of their time commitments so that interviews did not run over their allotted time and potentially interfere with other previously scheduled time commitments. Being conscientious of my participants' time afforded me the opportunity to gain their trust in my professionalism. This trust assisted in scheduling follow up interviews, which required an additional 60-to-90 minutes of their time.

**Sample size.** Qualitative research focuses in on the experiences of a small set of individuals so that the researcher is able to understand the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2003). While my study design created opportunities for investigating the lived experiences of Latinx mentors, the phenomenological design of this dissertation study called for a small sample size.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are vital to a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, it was necessary that I sought IRB approval prior to conducting my study (see Appendix A for IRB approval letter). By gaining approval from the IRB during the spring 2017 semester, I ensured that the study's participants and the institution were protected. In addition, I ensured that the necessary research protocol steps were taken that satisfied all IRB requirements.

## **Informed Consent**

Prior to the start of the initial interview, signed informed consent was obtained from each of the eight participants (see Appendix F) and included information regarding their rights:

- The purpose of the study and the use of the results will be for a doctoral dissertation that will be made public.
- Confidentiality steps will be taken at all times to ensure that identifying data is not disclosed to the public.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect all research participants as well as the mentoring programs that they are affiliated with.
- Participation in this study is voluntary.
- Participants are free to withdraw from the study and discontinue participating in this interview at any time.
- Participants are free to answer all or none of the questions asked and only the information that they feel is appropriate or relevant to the study.

## **Confidentiality**

During the study, all data remained confidential. All paper files were stored in a locked file cabinet in my personal office and all electronic documents were password protected. In order to protect the identities of the participants, I assigned pseudonyms to each participant and institutions that they represented. The pseudonyms were also used to label interview transcripts, audio recording, and archival records. After completion of the study, all transcripts, archival records, field notes, researcher's journal, and audio-recordings were destroyed.

## **Chapter Summary**

In summary, this chapter provided a detailed description of the study's research methodology. A qualitative methodology approach was used to examine the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor and the role of CCW in their mentoring relationships. The participant size consisted of eight purposefully selected participants. The collection of data included semi-structured focused interviews that lasted between 60-to-90 minutes, archival records, researcher's journal, field notes, and analyzed using Taylor-Powell and Renner's (2003) qualitative data analysis method and Hatch's (2002) thematic analysis process. Trustworthiness was ensured by using rich, thick descriptions, bracketing, triangulation, and member checks. Delimitations associated with this study included, participants, institutional differences, location of the study, and the theoretical framework. Furthermore, limitations of this study included the time allotted to conduct the research and sample size. Lastly, the study followed an aggressive timeline. A copy of the timeline is included in Appendix H. Chapter IV shall present a review of the data collection procedures, a discussion of the institutional context of the universities represented by the participants, as well as a detailed description of each participant.

#### **IV. THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE LATINX MENTOR**

Before diving into the findings of this study, it is important to provide context to discern how the results were derived. All participants, organizations, departments, and institutions have been assigned pseudonyms in order to ensure their anonymity in the study as well as to ensure that their institutions cannot identify participants. The initial section of this chapter provides information regarding the demographic and qualifying survey tool used to identify the study's participants. The following section provides background regarding the institutions included in the study. The chapter then concludes with individual participant portraits detailing their mentoring background, experiences, and strengths.

##### **Data Collection Review**

The purpose of this research was to illuminate the voices of the Latinx mentor and better understand the role of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) in their mentoring relationships. Specifically, the study provided insight into how Latinx mentors perceived their impact on the lives of their mentees as well as provided insight into policies and practice that develop and guide mentoring programs. Utilizing a phenomenological approach and purposive sampling, eight participants were selected to participate in the study. Each participant completed a demographic and qualifying survey and participated in two focused, open-ended, semi-structured interviews which Merriam (2014) indicates as crucial to collect information that is not directly observable. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the provisions set forth by the Texas State Institutional Review Board.

## **Participant Demographic and Qualifying Survey**

As part of the data collection process, participants were first asked to complete a brief demographic and qualifying survey (see Appendix D), which consisted of 12 questions (see table 4.1 for participant breakdown). The demographic and qualifying survey was e-mailed to each respondent who was interested in participating in the study. The results of the survey generated eight participants from various Texas public universities. In addition, results of the survey yielded additional data, which became useful in understanding each participant's mentoring and professional background.

Each of the participants self-identified as a mentor outside their professional role for at least five years and indicated that they had mentored Latinx students. The age characteristics of the group included a variance of those in their late 20s to those who are in their mid-40s. A gender diverse sample of participants was recruited as I obtained an equal representation of four female participants and four male participants. In addition, the participants represented a wide spectrum of professional backgrounds including research assistants to director of public programs at all four of the universities previously identified for the study; accordingly, the final sample was comprised of three participants from Alpha University, two participants from Bravo University, two participants from Charlie University, and one participant from Delta University.

All survey data collected aligned with necessary criteria to answer the three research questions: 1.) What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students? 2.) How can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning? 3.) What

role does Community Cultural Wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship?

**Table 4.1**

*Demographic and Qualifying Survey Results*

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Professional Title	Mentor	5+ years as a Mentor	Mentor Latinx College Students
Br-Bromine	Male	26-30	Program Coordinator	✓	✓	✓
He-Helium	Female	31-35	Student Affairs Specialist	✓	✓	✓
Li-Lithium	Female	41-45	Advisor	✓	✓	✓
N-Nitrogen	Male	35-40	Grant Officer	✓	✓	✓
F-Fluorine	Female	31-35	Student Affairs Specialist	✓	✓	✓
Be-Beryllium	Female	-	Program Director	✓	✓	✓
H-Hydrogen	Male	26-30	Researcher	✓	✓	✓
C-Carbon	Male	35-40	Program Coordinator	✓	✓	✓

### **Institutional Context**

Alpha and Bravo Universities are both public, four-year, predominately White, research institutions located in Texas. Both universities have similar student enrollment demographics. According to 2016 data reported by Alpha University's Office of Institutional Reporting, Research, and Information Systems there were over 51,000 students enrolled. Of the enrollment, 43 percent identified as White, 20 percent identified as Latinx, 4 percent identified as Black, and 18 percent identified as Asian. According to 2016 data reported by Bravo University's Office of Accountability, there were over 66,000 students enrolled. Of the enrollment, 58 percent identified as White, 20 percent

identified as Latinx, 4 percent identified as Black, and 6 percent identified as Asian.

Charlie and Delta Universities are both public, four-year, Hispanic-serving institutions located in Texas. Both universities have similar student enrollment demographics. According to 2016 data reported by Charlie University's Office of Institutional Research, there were nearly 30,000 students enrolled. Of the enrollment, 26 percent identified as White, 51 percent identified as Latinx, 9 percent identified as Black, and 5 percent identified as Asian. According to 2016 data reported by Delta University's Office of Institutional Research, there were nearly 40,000 students enrolled. Of the enrollment, 48 percent identified as White, 35 percent identified as Latinx, 11 percent identified as Black, and 3 percent identified as Asian. Table 4.2 depicted below provides institutional enrollment demographics for all four universities.

**Table 4.2**

*Institutional Demographics-Enrollment*

<i>Institutional Demographics-Enrollment</i>	<b>Alpha University</b>	<b>Bravo University</b>	<b>Charlie University</b>	<b>Delta University</b>
<b>Total Student Enrollment</b>	51,331	66,425	28,959	38,808
<b>White Student Enrollment</b>	43%	58%	26%	48%
<b>Latinx Student Enrollment</b>	20%	20%	51%	35%
<b>Black Student Enrollment</b>	4%	4%	9%	11%
<b>Asian Student Enrollment</b>	18%	6%	5%	3%

*Source: University Institutional Reporting Departments*

The interviews with the Latinx mentors provided important contextual details regarding the Latinx community at each university. Table 4.3 and 4.4 provide institutional faculty and staff demographics for all four universities. According to Office

of Institutional Reporting, Research, and Information Systems, 20 percent of students enrolled at Alpha University identify as Latinx, in comparison to the 8 percent faculty and 20 percent staff who identify as Latinx. According to the Office of Accountability, 20 percent of students enrolled at Bravo University, identify as Latinx, in comparison to the 6 percent faculty and 13 percent staff who identify as Latinx.

According to the Office of Institutional Research, 51 percent of students enrolled at Charlie University identify as Latinx, in comparison to the 18 percent faculty and 34 percent staff who identify as Latinx. According to the Office of Institutional Research, 35 percent of students enrolled at Delta University identify as Latinx, in comparison to the 22 percent faculty and 22 percent staff who identify as Latinx. The comparison in enrollment, faculty, and staff populations illustrate that the Latinx community at the four Texas institutions provides a unique look at the unfamiliar campus environment Latinx students face when attending college and finding cultural connections that can positively affect their collegiate experience.

**Table 4.3**

*Institutional Demographics-Faculty*

<b>Characteristic</b>	<i>Institutional Demographics-Faculty</i>			
	<b>Alpha University</b>	<b>Bravo University</b>	<b>Charlie University</b>	<b>Delta University</b>
<b>Total Faculty</b>	3,128	4,971	1,396	1,936
<b>White Faculty</b>	77%	61%	54%	64%
<b>Latinx Faculty</b>	8%	6%	18%	22%
<b>Black Faculty</b>	4%	3%	4%	4%
<b>Asian Faculty</b>	11%	9%	11%	4%

*Source: University Institutional Reporting Departments*

**Table 4.4***Institutional Demographics-Staff*

<b>Characteristic</b>	<i>Institutional Demographics-Staff</i>			
	<b>Alpha University</b>	<b>Bravo University</b>	<b>Charlie University</b>	<b>Delta University</b>
<b>Total Staff</b>	11,237	6,816	4,058	5,348
<b>White Staff</b>	65%	70%	45%	63%
<b>Latinx Staff</b>	20%	13%	34%	22%
<b>Black Staff</b>	6%	7%	5%	5%
<b>Asian Staff</b>	7%	7%	6%	7%

*Source: University Institutional Reporting Departments*

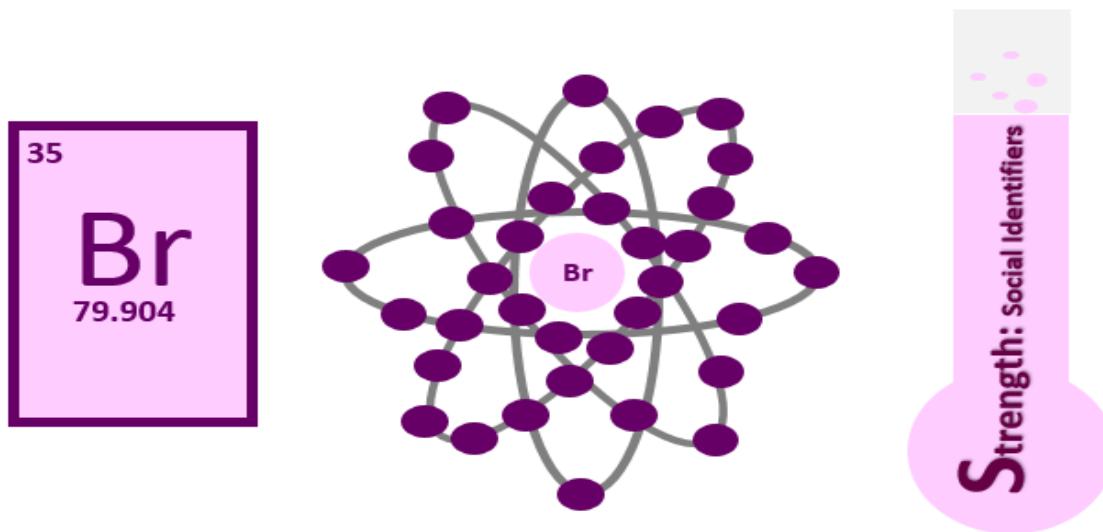
### Mentoring Programs

A diverse selection of mentoring programs were associated to the mentors who participated in this dissertation study. The programs which represented the mentors' association met the following criteria to be included in this dissertation study: mentoring programs supported by four year public institutions located in Texas; have functioning and sustainable formal mentoring programs; utilize formal mentors who volunteer their mentoring expertise outside their professional roles; have been in operation for at least five years, have the ability to demonstrate program achievement through documented academic student retention and persistence rates; and lastly serve college students including Latinx students (inclusive of all genders) . Utilizing archival records that included general programmatic information, statistical metrics, annual reports, and student achievement records, the mentoring programs were confirmed to have met the study's qualifying criteria.

In the following section, I present the individual experiences of the participants. I will introduce each section with the participant's pseudonym and a picture that represents their mentoring identity. I have selected to use periodic elements as a way to represent each participant. Elements were chosen, as they are most known for forming bonds, which is what mentors do with their mentees. Next, I provide a brief narrative of the participant and include information regarding their mentoring experience including their perceived benefits and challenges gathered from each experience that was shared.

### Participant Portraits

#### Bromine-Br



*Figure 4.1* Bromine Representative Illustration

Bromine, a mentor for nearly six years currently serves as a program coordinator for a large statewide mentoring program that focuses on the educational success of men of color in high school and throughout college. Although, Bromine has worked students representing all races, he does continue to work with Latinx male college students. Bromine's role is to guide students toward a path of success and to be someone "who has

your best interest at heart.” Serving as a mentor for Latinx college students, Bromine has worked towards refining his mentoring abilities through the development of cultural competency skills and student development theories that focus on the persistence of first year college students. Mentoring over 30 college students, Bromine approaches mentoring through a social, emotional, and cultural lens utilizing cultural and social identifiers as a way to build trust and nurture a mentoring relationship as Bromine states,

There were some other students who would ask for advice on how to transition to college. Or, they are a student of color and I was a student of color, you know.

What are maybe some things we both struggled with so I would say that from my very first position as a college student being a mentor for freshman all the way to now, to being a full-time staff member and even though in my job description currently doesn’t officially say to mentor anyone. I still mentor grad students, undergrads, and even younger staff members...I know that in some of the mentoring relationships I’ve had closer connections to students who maybe we have very similar background, maybe we were the same sex that would help, but even same culture, same hometown. Just because we have those same experiences, which I think is really an easy way to connect to someone and some of the students who I maybe mentored...

Bromine’s path as a mentor has been abundant and filled with numerous experiences that have assisted in the development of him as a mentor. Bromine has learned a lot about himself as an individual and a professional. The reciprocal process of the relationships and unique mentoring experiences have yielded insights into his own “career trajectory and research interests” as well as the “kinds of the students, the kind of

people I want to work with; the kinds of issues I want to focus on.” Most of Bromine’s mentoring relationships have yielded positive experiences and benefits. Bromine enjoys the ability to see his students succeed and aspire to reach their goals. One of his fondest mentoring memories included being witness to his mentee “develop as a student as a leader, you know, and now as a graduate from this institution.” However, mentoring does not come without its own set of challenges. According to Bromine,

Some of the challenges definitely are about that generation gap. It can be seen in the room, sometimes, the students might just see me as another authority figure or like a teacher. They might not care as much or they might not see me as someone that can really influence them or really be a mentor to them.

Challenges and achievements go hand in hand as a mentor, and Bromine’s shared experiences can attest to his own resiliency as a mentor and the ability to keep mentoring despite challenges and obstacles that are presented.

**Summary.** Bromine’s narrative provides a glimpse into the experiences of a Latinx mentor as well as his approach towards mentoring Latinx students. Through his lens, mentoring is an avenue for helping Latinx students reach their goals and achieve their dreams. By working specifically with males of color and in particular Latinx males, Bromine speaks about the significance of social and cultural encouragement as a way to build trust and respect with the mentee. He also alludes to the reciprocal tendencies of the mentoring relationship. Not only does Bromine have the ability to teach and guide students but he also learns from his mentees. With each mentoring relationship, Bromine is able to improve upon his own abilities so that he is better equipped to serve his mentees. Just as he remembers learning from his own mentors, Bromine wants to see the

potential in his mentees and push them harder to reach their goals.

### Helium-He

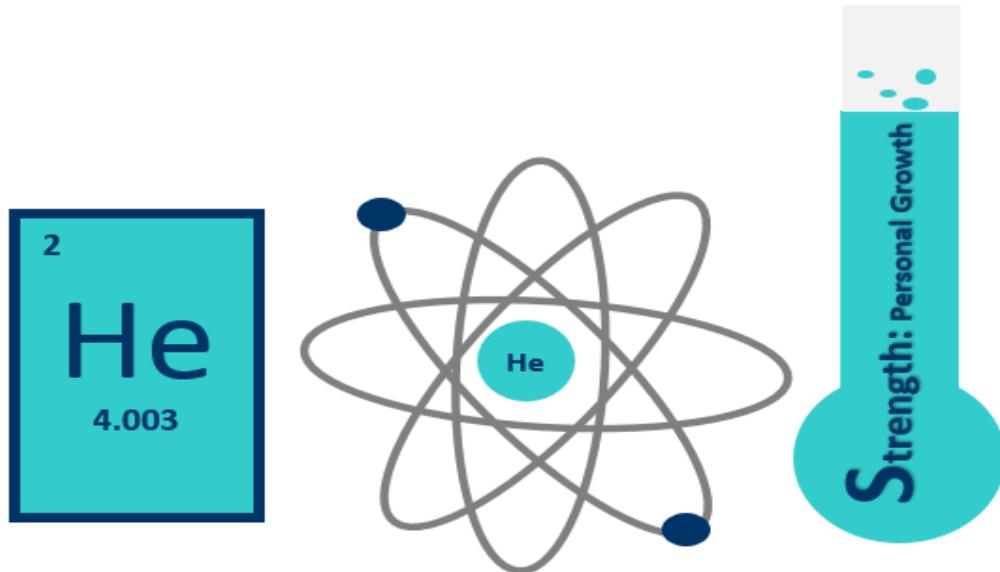


Figure 4.2 Helium Representative Illustration

Helium, a student affairs specialist has been working with college students in one capacity or another for more than eight years. Helium has mentored through various university programs for freshman, athletes, and Latinx sorority members. In particular, Helium has and continues to mentor Latinx college females. Helium views the role of a mentor as a way to “really to support and encourage...to grow really to grow that other person.” Serving as a mentor, Helium has worked towards refining her own set of mentoring skills through her degree and her current position as a student affairs specialist. In addition, she has learned from her own mentors, how to “be a great mentor” as her own mentoring relationships in which she was the mentee have “shown me and prepared me. What I want to be and as a mentor because I receive that and understand the value of that and I want to be able to pay that forward.” Mentoring more than 10 students, Helium approaches her role as a mentor through a personal-growth lens, focusing on growing the

mentee socially and emotionally by overcoming obstacles that might occur outside of the academic environment. For Helium, mentoring is more than academics, it can be helping a mentee gain new freedoms such as learning how to drive,

...I taught her how to drive. Like she didn't know how to drive. We were talking over lunch and she was like, "I have this issue happen at home and I felt stranded and I couldn't get anywhere." It wasn't a very safe situation. I was like "oh my gosh, why couldn't you get away?" and she was like well "I don't know how to drive." And so, I taught her how to drive.

Or building a strong foundation that eventually transitions into more than a mentoring relationship but a lasting friendship,

One turned out to be one of my best friends. I was her maid of honor at her wedding. But you know, I have been invited to a lot of personal celebrations for mentees that I have had. Whether that be a graduation, getting married, or celebrating the growth of their family. I don't know, a relationship that may have started as one thing and then flourished.

Helium's journey as a mentor has also been filled with her share of positive experiences but also challenges. The more challenging mentoring experiences have centered on the idea of growing a person but being met with resistance along the way especially when challenging them as a "person, student, and member of community." For Helium, the biggest challenge comes in the form of separating herself from her personal and professional role where she finds herself at odds with a mentee who maybe mixed up in unhealthy or even illegal activities,

You try and you have these growth conversations and even you know relationships that become this “mentor relationship.” I’m advising them and even then, you talk to them and you’re like “you know it’s not healthy for you, you really shouldn’t do that.” At the end of the day, they are their own person and they are going to make whatever decision they want. And sometimes it’s good and sometimes, not so good.

Due to these challenges, Helium guards herself more in her mentoring approaches and how much of herself that she gives to the relationship. However, she also recognizes that her views regarding her approach towards mentoring relationships should be altered in order to better serve her mentees. Helium has realized that not all relationships can be treated the same. Learning this valuable lesson, finding her voice, and continuing to challenge her mentees has allowed Helium to grow as a mentor and to recognize that she can gain a lot from each relationship.

**Summary.** From Helium’s narrative, it becomes evident that mentoring is a way to support and encourage students and truly grow the mentee. In her role as a student affairs specialist, Helium has the ability to meet and form relationships with a diverse set of students from Latinx athletes to Latinx sorority members. Her role as a mentor for these students allows her the opportunity to give back and help others, as her mentors have helped her. Specifically, Helium ability as a mentor is to grow her mentees both socially and emotionally so that they become confident young adults ready and able to tackle the challenges that they may encounter in the future. Helium mentoring identity is more than one sided, although she assists with academic mentoring, her reach extends far beyond the classroom walls and into other environments that the mentee is involved in.

Through mentoring, Helium utilizes mentoring as a mechanism to pass along her own lessons learned in order to serve others.

### Lithium-Li

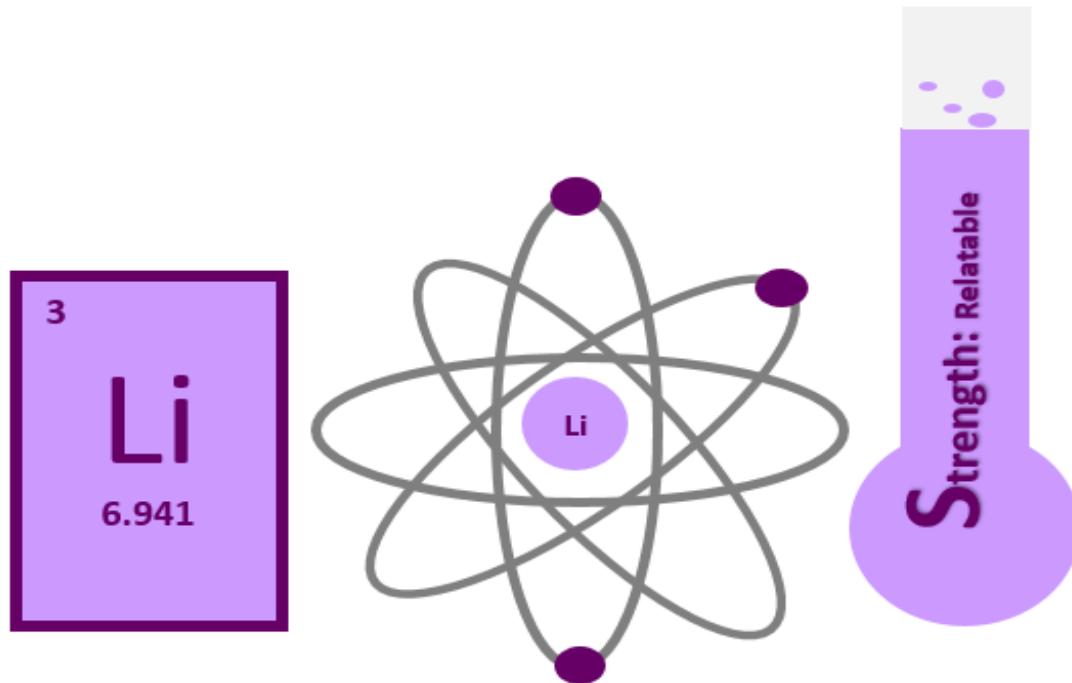


Figure 4.3 Lithium Representative Illustration

Lithium, an academic advisor has served as a mentor for over eight years. Lithium continues to mentor through an academic mentoring program that focuses on providing small college environment resources to students who attend large public universities. In particular, Lithium continues to mentor Latinx female college students. Lithium defines a mentor as a person who is “an advocate, a person who can guide, push, and be honest with another person in hopes of growing him or her.” In addition, Lithium also believes that a mentor is someone who is able to “look past just academics and be the kind of mentor needed by the mentee.” For Lithium, who has mentored for nearly a decade, she relies heavily on her own experiences as a way to relate to the mentee and help them with their own personal struggles regardless if they are academic or social. Her strength as a

mentor comes from her ability to relate to students on various levels for instance,

My last student [was] going through medical issue she decided to share with me what was going on and you know, I can't imagine being in her position, she's away from home. Being 18 or 19 and having to go through that. Having the doctor visits on her own and not having any of that support here. She had her friends but not anybody older. With her, I feel like we had a connection because I shared with her that I had breast cancer two years ago.

Regardless of the issue faced by the mentee, Lithium finds a way to connect and really cement the relationship with the mentee. For Lithium, the benefits outweigh the negative experiences that come with mentoring every so often. Lithium is able to relish in the joys of her students' accomplishments as she states,

I've worked with a lot of students that are pre-pharmacy and so they'll e-mail me because I'll tell them let me know, you know "did you get into pharmacy school?" I love getting those e-mails, they make my day and I'll e-mail them back because you know we worked on the plan together and you know you did all the hard work and stuff but the fruits of labor paid off, it's a good feeling.

However, as a mentor it is important to Lithium that she learn from her challenges as a way to improve her mentoring abilities. Challenges are more difficult to discuss for Lithium but she is able to share that through her challenges she has grown into a better mentor by learning from each unique experience,

You know there was a time when we were offered like two mentees for the semester and I think with the academic setting not getting involved in their personal life and separating that from whatever their issues are and not being

referred to as the proper place and sometimes they feel comfortable talking to you. A lot of times I think I don't want to know what's really going on or what's happening but "we do have resources for you, I'm sorry that this is happening but know that you can talk to or somebody that knows what's going on."

Learning and growing from these experiences, Lithium continues to mentor each semester. As a mentor, she now focuses on communication and ensuring that with her mentees, she is implicit about the relationship and the expectations of the mentee.

**Summary.** From her narrative, Lithium is a mentor who promotes a small-college feel on a campus that can be considered larger than some towns in Texas. Lithium is a well-established mentor and advisor. Her mentoring identity is firm but empathic as she guides students down the right path but chooses not to hold their hands. She relies heavily on her experiences as a way to bond with her mentees and develop trust. She recognizes the value in her experiences as they relate both culturally and academically to the experiences shared by her current mentees. Lithium embraces her role as a mentor and as a role model for her mentees and understands the importance of her role especially that a mentor is not a one size fits all and that her mentoring relationship and the type of mentor she is must be tailored to each mentee. Through mentoring, Lithium has gained a sort of satisfaction by helping others who she is able to identify with culturally and socially.

## Nitrogen-N

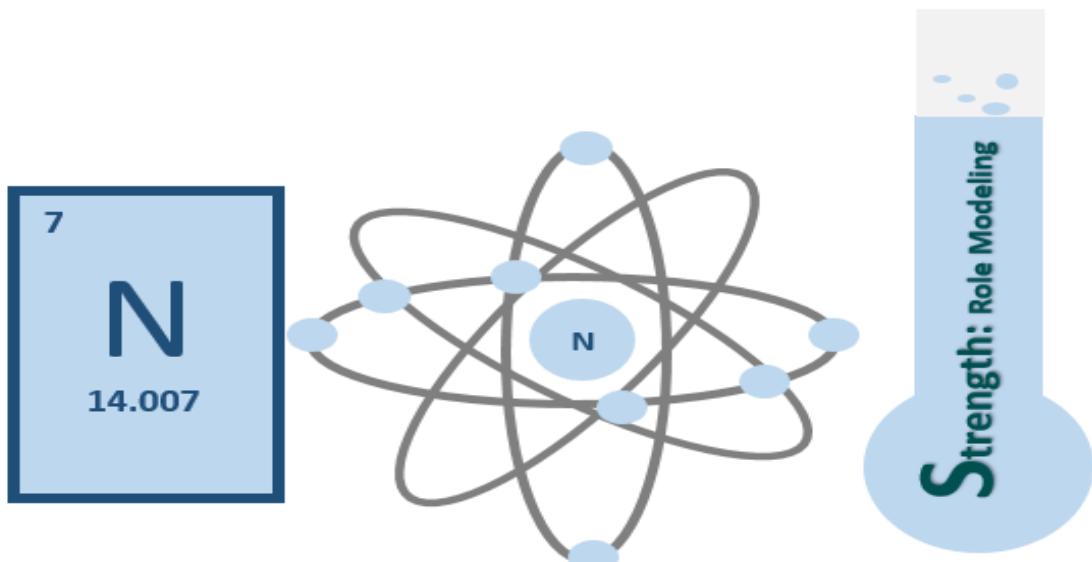


Figure 4.4 Nitrogen Representative Illustration

Nitrogen, a grant officer, has served as a mentor for nine years for a program that promotes vertical STEM mentorship opportunities for undergraduate students as well as local high school and middle school students. Although Nitrogen is a grant officer, he continues to mentor Latinx male middle school, high school, and college students.

Nitrogen defines a mentor as “someone who provides guidance to another person. Someone they can look up to, someone who is an example of success.” Nitrogen, who relies heavily on his own personal upbringing as a way to relate to his mentees believes that his similar background and his strengths provide a strong foundation for encouragement and resilience building for his mentees. He states,

...if you provide an example of success like I mentioned before I went to that same school as they did and now I am successful so they see it as it can be done regardless. I always tell them I came from the same school, I was raised by a single mother, she only spoke Spanish, so I had a lot of the same obstacles they

faced. I show them I went on and graduated... They see it as "I have similar obstacles and it's not going to hold me back."

For Nitrogen, being able to bond with his mentees in such a personal way instills a sense of trust that allows the relationship to flourish and grow.

Always cognizant of his role as a mentor and leader, Nitrogen draws on his own experiences to promote success with each of his mentees as well as the community of students at his institution and program. Reflecting on his experiences Nitrogen believes it is important to always be positive and promote professionalism in all his encounters with mentees as he states,

...I think when you come in as a professional you come in with power so these students are already looking up to you. You have to be careful on how you speak to them because you might say something negative that will influence them later on because they are looking up to you. If they see you being negative they think its ok to be negative. They look up to you and your position of power and everything you do. I always make sure to say positive things. Kind of like with my children, I always make sure of what I say and do if they see me doing it then they think its ok, "daddy is doing it so it's ok" same type of thing for the mentees. You're in a big brother role so everything you do is towards their goal so don't derail them.

Remaining aware of who you are and your role with the mentee is incredibly important to Nitrogen, as the role of the mentor can be powerful enough to either encourage or "derail" the mentees' aspirations and goals.

It is important to Nitrogen that he learn from his challenges as a way to improve his mentoring abilities. One of the most difficult challenges was keeping the mentee engaged throughout the course of the relationship as he states,

They needed a lot of motivation and encouragement in order to engage them.

They didn't really want to be there. Once you start engaging them and they start working on the projects, it was fun for them and they really caught on more. They would start coming back for the next sessions.

Through these experiences, Nitrogen has been able to grow into a better mentor and leader for his institution and local community. Due to mentoring, Nitrogen has found a way to give back to his communities and better himself along the way. Through continued mentoring opportunities, Nitrogen has devised ways to engage mentees so that the relationship is fruitful.

**Summary.** Nitrogen is a seasoned mentor whose portfolio of mentees is diverse and includes middle school, high school, and college students. For Nitrogen, mentoring serves as an outlet to stay involved in several communities in his life. He has based his mentoring beliefs on giving back and being a role model for those who share similar backgrounds as him. He affirms that mentoring allows him to show others that he understands and can empathize with their challenges and obstacles but still come out to be successful. Starting tips to taking a more active role in the student's life, Nitrogen soon realized that his own story of struggles and success could be used as a best practice in mentoring. His belief stems from his own undergraduate days when he learned that his education provided him with a responsibility to fight injustices so that the world becomes a better place.

## Fluorine-F

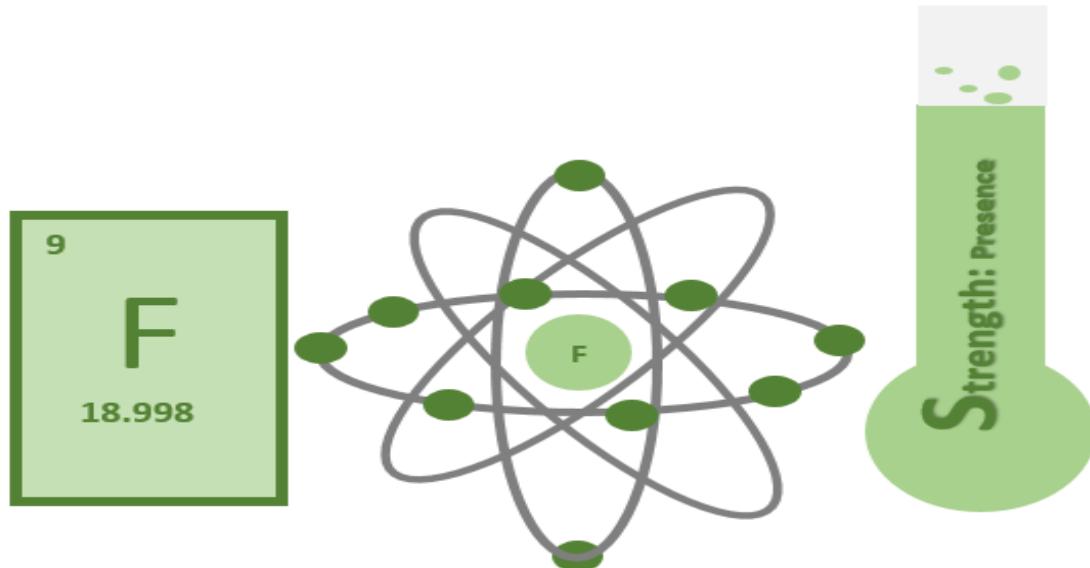


Figure 4.5 Fluorine Representative Illustration

Fluorine, a student affairs specialist, has served as a mentor for more than five years at various Texas institutions. Working in student affairs, Fluorine has chosen to mentor students so that she can become a better student affairs practitioner. In particular, Fluorine continues to mentor Latinx college students. Fluorine defines a mentor as “someone that is not bashful but just without prompting, offers guidance, offers support, offers advice.” For Fluorine, mentoring is not defined by a single label but is comprised of someone who,

...offers themselves in a way that they are not looking for anything in return but want to make sure that those around them can find their way, establish themselves, establish a legacy of them, what they hope to leave or create in their lives.

Through this perspective, Fluorine believes her role as a mentor is to challenge the mentee to “think critically about what the issue is that they are navigating.”

Fluorine's most successful mentoring relationships involve being present and nurturing relationships into long lasting connections. Fluorine believes that mentoring is a gateway into the mentee's life and that truly successful mentoring relationship involve more than just scheduled meetings but the building of long lasting relationships as she states,

...when a student sees you as a mentor they keep you up to date with what they are doing because they see you as someone that in the future "no matter what I'm doing they are going to be there." ... These students are like "come to my graduation" and it was in May in Nacogdoches. Obviously, it means a lot to them that they are reaching out. Same thing here, when I leave I have freshman already asking will I be here when they graduate. I'm like "yeah, I'll be here, we will make that happen." But, also reminding them, I'm only a text away or e-mail away.

Fluorine recalls from these experiences that being can truly affect the mentees life especially for those who do not have necessary support at home, school, or in their local community. However, Fluorine understands that with mentoring there will always be challenges. Some of the most difficult challenges have been working with mentees who approach the relationship with skepticism and challenge the continued advice that you provide as she states,

There's one example where it was a Latino male student who came up through the ranks of a student organization that I advise, but he was skeptical of me, skeptical of the office, and the way the office supported the work that I do and the work that they do. He didn't take into consideration these individuals and how the

students perceive the individuals. With students, while I perceived it as a struggle advising this student because he asked a lot of questions he was hesitant, resistant to my advice. He would always come back because he knew that when he asked me questions and I responded with questions that I was challenging him and helping him to think more critically about programs or decisions. We would often talk about career choices, classes he was taking, people he was speaking to. To me I felt like it was difficult but at the very end he came back and thanked me, he was like “I thank you for the mentorship. I know that you’re just trying to challenge me to think critically about what I am trying to do.” I appreciated that the fact that it’s not always going to be easy when you mentor and the students have just as many questions for us as we have with them.

The challenges have provided Fluorine with a way to grow herself as a mentor. She understands the complexities of mentoring relationships and as a result devised approaches for mentees who are facing challenging issues. Through introspection, which she sees as one of the best benefits of mentoring, Fluorine is able to cultivate her mentoring skills so that the next mentee is better served than the last.

**Summary.** Fluorine has mentored students across the state of Texas at various institutions of higher learning. Fluorine, a student affairs practitioner, elected to become mentor so that she could improve her own professional development skills as a student affairs practitioner. Mentoring is an avenue that allows Fluorine the ability to bond with students who have a hard time adjusting to their current environments and who are looking for a familiar face. Fluorine realizes the value of her cultural ethnicity in her mentoring relationships and uses that value as motivation to encourage and improve the

lives of her mentees. She is a mentee who will ask questions to get her mentees to think critically about themselves, their work, institution, and the spaces they enter. Through mentoring, Fluorine combats social injustices and helps her mentees become resilient and proud of who they are.

### Beryllium-Be

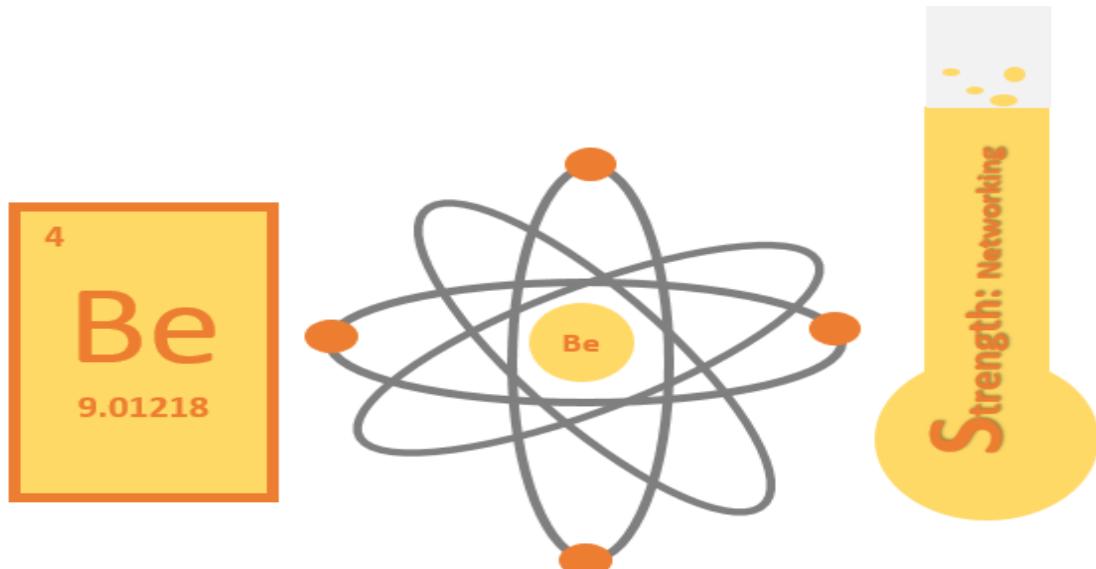


Figure 4.6 Beryllium Representative Illustration

Beryllium, a program director has served as a mentor to high school and college students for more than five years at various institutions in Texas. Working in higher education for more than 15 years, Beryllium mentors so that she can connect with students to offer guidance, support and encouragement in order for the mentees to achieve their goals. In particular, Beryllium continues to mentor Latinx female students. For Beryllium, she defines mentoring as both formal and informal. Formal mentoring involves a more structured relationship where the mentor is there to “guide you” and to grow “professionally, help you network, and help you make connections that you might not otherwise make.” Informal mentoring involves “a relationship that evolves that this person is helping to guide you to help learn things avoid making mistakes.” Beryllium

sees her role as an “opportunity to help them see beyond what their circumstances are.”

For Beryllium, her similar background and upbringing provides her with a strong

foundation for building a relationship with her mentees as she states,

Especially if you’re first generation maybe your family hasn’t traveled down that road or you don’t have a lot of people in your circle or community that are professionals it’s good to know and hear that “hey we all put our pants on one leg at a time.” I really think it’s powerful for young people to hear that or to learn about your own struggles. To know that and to hear that everyone has their own struggles. Here are some ways I overcame mine; here are some possibilities for you. Just helping them know that life happens to everybody, here are some ways you can get up when life happens.

Benefits such as these continue to drive Beryllium to keep mentoring. However, as a

seasoned mentor, she has also faced significant challenges as she states,

She was undocumented and may have felt that she had few options. She got pregnant and didn’t continue with her education though she did get a high school certificate. It didn’t end up working out for her, her dream of becoming a firefighter. She didn’t communicate a whole lot. She was very quiet. I hope that her journey will take a turn so that she realizes her dreams one day.

In particular, this experience relates to a high school student she mentored which had a significant impact on her experiences as a mentor. Challenges such as this have had a lasting impact on Beryllium. However, learning from these challenges, Beryllium really strives to help students continue their education so that they become “equipped to provide for themselves.” In the end, it is the hope that “some of the work, some of the words, you

hope that it sticks" so that the mentees are better equipped to make choices that will positively affect the rest of their lives.

**Summary.** From her narrative, Beryllium is a person who lives and breathes mentoring through her work, her community, and in her professional organizations. Her definition of mentoring clearly points out the importance of formal and informal mentoring and the value that each type brings into a mentoring relationship. From providing structure and rules to being open and compassionate, Beryllium is able to influence the lives of her mentees academically, professionally, socially, and emotionally. She understands that hope is critical to mentoring relationships. Through hope and intentionality, Beryllium instills the belief of possibility in all her mentees.

### Hydrogen-H

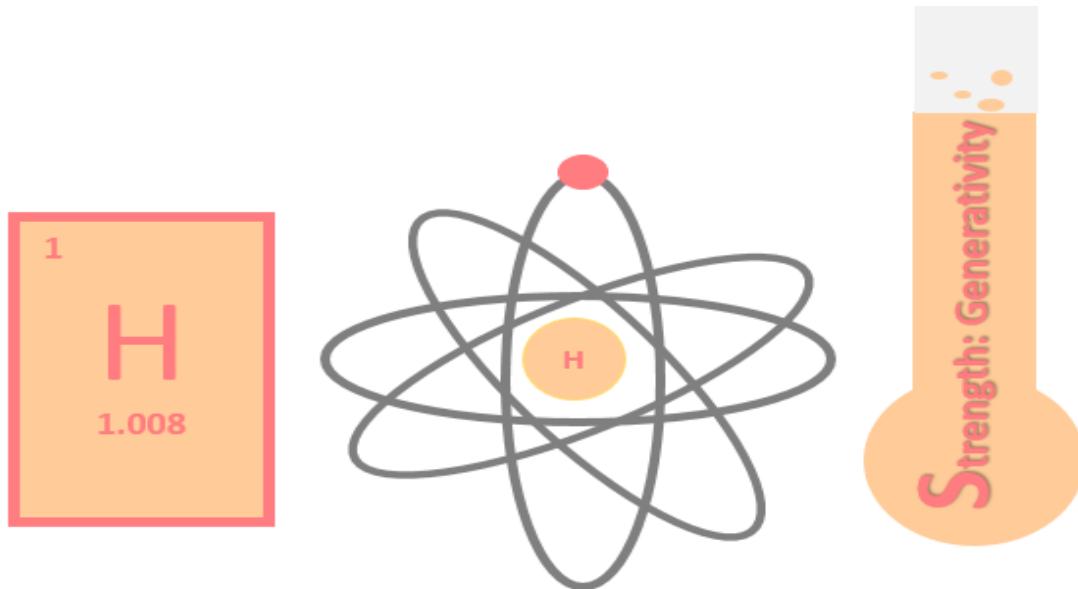


Figure 4.7 Hydrogen Representative Illustration

Hydrogen, a researcher, has served as a mentor for more than five years at various institutions in both California and Texas. Working in higher education, specifically with males of color. Hydrogen continues to have the opportunity to mentor undergraduate and

graduate Latinx college students. For Hydrogen, he defines mentoring as a way to “guide someone in their education and also give advice.” Hydrogen sees his role as “a friend, someone that they look up to someone that they refer to when they have a question or need something but most important it’s an extension of the family member.” For

Hydrogen, mentoring is a way to give back and help others like him as he states,

I actively pursued it...through the scholarship, you are encouraged to do that.

People ask you or see you doing certain things. They see you and ask “can you be my mentor?” I have countless experiences where people Facebook me, Snapchat me, or text me and ask me to be there mentor in this. I actively pursued it on my own for that same reason I have had opportunities to pursue and take the opportunity to pursue it. For me it’s when I was in your shoes I didn’t have that type of help. I don’t want them to look back and say “he could have helped and didn’t.”

Because of Hydrogen’s mentoring, long lasting bonds and friendships have formed.

These bonds and friendships act as another reason why he continues to mentor as he states,

The benefits have been friendship like a lifelong friendship. I have gained a friend by simply doing the right thing. By being there for someone. Did I expect it? No. Do I welcome it? Hell yeah! I think it’s great. These relationships can only grow... You know so I can see this relationship growing exponentially.

Benefits such as these continue to drive Hydrogen to keep mentoring. Hydrogen has faced significant challenges that have caused her to take the bad experiences as a way to learn and improve as he states,

You can only do so much for that person. At the end of the day, I am also a student. If my mentee is having a financial hardship. I cannot help that person because I myself I am going through my own thing. If I have had to be able to find the balance between what I can do and can't do and be able to communicate that. That's a big thing find that communication with the person. Be able to find what works and what doesn't.

Challenges such as this have affected how Hydrogen approaches mentoring. However, learning from these challenges, Hydrogen is able to refine his mentoring abilities so that each relationship has the opportunity to grow.

**Summary.** For Hydrogen, mentoring was something that he actively pursued. Recognizing the value he had received from his own mentors and the responsibility derived from his scholarship, Hydrogen mentors to ensure others like him have the help they need to prosper and navigate the institutional environment. Hydrogen perceives the mentoring relationship to be more than just a formal relationship that occurs within an institutional setting, but a relationship that is carried outside of the classroom walls. Hydrogen is not only a mentor, but also the mentee's friend, resource, and shoulder to lean on. He is someone who becomes part of the family, someone who attends familial events, and someone who has an invitation to dinner. Hydrogen understands the significance of mentoring and the impact that it can have on the trajectory of a student's life. For him, mentoring is a way to help others when the opportunity is presented. He wants to make sure that when he reflects back on his life and the things he did to better his community, mentoring and helping others was part of his life.

## Carbon-C

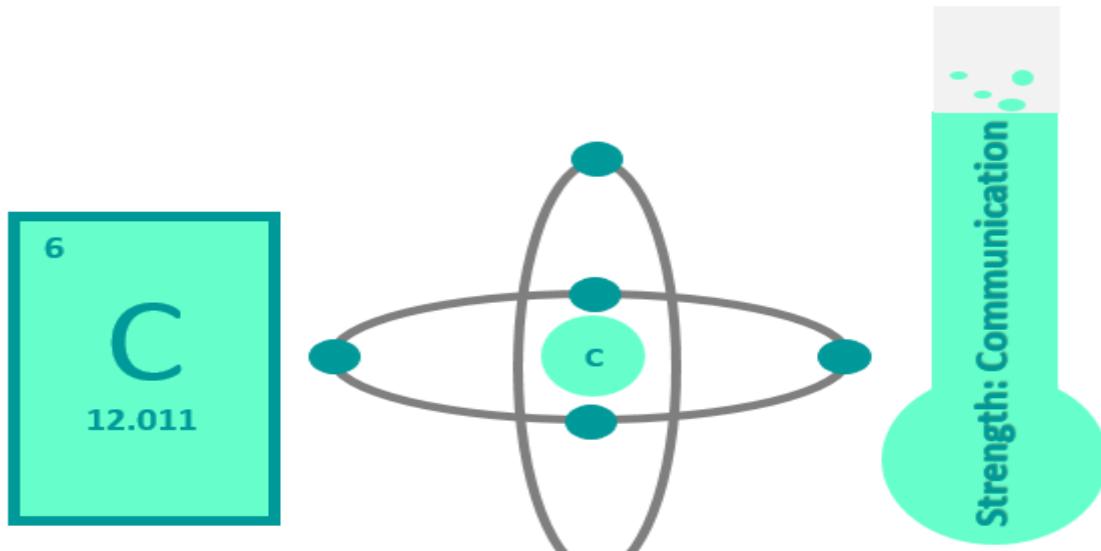


Figure 4.8 Carbon Representative Illustration

Carbon, a program coordinator, has served as a mentor for more than six years. Working closely with Latinx students in a higher education setting, Carbon has had the opportunity to mentor college freshman as well as college seniors. In particular, Carbon continues to mentor Latinx male college students. For Carbon, the act of mentoring is something that is “close to my heart” and he defines a mentor as “a way to help transform someone else into not only thinking about his or her future but visualizing it.” A mentor is someone who “can really open their minds both for themselves and others in the future.” The benefits associated with mentoring are incredibly impactful for Carbon as he recalls,

I have really enjoyed being part of his life and mentoring him. He is really at the beginning of being so much more than he already is. Not to say he isn’t intelligent because he is, but I can see he is at the point of realizing his own potential after many conversations of “where do you want to be? How are you going to get

there? What's your purpose?" I can see that he is thinking more long term and it's exciting. It really is. I am excited to see what happens with him because I really think he is so much smarter than I was at his age.

These benefits really cement why Carbon continues to mentor and help those around him.

By mentoring, Carbon has the ability to,

See what becomes of them whether they have taken the risks that they considered.

It's exciting to see people grow up in their own way after they have the info they needed that they took in. You can give a lot of people advice, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. But when they take that breath of fresh air and say "I can do this" it's amazing to see. To see them make more money than you, start a family, you see them prosper, [and] it's heartwarming.

For a seasoned mentor like Carbon, he understands that mentoring also comes with its fair share of challenges. However, Carbon's approach to challenges allows him to grow and improve abilities to reach more students as he recalls,

It's new, it's challenging to get people to open their mind we all have habits and comforts that we miss. Change isn't always easy but it can be but starting that process can be difficult. Not everyone learns right away from their mistakes or learns what their options may be. Sometimes people don't want to listen. You can't be mad at people who don't want the information so you need to be patient with yourself in getting advice. Sometimes you can lose them by giving too much influence or pressure. I think it's important to recognize where that person is in their life and what their limitations might be.

Challenges like these have had a lasting impact on Carbon but have also taught him how to be a better mentor as he has become more patient and understanding of each mentee's needs, unique stories, and upbringing.

**Summary.** The narrative presented by Carbon illustrates his passion for mentoring and making his institution a better place. Mentoring provides Carbon with the ability to help the mentee see their future and chase their dreams. Working with his mentees on nearly a daily basis, Carbon is able to see them grow from freshman into seniors with a vision and plan on how to tackle their futures. For Carbon, mentoring is a way for him to help others especially as he never had a mentor to help him navigate life's choices, set goals, and chase ideas as a young man. Because of these experiences, Carbon chose to start mentoring to help others make smarter choices and avoid the roads he traversed so that they have a positive outcome for their own lives and futures.

Chapter V shall provide answers to research questions one and three of this dissertation study. The chapter will present the findings that include the use of thick, rich descriptions to capture the lived experiences of the Latinx mentors. In addition, a discussion of the single emergent forms of capital as well as the cultural tools that are utilized by Latinx mentors is provided.

## **V. Findings**

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the voice of the Latinx mentor's experiences and discern the role of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) in their mentoring relationships. The following three questions guided the study:

- 1.) What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students?
- 2.) How can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning?
- 3.) What role does Community Cultural Wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship?

## **Findings**

The stories shared by the participants provide a glimpse into their unique experiences as a mentor. When viewing their stories collectively, the stories provide thick, rich descriptions that demonstrate the importance of mentoring and the role of CCW (Yosso, 2005). While benefits and challenges varied by participant, their own definitions of mentoring were strikingly similar as the definitions rendered very similar ideologies focusing on support and growth of the individual. In addition, it is important to note that the experiences shared by the mentors did focus on same gender mentoring practices. Few experiences that were shared included cross gender mentoring approaches. By utilizing Taylor Powell and Renner's (2003) method for qualitative analysis as well as thematic analysis (Hatch, 2002) I was able to identify one major theme, three subthemes or characteristics, and eight mentoring tools, which emerged from the participants'

experiences. The one theme that emerged was a new form of capital, entitled Relational Capital, which is a seventh form of capital that bridges the six forms of capital in Yosso's (2005) framework. The relationship that has been identified between the new emergent form of capital and the preexisting six forms further demonstrates the idea that these forms of capital are not mutually exclusive of each other and often times coexist together. In addition, the emergent form of capital when combined with Yosso's (2005) framework presents a culturally responsive methodology that is absent in mentoring programs across university campuses.

Relational Capital was comprised of three characteristics. The three characteristics emerged as subthemes in the process of analysis. It is important to note that during the analysis, all eight participants exhibited at least one characteristic of Relational Capital however, the number of participants that exhibited each subtheme, or characteristic, varied. The first characteristic, or subtheme was Compassion, which draws on the two tools of Hope and Inspiration that are visible in Yosso's (2005) Aspirational Capital. Compassion provides an understanding of the tools that are utilized by mentors in order to support mentees and their goals while in college. The two tools align with the CCW Model (Yosso, 2005) and the ability to nurture the culture of possibility within others. The second characteristic of Relational Capital, or second subtheme, was Experiential and binds Yosso's (2005) Familial and Linguistic Capital. The Experiential construct includes four tools: Extension of Family, Shared Experiences, Culture of the Shared Meal, and Code Switching. The four tools provide a basis for understanding the role of a mentor and the perception of an extended familial or community member, which then allow mentors to leverage a positive relationship with the mentee (Yosso, 2005). In

addition, the tools provide an avenue for the mentor to communicate with the mentee in a way that is comfortable and accepting to both, which in turn can translate into academic success by enhancing and developing communication skills (Yosso, 2005). The final subtheme, or characteristic, of Relational Capital is Generativity, which focuses on two tools (Understanding and Utilizing Networks and Skill Building) that bridge Social, Navigational, and Resistant Capital. The tools are critical to how the mentor negotiates the mentoring relationship so that the mentee is able to successfully enter social intuitions such as educational spaces (Yosso, 2005). In addition, the tools represent the importance of space and support in providing a strong foundation for the mentor to prepare his or her mentees to enter society or other social spaces and confront challenges head on (Yosso, 2005). Lastly, the identified tools provide a way for mentors to gain access into the mentees' lives and in turn guide mentees towards the necessary skills when entering social institutions (Yosso, 2005).

### **Relational Capital's First Characteristic: Compassion**

Compassion as defined by Boyatzis, Smith, and Blaize, 2006 has three components that include: (a) empathy or understanding the feelings of others, (b) caring for the other person (e.g., affiliative arousal), and (c) willingness to act in response to the person's feelings (p. 452). For the purpose of this dissertation, the working definition of Compassion is provided and defined as the ability to influence behavior in order for the other individual to advance towards his or her goals and dreams.

Compassion focuses on the notion that the mentor should become adaptable to the needs of his or her mentee, in order to build a meaningful and positive relationship. By understanding who the mentee is, what his or her goals and hopes are allows the mentor

to have a better understanding of how to respond and motivate the mentee (Pryce, 2012). In relation to Yosso's (2005) framework, Compassion emerged from the data as an asset that provided the Latinx mentors with ways to build and strengthen his or her mentoring relationships by employing culturally sensitive approaches; drawing on aspects of Aspirational Capital. The culturally sensitive approaches often times led to more personalized relationships that allowed the mentor to respond more readily to the mentee's needs outside of the classroom. Moreover, Compassion illustrated the cultural nuances needed by the Latinx mentee so that he or she could receive the continued encouragement to persist. Compassion and the culturally responsive caring derived from this form allows the mentor to understand the mentee both academically and personally. In particular, Compassion allowed Latinx mentors to build strong relationships that encouraged their mentees to progress towards achieving their goals. Through the mentor's lived experiences, it became apparent that Compassion assisted in the development of a method for Latinx mentors to build the mentee's ethnic or cultural consciousness. Further, by building the mentee's ethnic or cultural consciousness, the mentees become more equipped and prepared to persevere, become more self-efficacious, identify and build his or her own inner strengths such as confidence, pride, and personal responsibility. In addition, the lived experiences were also a testament to the understanding that as a Latinx mentor, they are quite often perceived as versatile and are considered counselors, cheerleaders, drill sergeants, and motivators. Many times, the Latinx mentor goes beyond his or her duties to build high expectation type relationships that validate the mentee's self and promote his or her success.

The subthemes that make up Compassion reveal that nurturing the culture of possibility within a student provides that student with the necessary motivation to persist while in college. The act of Hope and Inspiration support the students' drive for attending and graduating from institutions of higher learning. Compassion and the two tools that emerged allow the mentors to instill the necessary drive and motivation for mentees to push beyond their current circumstances in order to reach their goals and dreams.

Compassion became vital to the mentor/mentee relationship because it nurtured a substantial change in the mentee's behavior, thoughts, and emotions in hopes of reaching his or her ideal self. According to Boyatzis (2008), in terms of the mentee, the ideal self includes (a) an image of a desired future (b) Hope that one can attain it, and (c) aspects of one's core identity, which include enduring strengths on which one builds for this desired future (p. 456). This ideal self emerges from one's own dreams and aspirations. The role of the mentor comes in two forms that are connected to the subthemes that emerged from the findings. The two forms that the mentor takes on include: (a) helping a person to see an aspiration or dream that had not been considered or (b) role-modeling a way of acting (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 457).

Helping a person to see future aspirations and dreams is often times identified as the tool Hope in the mentoring relationship. In addition, role modeling is quite often identified as the tool Inspiration in the mentoring relationship as well. Actively instilling both tools provides the mentor with the ability to "wake up" the mentee so that change can begin. These "wake up" moments that the mentor imparts on the mentee allow for opportunities in which the mentee is able to see his or her purpose in a much broader

context. Hope is the first tool of the Compassion characteristic that emerged from six of the participants' experiences.

**Hope.** The first tool that emerged from the characteristic Compassion and provides mentors with the ability to transform mentees into their ideal selves so each mentee is able to reach their dreams and goals. Throughout the interviews, six participants in particular provided a detailed description of how the tool Hope as a form of Compassion which become an integral part of their mentoring relationships.

The experiences shared by Fluorine demonstrate how Hope became a critical driver in building persistence within her mentee. In this excerpt, Fluorine discusses her experience as it relates to the Hope and mentoring her DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students. In particular, Fluorine speaks about how Hope becomes critical when helping DACA students envision their future selves.

I think this one shows up a lot when working with my DACA students. What are their hopes and dreams for their education and future? We talk a lot about plan b and plan c to be able to realize some sort of dream. There is a dream we know if this happens we can't do that but what if this happens? Granted if the dream means, "I just want to remain in the states" or if the dream is "I want to progress in my education" you are going to have to set up those processes in place to continue your education.

Fluorine utilizes Hope in order to better serve her mentees. For Fluorine, Hope is necessary and helps her mentees envision possibilities of their future, which may have at one point been unimaginable or thought to be unrealistic. In this specific example, Fluorine is assisting her mentee with designing multiple plans for the future should plan a

not come into fruition. The ability to envision futures for her mentees especially during times of doubt assists in cultivating Hope and positives outlooks for future endeavors. As a Latinx mentor, Fluorine draws from her Compassion and utilizes Hope as a tool to motivate her DACA mentees so that they are able to plan and continue to advance towards their dreams. Many Latinx students face difficult barriers while in college that prevents Hope from becoming the necessary tool to allow him or her persevere. As a Latinx mentor, Fluorine is able to recognize those significant barriers and assist her mentor in overcoming them.

Like Fluorine, Beryllium acknowledges the role of Hope in mentoring relationships and provides a similar experience sharing the powerfulness that Hope provides mentees. In this particular experience, Beryllium reflects Hope as a tool she uses in her mentoring relationships in order to instill the necessary confidence and belief in the mentee that his or her dreams are achievable.

Hope to me is a very powerful thing. If you can give someone Hope, that can carry you through some really rough days. That is what I try to do give them this idea of Hope... When mentees dream big for their future, it is important to help them learn to navigate the pathways that can help them reach their dreams.

Building a network of experiences to draw from and alluding to the idea that the mentee can achieve these same goals builds and nurtures the culture of possibility within the mentee. In doing so, the mentor ultimately grows the mentee's ability to persist and follow through with his or her educational and career endeavors. As a Latinx mentor, Beryllium utilizes Hope as a tool to assist her mentee in navigating paths that will lead them to achieving his or her dreams. Similar to Fluorine, Beryllium is able to connect

with her mentees as a Latinx mentor and provide the necessary support to identify and breakdown those challenges and hurdles that may be preventing the mentee from achieving his or her future dreams.

Much like Beryllium, Bromine shared a similar experience in which Hope becomes integral to the mentoring relationship. In the particular experience shared by Bromine, he speaks about helping his mentees meet their goals and graduate from college.

Most of the students I worked with were first year students, early on first year, or second year. Trying to help them realize that they can meet their goals and graduate from the university or go on to professional or graduate school or go on to their careers.

Working with mentees to help each one realize his or her dreams and meet his or her goals while attending college is incredibly significant and has the ability to affect so many more people than just the mentee. By achieving success, the mentor harbors a sense of accomplishment in helping his or her mentee achieve his or her goal. In addition, the university benefits by awarding degrees on time. As a Latinx mentor, Bromine employs Hope as a tool to encourage degree completion and advanced degree endeavors among his mentees. For many Latinx college students, degree completion and advancement becomes increasingly difficult especially when he or she lacks the necessary support from his or her communities. As a Latinx mentor, Bromine has recognized these same sentiments and has the ability to help his mentees through validation as a Latinx student who has the ability to pursue academics.

Carbon's experience, much like Bromine's was similar. In particular, Carbon mentoring relationship focused on a post-college life and future career endeavors. Specifically, Carbon discussed how he motivated and pushed his mentee to think about the future and to ensure that he made his family proud and made good life for himself.

I really pushed my mentee hard. His goal was to be an advertising person for a major soccer league in Texas...We talk about his financial future... He did not push as hard in the advertising world as I Hoped but he is now a financial advisor and doing well for himself.

Although Carbon's mentee did not follow through on his original career plan, he was still successful and content with his choices. As a Latinx mentor, Carbon was able to pull from his own Compassion and use Hope as a tool to push his mentee to earn a degree, find stable employment, and become a contributor to society. Recognizing the plight that Latinx college student face including doubt and imposter syndrome, Carbon provided Hope to his mentee through constant motivation to progress in a forward momentum so that his family is proud of his achievements.

Just as Carbon pushed his mentees, so did Hydrogen. The experience Hydrogen shared, demonstrates his ability to be a supporter and his mentee's biggest cheerleader. In particular, Hydrogen discussed becoming his mentee's biggest cheerleader so that he could support and guide them down the right path.

...you help others be motivated and how I am able to be that is by always being the biggest cheerleader. That is the biggest thing I can do is support them. It does not always mean I will always agree with them, but I will show them the right way. If they choose a different path than it is his or her life. You have to be

emotionally involved to a certain point. You do not want to live his or her life.

You are living your own life. You do not want it to be damaging.

Hydrogen's sentiment of being the mentee's biggest cheerleader is telling. In many cases, this is exactly what the Latinx mentee needs to persist. The mentee see his or her mentor as a support structure and someone who believes in them. This very act provides Hope and a positive mindset in believing that the unachievable is achievable. As a Latinx mentor, Hydrogen used Hope as a driver to provide the strength and encouragement his mentee needed to stay on track and make positive advancements in his life. Again, as a Latinx mentor, Hydrogen is able to identify and recognize those obstacle and challenges faced by Latinx college students and provide the necessary support so that the mentee overcomes those challenges.

Mentees many times faces various crisis while in college and turning to his or her trusted mentors for advice is a naturally occurring practice. In such cases, Hope becomes a way to heal a mentee, especially during those times of crisis. In the particular experience shared by Helium, she reflects on being able to use Hope as a way to solve a crisis and provide a positive outlook on a negative situation that the mentee was experiencing.

Sometimes for them in that moment they are living a crisis. How we help them reshape that into positive energy? You know there is Hope, "you are going to be ok, and it's going to work out. Right now, it's awful but it's ok." You are going to be that person that helps them and provides Hope when they are lacking it, when they feel like it is the end for them.

Hope in a time of crisis is incredibly important in the mentoring relationship and can provide that extra bit of reassurance needed by the mentee to overcome whatever challenge they are experiencing. This is most evident in the shared experience provided by Helium. As a Latinx mentor, Helium used Hope to resolve a personal crisis her mentee was experiencing. Through Hope, Helium gave her mentee the needed reassurance to face the crisis head on and come out resilient on the other side. This becomes especially important in Latinx mentoring as it provides the extra layer of support often times lacking and needed in order to carry on.

Utilizing Hope in mentoring relationships becomes important especially when it is lacking in other areas of his or her life including his or her family, friends, and/or community. Without Hope, many of these mentees could have succumbed to their crisis and had it affect all other facets of their lives. The second tool that seven of the participants identified as part of their Compassion is Inspiration.

**Inspiration.** The second tool that emerged from the analysis of data was Inspiration. For mentors, Inspiration provided a way to evolve the mentoring relationship, motivate the mentee towards action, and in some cases completely transform an individual or relationship. For seven participants, Inspiration became the delivery mechanism for Compassion.

In particular, Bromine's reflection provides an experience that centers on Inspiration. The experience shared by Bromine suggests that inspiring students to think big and setting each of his mentees up for success will result in the achievement of their goals and dreams. Bromine inspires his mentees through constant motivation, allowing them to dream, and think of the impossible as possible. He believes that his mentees all

have the ability to achieve their dreams. He works towards raising their expectations and motivating them to succeed. His biggest motivator is education and he works with his mentees to continue beyond a bachelor's degree.

There are some students who want to go on the same track as you, there are some students who don't want anything to do with more school after college... but even for career prospects, there could be some students who might not think that they can achieve something or there is a position that they do not think they can get. But, if you kind of help them and coach them, "you got to think big, you got to make sure that you don't set yourself up short, that you can achieve it."

Motivating mentees to take action and responsibility over their lives is how Bromine inspires those he mentors. Bromine has the ability to inspire transformation within the mentoring relationship in order to achieve change in his mentees. The actions that Bromine continues to take have resulted in positive outcomes for his mentees including graduating from college and pursuing advanced degrees. As a Latinx mentor the ability for Bromine to inspire his mentees to continue their endeavors in just another practice deployed by Latinx mentors in order to ensure that college completion through culturally responsive methods.

Much like Bromine, Lithium's experiences utilizing Inspiration have been similar and have resulted in positive actions taken by her mentees. In this specific experience, Lithium discusses strategies and action plans with her mentees when resolving obstacles. Most importantly, she stresses that plans will never be perfect or the way one envisions them to be. More often than not, she suggests that one needs to be flexible and sometimes go off course in order to achieve the expected result. The ability to visualize more than

one possibility and way to achieve the same outcome is what Lithium tries to instill in her mentees. When she is successful, the mentees become less stressed, accept the new possibilities, and go one to do what they originally had planned but through a different direction.

I always use the analogy [that] sometimes we are not always in [a] direct line from A to B. Sometimes you are going to have to go off course before you finally get to where you want to go.

Lithium's has refined her ability to provide insight and perspective when her mentees face adversity or challenges. Lithium's ability to instill problem solving processes and alternative planning in place allows the mentee to make decisions that are more informed and to consider all possible scenarios and outcomes. In doing so, the mentee is working towards changing how he or she might think and approach challenges. Another method employed by Latinx mentors to provide Inspiration is through future planning. As a Latinx mentor and advisor, Lithium understands the complexities of academic aspirations faced by many Latinx students. This becomes increasingly important as large institutions face challenges when Latinx college students are reluctant to seek out or ask for help. The ability to understand this reluctance is inherent to Latinx mentors.

Every mentoring relationship is different and as a result, not all experiences concerning how Inspiration is used are similar. Nitrogen's experience regarding Inspiration was different when compared to Bromine and Lithium. For Nitrogen, Inspiration comes as a form of role modeling. Through role modeling, Inspiration has the ability to naturally occur and positively affect the mentees. Nitrogen's specific experience demonstrates his ability to take on the role model identity and use his own shortcomings

to produce strengths as he discusses his upbringing and successes with his mentees.

I always tell them I came from the same school I was raised by a single mother.

She only spoke Spanish, so I had a lot of the same obstacles they faced. I show them I went on and graduated... They see it as "I have similar obstacles and it's not going to hold me back."

This particular experience demonstrates the importance of role modeling in mentoring relationships. From this experience, role modeling has been extremely impactful for Nitrogen. Nitrogen has the ability to inspire others by sharing his background and upbringing. These actions make Nitrogen more relatable culturally as the mentees view these Shared Experiences as more personal. The connection that the mentor provides through cultural role modeling allows the mentee to see his or her own future as possible and thus sparks Inspiration to follow through with his or her own dreams and goals. As a Latinx mentor, there is something to be said when the Latinx mentee is able to be inspired by his or her role model. Through role modeling a cultural connection is made that allows the mentor and mentee to build a relationship built on trust.

Much like Nitrogen, Fluorine shares a similar experience in which she speaks about meeting other role models and their ability to change the mentees lives. In her particular experience, she speaks about a Latina vice president who is a powerhouse at her university. This particular person is someone she considers impactful on the lives of the mentees and has the ability to assist the mentees with defining their future selves.

Even as a professional, we want to impact young professionals. I am a believer as humans that we value relationships. My time at this university, I have had three students who I talked to about my meeting this person. I want them to know it is

very normal to see ourselves in people that are above us and do what they are doing. I asked her to meet with my students. I said to her “hey I have these three students who I think you would be great mentees for or you would give great advice to them or great questions to ask of them that might help them think what they are doing at the university or with their degree.”

Fluorine’s ability to see beyond herself and introduce her mentees to other mentors who have the ability to become role models demonstrates her utilization of tools to inspire others to chase their dreams. Fluorine’s actions speak to her wealth of compassion in order to help her mentees visualize their future selves. Again, that same cultural connection is made through role modeling and the output being Inspiration. The ability to “see ourselves in others” can provide the Latinx mentee with a deeper connection to his or her institution and translating into academic success.

In another instance, Hydrogen shares an experience in which his mentoring relationship became Inspirational to the mentee. In this particular experience, Hydrogen assumed the role model identity and through this role, the mentee became inspired by Hydrogen’s story so much that he followed Hydrogen’s educational path graduating from the same universities and making the same journey across the United States.

...I used to be very involved with that organization at my university. All those students who came in, I would get to work with them. Specifically, one student, I saw him since he came in. Now he has graduated from that university. He took a year off and now is coming to this school in the fall. He is doing the same thing. He is going to do the same thing I did at this university and so the cycle continues... I can see how he is growing and that he has followed my footsteps.

Again, it has to do with being a man. We do not say or do certain things. It is kind of like I see you doing certain things and I know you're doing certain things.

Hydrogen's experience with this one mentee has been memorable and one of his best relationships. He understands the dominant role he has as a mentor and how his actions can affect his mentees. Hydrogen values the Inspiration he provides to his mentees. He understands that the Inspiration he projects has a lasting effect on the mentee's life and ultimately can change the trajectories of his or her future. As a role model to a Latinx student, Hydrogen understands the importance of his position. He himself has had Latinx role models that have shaped, influenced, and inspired his own journey. The ability to pay that forward and assist other Latinx students by being a positive figure in their lives is found in culturally responsive support services such as mentoring.

Much like Hydrogen, Helium shares a similar experience in which she relied on her experiences to guide her mentoring practices so that she could influence and inspire her mentees follow her example and not make the same mistakes she did. In her particular shared experience, she discusses her teaching moments. In these particular moments, she reflects on her own experiences and uses those experiences as examples of what not to do or do depending on the mentee's circumstance.

Yah, we have had a lot of really good teaching moments for that. "This is what I did, this didn't work out, or it worked out great for me. This is what you need to do; this is who you need to talk to."

These teaching moments serve as a method of role modeling and inspiring Helium's mentees. Helium utilizes her experiences as a guide. She shares with her mentees her the outcomes of her decisions, which have the ability to influence the mentee's thought

process and ensure that he or she is, are making the most sound and informed decisions possible. As a Latinx mentor, the ability to inspire mentees through valuable teaching moments demonstrates a capacity for learning and continued growth found in cultural guidance provided by someone who is perceived as a trusted source and someone who has been in the mentee's shoes before.

Beryllium's experience is comparable to that of Helium's shared excerpts. The particular experience shared by Beryllium illustrates her ability to inspire her mentees by relating to their challenges and struggles.

Especially if you are first generation, maybe your family has not traveled down that road or you don't have a lot of people in your circle or community that are professionals. It is good to know and hear "hey we all put our pants on one leg at a time." I really think it is powerful for young people to hear that or to learn about your own struggles. To know that and to hear that everyone has their own struggles. Here are some ways I overcame mine; here are some possibilities for you.

The ability to relate to mentees is critical to Beryllium's success as a mentor. Through relatability, Beryllium is able to connect and inspire her mentees to follow through with their plans. By sharing her experiences as a Latinx and those of others like her, Beryllium positions herself in a role that empathizes with the mentees' challenges and but still provides Inspiration to overcome those obstacles.

Utilizing Inspiration in mentoring relationships becomes significant especially when the mentee needs additional encouragement or is lacking the motivation necessary to overcome a challenge. Without a mentor's Inspiration, many mentees may not follow

through on their goals or become discouraged to overcome a challenge they are experiencing. The Inspiration that the mentor brings to the relationship has the ability to shape the mentoring relationship in such a way that the mentee has a sense of empowerment to progress.

As noted by the experiences shared among the participants, Compassion as an integral role in the Latinx mentoring relationship. The experiences shared by the mentors provide a strong foundation for the applicability of Compassion and its ability to build persistence and resiliency in the mentees. The two tools that emerged from the analysis of data, Hope and Inspiration, are effective in motivating and encouraging mentees. Through the act of motivation and encouragement, those mentees who lack the necessary Compassion in themselves and from their surrounding communities are able to change the course of their trajectory. By changing the course of their trajectory, mentees now have the ability to modify the direction of their future in order to persist and pursue their goals with a greater sense of empowerment and determination.

### **Relational Capital's Second Characteristic: Experiential**

According to Merriam-Webster, experiential is defined as relating to, derived from, or providing experience (2017). For the purpose of this dissertation, the working definition for Experiential is provided and defined as the shared common attributes such as cultural backgrounds, customs, traditions, and experiences in order to enhance mentor supportiveness and foster the necessary aid needed for the mentee to thrive. In relation to Experiential was derived from the data as an additional subtheme, or characteristic of Relational Capital, that provides the mentors with methods to frame their interactions with their mentees; it binds Yosso's (2005) Familial and Linguistic forms of capital. This

particular subtheme allows Latinx mentors to build trust with their mentees by empowering them to utilize their Shared Experiences as a form of strength to pull from. In doing so, the mentors enhance their support role by providing emotional and instrumental assistance to the mentee. Often times, in Latinx mentoring relationships having the same ethnic backgrounds is perceived to be more helpful with building self-efficacy among the Latinx mentees. The lived experiences of the Latinx mentors attested to the understanding that they were seen as having a more identifiable and prominent role in the mentees lives because of their Shared Experiences and similar backgrounds. Especially for those who may be first generation and solely rely on their mentors to guide them towards personal growth as college students. For both the Latinx mentor and mentee, Shared Experiences and backgrounds has resulted in a greater assignment of value towards the relationship. The connections found in the subtheme Experiential and cultural mentoring has provided a pathway for Latinx mentees to receive mentorship from Latinx mentors who have endured similar experiences and have overcome those experiences to achieve success.

The tools that make up Experiential reveal that family has a “broader understanding of kindship” (Yosso, 2005, p.79) and this form of capital is “nurtured by our extended family” (Yosso, 2005, p.79). Salas et al., (2014) argues that cultural awareness in mentoring relationships prevents early departure from institutions, promotes a sense of belonging validation within the mentee, and allows for the mentor and the mentee to share his or her true authentic self. In addition, Experiential infers that Code Switching is used as a tool to communicate in order to communicate with “different audiences” (Yosso, 2005, p.79), which is essential to the mentoring relationships so that

the mentee is able to build a strong foundation for academic success. Experiential and the four tools that emerged including Shared Experiences, Extension of Family, The Culture of the Shared Meal, and Code Switching allow the mentors to become part of a closed community in order to provide the necessary guidance to build moral and educational consciousness.

**Shared experiences.** The first tool that emerged from the subtheme Experiential provides mentors with the ability to relate to their mentees by sharing experiences. Through sharing experiences, the Latinx mentors are able to assist with personal and social challenges by providing the necessary emotional support that is derived from Shared Experiences. Throughout the interviews, six participants provided a detailed description of how Shared Experiences became an integral part of their mentoring relationships.

The experiences shared by Helium demonstrate how Shared Experiences became critical to building a strong foundation for her mentoring relationship. In the particular experience shared by Helium, she discusses how being Latina has helped her to shape her mentoring approach.

I think with some of the women the Latinas I mentor. The experiences we share.

Sharing in those familial experiences overall have helped shape and influence the mentoring that occurs. It is in the things that we share where it occurs.

Helium's experience is significant as it demonstrates the cultural connection found in Latinx mentoring relationships. Her cultural background has allowed her to shape how she approaches and guides her mentees. The ability to pull from her own experiences because they are similar is valuable and provides the mentee with a reaffirming

understanding that obstacles and challenges can be overcome. As a Latinx mentor, much can be said when the mentor can share in similar experiences as the mentee. By being able to pair the mentor with a mentee who has been in his or her same predicaments allows for the mentee to seek guidance from a mentor who is relatable.

Similar to Helium's excerpt, Lithium gives a similar reflection of how Shared Experiences provided a unique opportunity to grow the mentoring relationship. In her particular shared experience, Lithium discussed being able to relate to her mentee by growing up in the same type of family environment.

Just because of my background, my experiences, being able to establish to somebody based on having the same type of family value or growing up with the same type of family environment...this student that I was mentoring this semester, she was the youngest of the family, like me. Her older sister took care of her like my sister took care of me, so there were a lot of things we had in common even though I'm old enough to be her mom that we could identify with. That's just some kind of similarities I think that helped our relationship and me understand you know how important that relationship was with her sister and I guess I felt the same way with my older sister...it forms that connection and you can kind of relate a little bit better and understand that there are situations. Even though there are unique situations...Family dynamics is sort of that sort of thing regardless of how old you are some things just do not change.

The shared familial experiences provide value and wealth to the mentoring relationship. The connection that is formed between the mentor and the mentee when sharing such experiences result in the formation of a deeper connection that promotes trust and

understanding which had the ability to translate into positive outcomes within an academic setting. Again, from a cultural perspective, the ability to gain trust and seek advice from a mentor who has had the same experiences as the mentee provides a resource where the mentee is able to feel comfortable in a safe and familiar space.

Bromine provided a similar memory that demonstrates the power of Shared Experiences as an important tool to assist the mentee in overcoming unfamiliar or challenging environments especially as a Latinx. In his particular experience, Bromines discussed the deeper understanding of Shared Experiences and its value in a new and unfamiliar world.

When I talk to some of my mentees who are very close to their family, their community, they understand that they bring those kinds of experiences into a world like here since it is a world of its own. I think they come to realize that those shared experiences are important and that they can use those tools to help them [selves] out.

The Shared Experiences are considered tools of value found in the Latinx mentoring relationship. Ensuring that the mentee has a firm understanding on the value of his or her Shared Experiences provides him or her with better ways of approaching unfamiliar environments and solving challenges. As a Latinx mentor, the ability to establish a sense of community through Shared Experiences becomes significant as it nurtures a feeling of belongingness and identity among Latinx college students.

Nitrogen's memory centered on Shared Experiences as a form of trust. In the particular memory shared, Nitrogen discussed the value of trust as it translates into

relatability in mentoring relationships especially when the mentor faced similar adversities.

Yes, definitely being able to relate to the people you are mentoring. They believe you and trust you. If they can see that I have gone through something similar than they can really relate to you.

Trust becomes incredibly important in building a strong foundation for Latinx mentoring relationships. The ability to relate to the mentee through cultural Shared Experiences allows the relationships to flourish and strengthen. For Latinx mentees, it is important that they are able to see themselves in their mentors. The ability to relate to their experiences and struggles allows for the mentee to develop a greater sense of self that translates into resiliency and persistence on campus.

Beryllium's shared experience focused on sharing similar sentiments that resulted in positive outcomes. In her particular experience, she spoke about how graduate students quite often doubt their abilities. By validating their self-worth and sharing with them similar sentiments or experiences, the graduate students were able to persist.

...when you are able to share the fact that everyone doubts themselves and be vulnerable with your own experiences and feelings, then it helps them see that you can make it. It gives them a feeling of "well maybe I don't get to choose where I come from but [I get to choose] where I am going." I think that is really important.

Relating to your mentee especially during times of self-doubt is incredibly powerful. By validating your mentee and sharing with him or her, that negative feelings are common demonstrates the mentor's capacity for understanding, relatability, and reassurance. For

Latinx mentors, strength is found in the ability to relate to the experiences of the mentee and provide the necessary support to guide him or her away from a path of self-doubt and towards self-belief.

Hydrogen's reflection concentrated on similar student experiences shared by him and his mentees. In his particular experience, he spoke about understanding the struggle of balancing school, family, and financial scholarships.

It has a lot to do with the fact that, for example, we are at the same schools, the same fields, and happen to be [scholarship recipients] so we know the struggle.

We know what it is like to share some of the scholarship with our family members because they need money too.

Hydrogen understands the sometimes-overwhelming stresses faced by Latinx mentees. In his particular experience, Hydrogen conveys that balancing school, family, and financial need is a familiar sentiment that he overcame. As a Latinx mentor, sharing similar experiences such as these and drawing on familial commonalities can provide the mentee with a calm approach towards resolve by relying on someone who has had similar experiences.

Utilizing Shared Experiences in mentoring relationships becomes important especially when guiding mentees towards making well informed decisions. Without Shared Experiences, many of the mentors may not have had the opportunity to better relate to their mentees and build the necessary trust and self-empowerment needed to thrive while in college. The second tool that six of the participants identified is Extension of Family.

**Extension of family.** Another interesting theme that emerged from the analysis of data includes the Extension of Family concept. Throughout the interviews, five participants provided a detailed description of how the Extension of Family became a significant factor in their mentoring relationships.

Nitrogen's experience provided insight into the role of being perceived as an Extension of Family. In his particular experience, Nitrogen spoke about his own perception as a big brother and being able to guide them while in college.

I considered myself in a big brother role to them. I would relate it back to their experiences whatever it might be. In thinking about that, I was like a big brother in college to guide them through that while they go through college.

Assuming the cultural role of a big brother or big sister as a mentor is a common experience for Latinxs. In this role, the Latinx mentor acts not only as a mentor but also as a member of the extended family taking on additional responsibilities most common with family members.

Fluorine's experience was similar, as she views *familia* (*family*) as something to be valued and nurtured in one's own community regardless of how that community is made up. In her particular shared experience, she spoke about mentoring sorority sisters and the value in extended family.

My students know I talk about family. They are primarily sisters, so I talk about sisterhood and empowering each other. We talk about educated Latinas. One of the values is *familia* (*family*), so we emphasize that in our recruitment and we talk about how we nurture that in our organization. As the advisor, how do I show that

so that the students can see a support system [for their] organization? They see a staff member who is involved in their experiences.

Speaking about family and being perceived as an extended family member is integral to the mentoring relationship and the bond found between the mentor and the mentee. In many cases, the Latinx mentor assumes the role of a family member due to his or her ability to relate to the mentee on more social emotional levels.

Lithium's discussion focused on her cultural background and the ability to use her experiences as a way to connect with her mentors. In Lithium's particular experience, she spoke about growing up in a Hispanic environment and having similar familial values as others who grew up in the same environment.

Because of my background, I guess and my experiences, it being able to establish to somebody based on having the same type of family value or growing up with the same type of family environment... so I think having that helps, being able to have that.

Shared Experiences and similar cultural upbringings equip Latinx mentors with the necessary tools to cultivate a successful mentoring relationship. The ability to share and relate with your mentee through the Latinx culture demonstrates a deeper understanding of some of the dynamic issues faced by Latinx mentees especially when attending college away from home.

Bromine's experience is similar to Lithium's as he spoke about similar backgrounds and experiences. In Bromine's particular experience, he shares that mentoring Latinx students allowed him to have a much closer connection than with students of other races and ethnicities.

I know that in some of the mentoring relationships, I have had closer connections to students who maybe have very similar background; maybe we were the same sex that would help, but even same culture, same hometown. Just because we have those same experiences, which I think is really an easy way to connect to someone and some of the students who I maybe mentored or I was a teaching assistant in college as well even then that was kind of a mentoring relationship you know. I had students who were maybe White, Indian, or you know maybe I did not have a close connection to them because of that.

Close connections found in Latinx mentoring relationships can be attributed to similar backgrounds and cultures. Utilizing similar backgrounds and the Latinx culture as tools and methods to create close connections can assist in strengthening mentoring relationships among Latinxs as it provides the mentee with a level of comfort and familiarity found in someone who identifies with his or her background.

Hydrogen's particular experience centers on the sharing of traditions and customs as a way grow closer to his mentees. In Hydrogen's particular shared experience, he speaks about sharing traditions and customs as a way to relate to his mentees. Through this act, his mentees are reminded of home and how they grew up.

...most important it is an extension of the family member... and that is why we click... because I remind them of their family members. Because it is how they grew up. I remind them of all their traditions and customs.

Familiarity as a means of connecting is another tool used by Latinx mentors. Traditions and customs from the Latinx heritage can provide mentees with a sense of belonging as

well as a way to identify with other who are like them. These feelings can translate into overall resiliency while attending college.

Latinx mentors who perceive their role as an Extension of Family provides the mentors with a way to relate and connect in their mentoring relationships. Mentees who perceive their mentors to be part of their family harbor a sense of familiarity and comfort which ultimately aids in their overall academic resiliency and persistence. This is especially true for first generation students or those students who are traversing unfamiliar territory, are away from home, and are having a harder time connecting with the campus. The third tool that three of the participants identified as part of their Experiential Capital is The Culture of the Shared Meal.

**The culture of the shared meal.** The third tool that emerged from the analysis and resonated with three of the participants was the concept of food and the ability to bond over sharing a meal. The simple act of sharing food with another person was perceived as a way to connect with the mentee. Throughout the interviews, three participants provided a detailed description of how The Culture of the Shared Meal become critical to bonding with their mentees.

Bonding over food is another tool that Hydrogen uses to cultivate a strong mentoring relationship with his Latinx mentees. In Hydrogen's particular shared experience, he discussed how food becomes a way to grow with his mentees, "I have shared food with him. I have shared meals with him. I myself have grown with him as well." The cultural experience related to sharing and bonding over food translates into a form of welcoming and trust in the Latinx culture. By utilizing food, Hydrogen is able to

connect with his mentor and really cement the overall feeling of belonging in the mentoring relationship.

Helium provided a similar sentiment regarding the power of food as it relates to building Experiential Capital. In her particular shared experience, she spoke about the ability to connect with the mentor by sharing a meal.

I take a lot from my family. A big thing for my family is bonding over food. For a lot [of my mentees], it's come over and eat in my house if we get to that point or having those conversations and connecting over a meal or food.

Much like Hydrogen, Helium's experiences surrounding food is understood to be another cultural method for connecting and building trust in the mentoring relationship. The cultural understanding of sharing food signifies that the mentee and mentor are family.

Carbon's reflection related to breaking bread as a way to bond with his mentee and gain his trust through a cultural practice. In this particular experience, Carbon discussed a favorite restaurant that he and his mentee would frequent so that they could spend time getting to know each other in a more relaxed environment. In doing so, Carbon was able to bond with his mentee and earn more about his future endeavors.

A great way for he and I to become more comfortable with each other was to enjoy breakfast tacos...We are both Hispanic and enjoy Mexican food. This place has very authentic tacos and was the best place for use to find common ground with each other as Hispanics. It helped use to both relax mentally, allowing us to forget about whatever challenge that were presenting themselves. We were instantly just friends with the same ethnic background enjoying a taco, talking freely about challenges, goals, feelings and life in general. I feel our

ethnic similarities allowed use to bound and strengthen our relationship. I feel breaking bread with him showed him [that] I am in many ways just like him and that I can be trusted.

The cultural experience of eating together is significant for Carbon especially when cultivating a mentoring relationship. As a Latinx mentor, food is seen as a cultural value and helps to demonstrate the importance of togetherness, which can be used to bond with the mentee. The significance of sharing food is incredibly important to Carbon and is used quite often as a tool to strengthen his ties to the mentee.

The Culture of the Shared Meal used as a tool in Latinx mentoring relationships becomes important especially when beginning to connect with and understand the mentee's cultural traditions and upbringing. Through the act of sharing meals, many of the mentors may have the opportunity to better relate to their mentees, continue to build trust, and promote cultural identity as a positive method to nurture and promote who they are and where they came from. The last tool that six of the participants identified is Code Switching.

**Code switching.** The last tool that emerged demonstrates the importance and acceptance of language within the Latinx mentoring relationship. Throughout the interviews, six participants provided a detailed description of how Code Switching became necessary as a way to build trust and open the doors of communication with their mentees.

The experiences shared by Hydrogen indicates that Code Switching is important within the mentoring relationship as it provides a way to build trust and comfortability with the mentee so that they become more receptive to advice. Hydrogen's particular

shared experience related to cultural *dichos* (*sayings*) as a way to relate to the mentees family, traditions, and customs.

Actually, the reason that people are comfortable with me is because I love *dichos* (*sayings*), basically half my language is *dichos* (*sayings*), that's what I always tell them. I think it reminds them of home. That is why we click so much, because I remind them of their family members. Because it is how they grew up. I remind them of all their traditions and customs.

Language is significant in the Latinx mentoring relationships. In particular, the ability to code switch allows the Latinx mentor to open up the channels of communication with his or her mentee. In many instances, the mentee may be more receptive to advice if he or she feels that the advice is coming from someone who is relatable.

Carbon's experience was similar to Hydrogen's in that Code Switching helped his mentees understand the difference in language. In particular, Carbon's shared experience centered on teachable moments involving language and the appropriateness of when to communicate in certain languages.

Some aspects of language Spanish or English will be appropriate or not in certain times. When he is around me he knows, or has grown to know when to be professional and when to be casual...He inherently picked up on the cues. It is an asset. I have told him to look for jobs that are bilingual it is a huge advantage. Bilingualism is another tool used in the Latinx mentoring relationships. The significance of being able to speak multiple languages and code switch with mentees promotes a sense of homogeneity between the mentor and mentee. Using multiple languages and switching between languages demonstrates a level of comfortability between the mentee and

mentor and also recognized the cultural identity of Latinxs in spaces where the mentee may feel marginalized.

Much like Carbon's experience, Nitrogen's memory focused on teachable moments. Nitrogen's particular shared experience, he discussed how Code Switching assisted in communicating instructions in a way that the mentee understood, "as I mentioned before going back and forth between English and Spanish is helpful... We would speak a different language but the concept of learning was still the same." In this particular experience, the teachable moments related to academics however, the idea of using language as a way to communicate and facilitate instruction become beneficial to growing the mentoring relationship.

Fluorine's experience centered on Code Switching as a way to promote bilingualism and her culture in a very White dominated space. In her particular experience, she discussed the importance of speaking Spanish and Code Switching with her mentees, who noticed her ability to switch between the languages. The importance of her Code Switching signified that language and culture are valued and respected in her office.

It is really important for me to remember my Spanish. There is one student, we would talk a lot but there were moments that she would point out how I code switch. We would be talking in Spanish and then my phone would ring and I would answer it. She would point out, "Why do you change your voice when you answer the phone?" We talked about code switching at that moment... When we walked into my office, she asked, "Can we just speak Spanish?" I said, "Heck yah I would love that." I [can] practice my Spanish and we can talk in Spanish. I know

there are somethings we can better express in Spanish. It lets them know that it is ok. In my current office, I advise a multicultural organization. They are surrounded by very many White [people], so my students congregate outside my office. I go outside and let them know that they can very much speak in Spanish [and say] “Hey you can speak Spanish too!”

Promoting dual languages is a tool used by Fluorine, especially in her mentoring relationships. Promoting her culture through language allows her to connect with her mentees, make them comfortable, and most importantly proud of who they are and whom they represent. These feelings can assist mentees transition to new and unfamiliar worlds where they may feel like an outsider and unwelcomed.

Helium’s shared experience relates to language and Code Switching as a way to communicate more effectively with her mentees. In the particular experience shared by Helium, she discussed how language and Code Switching is beneficial in conveying messages and advice.

Taking it literally with language being able to communicate with them in Spanish and have those conversations with them assisted me... Back to storytelling, the language, being able to communicate with students in the language that they are comfortable with. If it is Spanish obviously. English or Spanish we are good. But yah, being able to communicate has really helped.

Effective communication is key to mentoring relationships. In particular, Latinx mentors find themselves communicating in multiple ways in order to better work with their mentees. Whether it is English, Spanish, or both, Latinx mentors who are able to converse in multiple languages are able to build stronger and meaningful mentoring

relationships because they are able open the lines of communication with the mentee.

Beryllium's experience surrounding Code Switching focused on the Spanish language as a strength instead of a weakness. Beryllium's particular shared experience involved a discussion with her mentee and urging her to see her bilingualism as a strength.

While my mentees might be bilingual and want to speak Spanish, I always welcome that as something to be proud of. It's not to be hidden. It is something to value...So for me it's important that they recognize that it is important and valuable.

Viewing bilingualism as a strength is important in the Latinx mentoring relationship. Encouraging mentees to use the Spanish language to their advantage and to promote language as one of their strengths helps to cultivate a more positive mental outlook for the mentee, which again has the ability to help promote resiliency and persistence.

Utilizing Code Switching in mentoring relationships becomes important especially when communicating and building a sense of value and belonging with the Latinx mentees. Without Code Switching, many of the mentors may not have had the opportunity to communicate more effectively with their mentees. In addition, the lack of Code Switching may have resulted in a lessened sense of self-worth and empowerment among the mentees. The experiences of the Latinx mentors demonstrates that the mentees understand the value of Code Switching and mitigating social discontinuities found in institutional cultures. Using Code Switching as a tool has become an effective way for relating culturally to the mentee.

As noted by the tools and the experiences shared, the Experiential subtheme has a

critical role in the forming of mentoring relationships, the building of trust so that the relationship can flourish, and building a supportive foundation of communication skills for the mentee. The experiences shared by the mentors provide a strong foundation for the applicability of the Experiential characteristic in mentoring relationships. The last characteristic to be explored is Generativity Capital.

### **Relational Capital's Third Characteristic: Generativity**

According to Erikson, generativity, a psychosocial construct, is defined as the ability to guide the next generation (1950). For the purpose of this dissertation, a working definition of generativity is provided and is defined as, the ability to guide and assist the mentee in building strengths and skills in order to prosper. The ability to learn to network, build relationships, and navigate social institutions are critical to the persistence and retention of Latinx mentees. Through social integration, a mentee has the ability to leverage various forms of capital that provide access and validation, both of which are strongly correlated to academic persistence of Latinx students (Salas, et al., 2014). Generativity was derived from the data as an additional subtheme that provides the mentors with methods to support and grow their mentees. As previously noted, Generativity bridges the Social, Navigational, and Resistant Capitals from Yosso's (2005) framework.

The tools that make up Generativity infer that the ability to Understand and Utilize Networks and Skill Building provide mentors with the necessary resources to assist their mentees. These resources allow the mentee to "maneuver through social institutions" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80), disrupt spaces in order to "challenge inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80) and equip mentors with the necessary capital to provide

“instrumental and emotional support” (Yosso, 2005, p.79). The two tools that emerged are necessary in the mentoring relationships so that the mentee becomes resourceful and able overcome challenges and become prepared for future endeavors. Understanding and Utilizing Networks is the first tool of the subtheme Generativity and is discussed in the next section.

**Understanding and utilizing networks.** The ability to understand the value of one’s own network and to be able to utilize it so that others can prosper from it provide mentors with another tool that is critical in the Latinx mentoring relationships. For many Latinx mentees, especially those just starting college, their networks may not exist or are not large enough to assist them in reaching their academic goals. A mentor who understands the mentees networking limitations can provide resources to help the mentee grow his or her own network. Throughout the interviews, seven participants provided a detailed description of how this subtheme become an integral part of their mentoring relationships.

The experiences shared by Bromine allude to the notion that Understanding and Utilizing Networks allows for the mentee to thrive on connections in order to cultivate success. In the particular shared experience, Bromine discussed his connections as they helped students navigate social institutions and made connections for their futures.

When it comes to some programs or people that students have had to deal with, we can get them connected with different resources. Letting them know which offices on campus will be more receptive to their needs or to what they are looking for. Like if they are looking for funding, if they are looking for just people to talk about their future, and just things like that... some of the students

that worked for me in these last few years, there's been a few times where I've connected them to a different organizations, departments, or colleagues that I know which in turn kind of got them into a job, internship, or kind of helped them out in their major. A lot of the students that worked for us were interested in graduate school so I got them connected to a professor.

Connecting mentees to resources is an important part of the mentoring relationship. In particular, for Latinx mentors, connections are critical especially when it comes to future goals. The ability to help a mentee by introducing him or her to someone who can solve his or her dilemma demonstrates a sense of priority and support for the mentee.

Fluorine's reflection presented a similar experience regarding connections and its ability to provide the necessary capital to gain access to social institutions. Fluorine's particular shared experience centered on the role of social institutions and mentees trying to gain access.

I do see it happening in my role and the importance of it being developed within myself and my students. When I see the word social institutions, I think of them as these institutions that hold a power. A power I do not have right now. The only way to get that power is to get in there and connect with those individuals in order to get that power to influence the experiences of the students here on campus... I need to make sure that I also have resources that I can then share with my mentee in order to alleviate the anxiety attached to new places and new people. It is an obligation and if I don't, then why am I doing what I am doing? Continuing to build that capital is really important.

Cultivating capital is critical for Latinx mentors. The more capital that the mentor can build, the more resources he or she can provide his or her mentee in order to gain access to those closed social institutions.

Hydrogen's experience assigns value to his connections by using his contacts as a way to open closed doors. Hydrogen's particular shared experience relates to helping his mentee meet a professor on campus that he had been trying to speak with for quite a while. Hydrogen happened to know the professor quite well and was able to assist his mentee in meeting him. "Everyone needs someone to help them out and be there for them... Acknowledging that we are all in this struggle together. It is ok to have someone intercept for them and say "hook'em up man." Connections and resources can equip mentors with the necessary capital they need to assist their mentees in overcoming obstacles. In particular, Latinx mentors understand that it takes more than providing the mentor with a name or contact but often requires a more personal intervention in order to accomplish the task.

Much like Hydrogen's, Nitrogen's experience focused on the idea of mentee providing support through his diverse organization connections. Nitrogen's particular experience focused on advising his mentee to connect with Latino based organizations but also with organizations that represent different ethnicities. In doing so, the mentee was able to build his own social capital that assisted him in his future endeavors.

For students, they focus a lot on Latino based organizations. I think that is great, but I think we need to focus on other organizations and other networks to build Social Capital with other cultures. Part of being this support system for Latinos

but being in contact with other races as well... That is what really is going to open up the doors for them.

Expanding one's own capital by creating a diverse group of resources to pull from is another method used by Latinx mentors. In this particular instance, networking with others who may represent a different ethnicity and or culture can prepare the mentee through dialogue and interactions with those outside of his or her own community.

Helium's experience is similar to those of Hydrogen and Nitrogen. Helium's particular shared experience centered on utilizing her networks in order to give her the ability to connect mentees with other mentors in order to build stronger mentoring relationships. The particular experience shared by Helium involved connecting her current mentees with other mentors so that the mentee was able to build strong relationships and build her own set of resources for future assistance, "I have been very fortunate in building a great network of professionals across the State of Texas and across our campus. Connecting our students with different mentorship relationships."

Connecting mentees to other mentors outside of their communities is another method used to create and build resources for mentees. The larger the mentoring community becomes for the mentee the more he or she will be able to connect with, as his or her community grows.

Lithium shared a similar experience in that her role as an advisor connects her to a wealth of services that students including her mentees are able to take utilize. Lithium's experience concentrated on providing numerous resources to her STEM mentees so that they became equipped with the proper tools to overcome academic and social challenges.

We have such a surplus of services offered here to help students. We have those specific STEM studies in the library that are geared towards chemistry, physics, [and] calculus. Once again, because we have nonacademic counselors. We count on them. We even have counselors we can refer these students [too] at a very discounted rate, which [they] pay like ten bucks a session which is great. Definitely using those social networks is a good idea. There is also different success programs. Students who are on probation, they get assigned a mentor and a student mentor that kind of help them navigate the university.

University resources are another way mentors connect with their mentees. Due to the amount of resources provided, many are unheard of or unknown by the mentees. Therefore, as a mentor it becomes increasingly important to help the mentee sift through all the programs to find ones that will benefit him or her.

Beryllium's experience regarding collaborations and connections was similar to the other mentors. Beryllium's particular experience concentrated on helping her mentees by calling on those that she knows to provide resources and assistance in order to further goals.

I believe in collaboration in a big way, so that is what I encourage. Whom we can call on, whom can you connect with if you have this interest. Teaching those kinds of things is important. Just those kinds of things so they feel that they can reach out and call on people for help... I think of resources, social resources that I can introduce my mentee to, helping them connect with someone who can help further their goals.

Understanding the mentee's goals and relating them to the mentors' resources is another method utilized in mentoring relationships. In particular, Latinx mentors utilize their own capital to benefit their mentees. Quite often, Latinx mentors find opportunities to introduce their mentees to others who can advance his or her goals.

As noted by the experiences shared, Understanding and Utilizing Networks has a central role in equipping mentees with the ability to build and grow their networks of people for which they can benefit from. The experiences shared by the mentors confirm the importance of Understanding and Utilizing Networks in mentoring relationships. For mentors, Understanding and Utilizing Networks is a tool that has the ability to build the necessary skills and capital in the mentee needed to gain access spaces that will benefit them. The last tool identified in the subtheme Generativity is Skill Building.

**Skill building.** The last tool that emerged from the analysis of data includes Skill Building. Skill Building is utilized in mentoring relationships to help develop the mentee academically, socially, and professionally. By building skills, the mentee can open doors and gain visibility by expanding his or her network upon demonstrating his or her new or refined skills. Throughout the interviews, seven participants provided a detailed description of how this tool become an integral part of their mentoring relationships allowing their mentees to become resourceful, self-sufficient, and able to approach obstacles in a skillful manner.

Carbon's experience provides an understanding of how mentors prepare their mentees professionally. In the particular experience shared by Carbon, he speaks about constant preparation and practice to prepare for interviews and to refine his mentee's interviewing skills. Through this experience, Carbon was able to not only prepare his

mentee for his upcoming job interview but also prepare him for the rest of his life by refining those skills needed in the professional world in order to develop and advance.

One of the main areas he and I worked on were his soft skills in preparation for job interviews. I first advised him to look for some positions he wanted online. He also researched and studied interview questions. Once he found his ideal positions, we spoke about why he felt he was qualified for the position and how he would articulate his abilities to a potential employer. This was a great opportunity for him to learn how to speak towards his abilities and experiences. It was also a great learning experience for him to hear himself speak and articulate his words and skills. It is not easy to gather your thoughts under pressure one on one. We spent several weeks practicing and did several mock interviews until he was comfortable and confident. Although he has not found the right position for himself yet, we both felt more confident in his abilities to speak positively towards his qualities and abilities. I am honored and thankful to have been able to be a part of his life in this way.

The ability to work with a mentee to prepare him or her for his or her future is a positive experience for the mentor. Not only does the mentor have the ability to see first-hand how his or her mentee has grown over time but the mentor also has the ability to shape his or her mentee's future and ensure that the skills he or her introduce into his or her life are internalized and used to better him or herself.

Lithium's experience attest to notion that mentees need to become resourceful in order to build the necessary skills to thrive on a college campus. Lithium's particular

experience concentrated on equipping her mentees with the right tools and information to promote self-sufficiency.

I try to make themselves self-sufficient... you always hear “well I didn’t know about that” or and with a lot of students I always tell them “Google is your best friend” ...you want to be able to guide them but at the same time you need to let them sometime falter before they succeed.

Creating self-sufficiency within the mentee is important as it provides him or her with the skills to thrive on a college campus and as well as into the future. In particular, for Latinx mentors, self-sufficiency becomes vital to the mentoring relationship as it demonstrates that the mentee is responding positively to the mentor by growing and advancing his or her own skill set.

Beryllium’s sentiments echoed Lithium’s experiences regarding Skill Building. Beryllium’s shared experienced focused on soft skills and preparing the mentee for entering the professional world, “...just those basic soft skills to help you to be able to maneuver those circles that you’re going in to have quite often when you have a professional [role].” For students, soft skills may not be inherent. Therefore, it becomes the job of the mentor to ensure that those skills are passed along to the mentee so that he or she has the opportunity to refine them prior to entering the professional world. Within the Latinx community, soft skills have the ability to level the playing field and promote leadership through enriching workplace etiquette, interviewing protocol, as well as time management.

Hydrogen's experience as a mentor provided insight into why Skill Building is necessary in order to disrupt spaces. Hydrogen's particular shared experience focused on disrupting closed spaces so that the mentee can be recognized.

I try and be there for them to get what they need so that they can fight the system from within. You know a lot of people want to fight it from the outside, but no, you should fight it from the inside by getting into these spaces, challenging them, and disrupting them. How you can do that is [by] succeeding and giving them a big “fuck you” and by not going down. We have the same right to be at the table as any other person.

The ability to learn how to gain access to closed spaces and disrupt them from within is another skill Latinx mentors find important in imparting to their mentees. Representing marginalized populations, Latinxs have become accustomed to closed spaces and finding ways to gain access. Imparting this knowledge and working with the mentee to develop the ability to disrupt these spaces is important in developing his or her identity and social consciousness.

Fluorine's experience centered on both space and support working in concert so that the mentee is able to grow as a student and a leader. Fluorine's shared experience illustrated the value of being in diverse spaces and recognizing the value of those spaces especially in predominately White spaces.

How can we help them understand the value of being in multiple spaces? My students are very resistant to walking into this office because it is very White dominated. I walk out and they see a brown face they are like, “Oh so that’s our advisor.” On top of that, as they rise into leadership roles they start to realize what

this office is about and what this structure is about. It has a lot of processes that are not standard in Communities of Color, so I help navigate my students' experiences with those processes. I help my students navigate those processes, protect them from those processes, or I give them the language in order to fight those processes...[I ask,] "What are you doing now to better understand those spaces those real-world spaces, you're going to be perceived in certain ways. You are not going to think critically about those experiences because for you that is how things are but no, it is not how things are. You are letting this system determine how you are going to be treated and allowing it to stay the same. So how can you identify the inequities in that system in order to change them wherever you go?" That is why I do that.

Recognizing diverse spaces and the value that is assigned to them helps mentees navigate institutions in a more confident way. The ability for the Latinx mentor to guide the mentee through these spaces and teaching him or her the value of disrupting these spaces imparts knowledge that can benefit him or her throughout his or her entire life. Especially as he or she continues to encounter even more closed spaces throughout his or her life.

Helium's experience centered on providing support and Skill Building through her campus role. Helium's particular shared experience illustrated the complexities of campus policies and the students' right to protest on campus. Although she was not able to join her students, she mentored them by providing insight and understanding in relation to their concerns.

I can support them help them in policy...educating students and mentees about their rights and responsibilities of what they are allowed to do and not do. Sharing that knowledge with them has also been fruitful.

Understanding the concerns of the mentee and being able to respond in a way that helps him or her address his or her concerns is another tool utilized by the mentor. In particular, the Latinx mentors are called to go beyond especially during times of racial crisis as what was experienced by Helium and her mentees. The ability to provide insight and guidance on a campus setting while maintaining one's professional role illustrates that Helium's role, as a mentor can be more involved than other mentors' roles.

Nitrogen's experience concentrated on the ability to show mentees how to grow professionally. Nitrogen's particular shared experienced illustrated his resourcefulness as a mentor in guiding his mentees towards professional development while growing his own skills and methods to help future mentees.

Guiding mentees to resources is the easiest way to help them grow. It is also empowering to me, as a mentor since every mentee I help allows me to discover new resources to help the next. Showing them the thought process, not just what to do, but why. Why is networking important? What motivates people?

Understanding these allows people to produce strategies for their goals and roadmaps to success

Building the skills of the mentee does ensure roadmaps towards success. Latinx mentors quite often work with their mentees to develop these skills and processes to make him or her successful not only academically but also professionally. In addition, for many of the

mentors the process become reciprocal because it allows the mentor to grow alongside the mentee improving the development of both parties.

As noted by the experiences shared, Skill Building has a primary role in preparing mentees with the ability to develop professionally and prepare them for post college endeavors. The experiences shared by the mentors confirm the importance of social responsibility in preparing mentees to contribute to the betterment of society, their communities, and their lives through networking and Skill Building.

### **Summary**

The study shares the experiences of the Latinx mentor and the role of CCW within the mentoring relationships. Through their unique stories, the Latinx mentors shared their experiences and revealed how Relational Capital, its subthemes or characteristics, and tools became significant assets to their mentoring relationships. Relational Capital represented in their experiences provided the mentor with a strong foundation for building a relationship and ultimately leading the mentee down a path towards academic success. Each mentor's shared experiences were unique, however his or her drive and passion for mentoring centers on the goal of improving the lives of his or her mentee. This single goal remained constant and consistent with each experience shared.

In addition, the mentors in this study have contributed to the understanding of powerful role of the mentor and the unique attributes that they bring with them when utilizing their CCW forms of capital. Each mentor serves as a powerful reminder that mentoring is necessary and needed in higher education. The passion that each of these mentors brings with them is something that institutions of higher learning can use to its

advantage in order to improve the educational experience for all students. I hope that the mentors' experiences have the ability to inspire others to consider mentoring to help improve the outcomes of students within their own communities.

Chapter VI shall present a summary of the study, a discussion of the findings as they relate to Yosso's (2005) CCW framework, and a new framework will be introduced. In addition, implications as they relate to research and policy will be presented in order to answer the second research question of this dissertation study. Lastly, a review of the significance of the study and recommendations for future research will also be discussed.

## **VI. Discussion**

### **Summary of the Study**

Nationwide there is a call to action to increase the retention and graduation rates of Latinx in colleges and universities (Krogstad, 2016). Of the many methods universities and colleges have employed to increase resiliency and persistence, mentoring continues to be an effective method for serving those students who are historically underrepresented (Girves, et al., 2005). Presently, there is a dearth in the literature as it pertains to the study of the mentors' experiences and in particular Latinxs' experiences. With the rise in the Latinx has become a national priority for institutions of higher learning (Girves, et al., 2005).

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of Latinx mentors, the role of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) in their mentoring relationships, and to illuminate the voice of the mentors. Utilizing Yosso's (2005) CCW model as my framework, this study sought to determine how the six forms of capital (Yosso, 2005) influenced the Latinx mentors' mentoring abilities and to identify new forms of capital that are valuable in the mentoring relationship by answering the following three research questions

- 1.) What are the lived experiences of professional Latinxs who serve as formal mentors at institutions of higher education in Central Texas to Latinx college students?
- 2.) How can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning?

3.) What role does Community Cultural Wealth have in the Latinx mentoring relationship?

This study was able to increase the literature that focuses on the topic of Latinx mentoring. Through this research, I was able to provide a detailed description of the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor. Additionally, in this study, I utilized Yosso's (2005) CCW theory to examine the role that the six forms of capital have in Latinx mentoring relationships as well as the new form of capital that emerged from these relationships.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This chapter of the study discusses one major finding that emerged from the analysis of data. The major finding that Latinx mentors bring into their mentoring relationships is Relational Capital, which is comprised of three subthemes, and eight tools. The first subtheme, Compassion affords the mentor the opportunity to connect with the mentee utilizing Hope and Inspiration as tools. The second subtheme that Latinx mentors bring into their mentoring relationships is Experiential, which provides mentors with the ability to relate to mentees by using Shared Experiences, Extension of Family, The Culture of the Shared Meal, and Code Switching as tools. The last subtheme that Latinx mentors bring into their mentoring relationships is Generativity, which allows mentors to utilize their networks to connect their mentees socially and professionally and to develop their mentees academically through Skill Building tools. The following section provides a detailed discussion regarding the study as it relates to the final research question, the role of CCW, and the theme that emerged from the findings.

## **Finding One: Relational Capital's First Characteristic of Compassion**

Reviewing the experiences of the participants, it is of interest that the dialogue surrounding Compassion really focused on Hope and Inspiration, which links to Torres' (2006) findings that Latinx college students who are mentored have a stronger institutional commitment and intent to persist during their academic career. In addition, Compassion and its tools Hope and Inspiration are considered emotional supportive mentoring constructs that aid in nurturing a positive mentoring relationship (Avery & Daly, 2010; Garringer, 2014; Salas, et al., 2014; Treviño, et al., 2014). Although the participants expressed the use of Compassion in their mentoring relationships, they conveyed that Hope and Inspiration is delivered in very different methods that provide a rich mentoring environment for the mentee to excel academically (Phinney, et al., 2011). Helium assisted and mentored her mentee through times of personal crisis by utilizing Hope. Lithium utilized Hope as a way to assist her DACA mentees by planning for their futures. Beryllium relied on Hope to advance the career aspirations of her mentees. Carbon applied Hope as a way to encourage his mentee to work towards the betterment of his own professional self. Lastly, Hydrogen applied Hope as way to provide constant encouragement for his mentee to reach his dreams.

Inspiration was provided as a way to influence the mentees' abilities to persist while providing the necessary moral support needed to better themselves academically. Bromine was able to inspire his mentees through constant encouragement that centered on "thinking big" and setting the mentee up for future success. Lithium utilized Inspiration as avenue to resolve obstacles conveying, "we are not always in [a] direct line from A to B" and getting her mentees to think about all scenarios that will produce the

same results. Nitrogen inspired his mentees through his role modeling and ability to relate to his mentee's upbringing by discussing "I always tell them I came from the same school I was raised by a single mother." Fluorine's ability to instill Inspiration in her mentees was derived from her belief that "Even as a professional, we want to impact young professionals." Through this belief, she not only chose to be the best role model she could but she also connected her mentees to other role models who could serve as inspiration in visualizing their future selves. Hydrogen was able to inspire his mentees to follow his example as he shared the following sentiment "He is going to do the same thing I did at this university and so the cycle continues... I can see how he is growing and that he has followed my footsteps." Helium ability to inspire was conveyed through teaching moments as she discussed "we have had a lot of really good teaching moments for that. "This is what I did, this didn't work out..." Lastly, Beryllium inspired her mentees to persist through her ability to relate to their personal struggles and challenges as she stated, "It is good to know and hear "hey we all put our pants on one leg at a time." I really think it is powerful for young people to hear that or to learn about your own struggles."

Compassion at its most granular state infers the sentiment of feeling for the other person and when mentoring with compassion, it is essential that a caring relationship be established. Referencing the work of Boyatzis (2006), mentoring has the ability to support meaningful change in a person, his or her behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. Through compassion, both the mentor and the mentee achieve self-discoveries and psychophysiological benefits including ways of achieving one's ideal self.

Related closely to Confucian philosophy's virtue of benevolence, those who identify as having compassion do so to help others move towards achieving their desired goals, reach their dreams, and aspirations. Having Compassion allows a mentor to take a step back and begin to focus on the mentee and whatever his or her situation maybe at that time. Those mentors who demonstrate Compassion view a mentee's experience from the perspective of what does the mentee need most right now in order to succeed? How can I help the mentee progress and grow? Can I as a mentor be a positive model for the mentee? What else can I do that I am not doing to help my mentee? Referencing the experiences of the mentors who participated in this study, they each demonstrated a significant psychological and social impact that compassion is able to have on mentees through behavioral changes and changes in one's own self-image.

Given that compassion covers a broad range of constructs from emotional behavioral human tendencies, it can be argued that Compassion can drive pro-academic behavior amongst mentees. For many Latinx college students the Compassion characteristic and the tools used by their mentors, Hope and Inspiration, resonate deeply with them. Latinxs dream of bettering their futures through education. Retention of Latinx college students becomes plausible when Compassion is utilized. Based on the findings, Compassion is more a call to action it is an internal drive to help the mentees achieve their goals. The literature previously presented and the research that emerged from this dissertation study demonstrates that opportunities arise where Compassion and its tools can be utilized to improve the mentoring relationship and outcomes of the mentor. As noted by the Shared Experiences, Compassion played a critical role in the successes of their mentoring relationships.

While it may be difficult to control external environments, giving mentors the tools to increase their own Compassion is feasible. Tools that mentors need to develop their Compassion include creating an environment where compassion is nurtured by being positive in interactions with mentees. Broadening our own views of who receives compassion by being present in the lives our mentees and believing in their dreams through Inspiration. By seeking to understand the perspectives of the mentee, by engaging in dialogue and by actively listening to their stories, mentors can have a lasting impression on a mentee's psyche and ability to persist. Lastly, by being consistent in providing Hope, mentors have the ability to develop a growth mindset in their mentees to push towards achieving their goals. The tools identified serve as additional ways for mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning to reach Latinx mentees and help build a strong foundation for success.

### **Finding Two: Relational Capital's Second Characteristic of Experiential**

For mentors, the subtheme Experiential has the ability to aid in the formation of new mentoring relationship that promote trust, closeness, and create a foundation for academic success by strengthening communication skills with the mentee. This characteristic is founded on the idea of cultural experiences are inherently linked to a set of shared norms, beliefs, and behaviors common amongst a set of people. These shared norms, beliefs, and values are experiences that both the mentor and mentee relate to and draw from.

The idea that mentors have the ability to relate to their mentees through Shared Experiences demonstrates that mentors are viewed as individuals who have endured similar experiences. An example of this is found in the literature and relates to financial

hardships experienced by Latinx college students (Cuellar, 2015; Gross, et al., 2014, Núñez, et al., 2013). In particular Helium utilized Shared Experiences as a way to gain trust as she discussed “Sharing in those familial experiences overall have helped shape and influence the mentoring that occurs.” This was similar to Nitrogen as he stated, “They believe you and trust you. If they can see that I have gone through something similar than they can really relate to you.” Lithium was able to draw from her own Shared Experiences to grow her mentoring relationship by stating, “Just because of my background, my experiences, being able to establish to somebody based on having the same type of family value or growing up with the same type of family environment.” Bromine was able to use his Shared Experiences as a way to help his mentee overcome challenging environments as he discussed “I think they come to realize that those Shared Experiences are important and that they can use those tools to help them out.” Beryllium was able to apply her Shared Experiences to the mentoring relationship by becoming relatable and discussing with her mentees, “I think in when you are able to share the fact that everyone doubts themselves and be vulnerable with your own experiences and feelings then it helps them see that you can make it.” Lastly, Hydrogen used his Shared Experiences to demonstrate to his mentees that he too overcame similar hardships as he discussed, “It has a lot to do with the fact that, for example we are at the same schools, the same fields, and happen to be [scholarship recipients] so we know the struggle.”

Related closely to the similarity-attraction paradigm, research indicates that Latinxs tend to identify with mentors who are of the same cultural background (Sánchez, Colón-Torres, Feuer, Roundfield, & Berardi, 2014). Additionally, previous research suggests that identities, especially racial and ethnic, have a critical role in the

development of the mentee resulting in positive psychological functions. Relating closely to the previously mentioned research finding, the results of this study lend themselves to those findings, which indicate that pairing Latinx college students with Latinx mentors provides an assurance of cultural affinity (Torres, 2006) and positive psychological functions. In addition, supporting the findings of this study, previous research suggests that the pairing of Latinx mentors with Latinx college students, helps to foster connections that keep students engaged while in college (Deruy, 2016). Moreover, since many Latinx college students face racial isolation on campuses (Castellanos, et al., 2006) it becomes prudent for mentors with similar cultural values and experiences to nurture the mentee's sense of belonging, academic, and social adjustments needed to thrive on campus (Andrada, 2007; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Nora & Crisp, 2008; Sinanam, 2016; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006; Salas, et al., 2014). Similar cultural values and beliefs has led to Latinx college students becoming more empowered for future endeavors (Cuellar, 2015).

Familialism became apparent in the research as the mentors saw themselves as an extension of the mentee's family. This perception became critical in building trust with the mentee so that the relationship was able to grow and flourish in such a way that the mentee became comfortable in sharing privileged or private information with the mentor. In addition, mentors who were perceived to be an extension of the family were to maintain fruitful relationships and improve their mentees' ability to build relational skills with others. As it relates to the literature, the Extension of Family is culturally significant for Latinx college students. Often time's students may have the emotional support to attend college but the immediate family is unable to support their children with the

necessary capital, knowledge, or assistance needed (Crisp & Cruz, 2010, Harrell & Forney, 2003). This is especially important for the mentors to recognize and circumvent through the mentoring relationships. Nitrogen was able to utilize Extension of Family as a tool in order to assist them in navigating an unfamiliar environment like college as he discussed, “I was like a big brother in college to guide them through that while they go through college.” Fluorine employed Extension of Family as a tool in order to help her mentees understand the value of having a family away from home as she stated, “They are primarily sisters, so I talk about sisterhood and empowering each other.” Lithium’s drew from her Extension of Family as a way to relate to her mentees who share the same cultural values and upbringing as she states, “Because of my background, I guess and my experiences, it being able to establish to somebody based on having the same type of family value or growing up with the same type of family environment.” Similarly, Bromine applied the Extension of Family as a way to grow closer to his mentees and build a closer connection as he discussed, “I know that in some of the mentoring relationships, I have had closer connections to students who maybe have very similar backgrounds.” Lastly, much like Lithium and Bromine, Hydrogen was able to use Extension of Family in his mentoring relationships as way to build trust as he stated, “Most important it is an extension of the family member... and that is why we click... because I remind them of their family members.”

The Culture of the Shared Meal becomes significant in the mentor/mentee relationship as a way to bond and communicate in a comfortable and recognizable setting. For many, breaking bread with friends and loved ones, a universal concept, serves as a vehicle to bring people together because cultures and heritages are being

shared through the nourishment and enjoyment of food. Hydrogen utilized The Culture of the Shared Meal as a way to grow with his mentees as he stated, “I have shared meals with him. I myself have grown with him as well.” Helium applied The Culture of the Shared Meal as a way to connect with her mentee as she discussed, “A big thing for my family is bonding over food. For a lot [of my mentees], it’s come over and eat in my house.” Lastly, Carbon applied The Culture of the Shared Meal in order to bond and gain trust with his mentee as he discussed, “A great way for he and I to become more comfortable with each other was to enjoy breakfast tacos.”

Lastly, Code Switching became apparent in the findings as critical to the mentoring relationship because it provides a method for self-preservation of who one is in times of uncertainty or unfamiliarity. Although language is perceived to be a barrier for many Latinx students, bilingualism is valuable as it allows for Latinxs to communicate in other languages, navigate who they are within a large diverse community, and improve their social skills. Code Switching provides mentees with the ability to understand whom the mentor is, where the mentor comes from, in addition to sharing similar cultural identities and backgrounds. For many, bilingualism became something to be revered and valued in the mentoring relationship. As imparted by the mentors, the ability to code switch was not only seen as a skill but a way to relate to the mentee by identifying with his or her traditions and customs while providing them with a comfort level only found in the home or with close family. Hydrogen utilized Code Switching as a tool to relate to the mentee’s family, traditions, and customs as he stated, “I think it reminds them of home. That is why we click so much, because I remind them of their family members.” Carbon applied Code Switching as a way to demonstrate

teachable moments involving language and he discussed “Some aspects of language Spanish or English will be appropriate or not in certain times.” Nitrogen used Code Switching in order to provide teachable moments Code Switching assisted in communicating instructions in a way that the mentee understood by stating, “We would speak a different language but the concept of learning was still the same.” Fluorine applied Code Switching in order to demonstrate the power of bilingualism and representing one’s culture as she discussed, “I advise a multicultural organization...my students congregate outside my office. I go outside and let them know that they can very much speak in Spanish [and say] “Hey you can speak Spanish too!” Helium used Code Switching as a method to convey messages and advice in a way that her mentee would understand as she stated, “being able to communicate with them in Spanish and have those conversations with them assisted me... But yah, being able to communicate has really helped.” Lastly, Beryllium used Code Switching as a way to convey the importance of bilingualism ensure that her mentee saw the Spanish language as a form of strength by discussing, “She spoke Spanish and I wanted to help her see it as a strength.... It is something to value...So for me it’s important that they recognize that it is important and valuable.”

Homogeneity reflected in the Shared Experiences, Extension of Family, The Culture of the Shared Meal, and Code Switching became critical factors in the success of the mentees’ experiences. The four tools that emerged from the analysis of data have the ability to form fruitful mentoring relationships. The tools highlighted serve are additional ways for mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning to encourage and form successful relationships with Latinx college students.

### **Finding Three: Relational Capital's Third Characteristic of Generativity**

Mentoring has shifted over the years from being hierarchical towards becoming more open and flexible, mentoring relationships have begun to foster a culture that focuses on learning, sharing, and growing. Educational institutions are not the only place where students learn and prepare for their futures. In today's world, students are more likely to accept less traditional and more unconventional ways of acquiring knowledge and looking outside the classroom walls for opportunities to grow themselves. One such way is through mentoring. Through the avenue of mentoring, mentors have the ability to make tacit knowledge more explicit.

For mentors, understanding the value of their networks, using their connections to benefit others is considered a transfer of the mentor's wealth. By transferring a mentor's wealth, the mentee then has the ability to gain access to valuable social institutions that may have been previously closed. As research indicates, mentees look for mentors who are well connected and able to provide him or her with access to closed environments (Rudolph, et al., 2015), improve both academic and social integration (Ceballo, 2004; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007), connect better with the campus community (Torres and Hernandez, 2009), and improve a mentee's social identity (Wilson, et al., 2012). Bromine utilized his networks as a way for his mentees to navigate social institutions as well as make connections for their futures as he stated, "When it comes to some programs or people that students have had to deal with, we can get them connected with different resources." Fluorine applied her networks in order to assist her mentees in gaining access to closed institutions as she discussed, "I need to make sure that I also have resources that I can then share with my mentee in order to alleviate the anxiety attached to new places

and new people. It is an obligation." Hydrogen drew from his networks in order to assist his mentees in meeting others who were influential in the mentee's life as he discussed, "Everyone needs someone to help them out and be there for them... Acknowledging that we are all in this struggle together. It is ok to have someone intercept for them and say "hook'em up man." Nitrogen utilized his network as a way to assist the mentee in making connections with diverse campus organizations when as he stated, "I think we need to focus on other organizations and other networks to build Social Capital with other cultures. Part of being this support system for Latinos but being in contact with other races as well." Helium utilized her networks in order to give her the ability to connect mentees with other mentors in order to build stronger mentoring relationships as she discussed, "I have been very fortunate in building a great network of professionals across the State of Texas and across our campus. Connecting our students with different mentorship relationships." Lithium drew from her networks to assist her mentees to a wealth of services that students including her mentees are able to take utilize as she stated, "We have such a surplus of services offered here to help students." Lastly, Beryllium used her networks to demonstrate the power of collaboration and connections with resourceful individuals as she discussed, "I believe in collaboration in a big way... I think of resources, social resources that I can introduce my mentee to, helping them connect with someone who can help further their goals."

For mentors, Generativity comes in the form of teaching and passing along talents, skills, or insight that contributes towards the development of the mentee academically or professionally and as a way to improve the mentee's confidence (Torres & Hernandez, 2009). Through the lens of Generativity, mentees are the ones who are

initiated into cultures, conventions, knowledge, and practices of a community or social institution that they are to gain access to. Through the process of understanding these cultures, conventions, knowledge, and practices mentees are able to experience what Schön (1983) considers knowledge in action. From the research, knowledge in action becomes the soft skills that mentors pass on to their mentees. Whether it be how to search for information, how to network, or how to interview, these skills become important in preparing the mentee to address and overcome obstacles or to prepare the mentees for the next chapter of their lives. Carbon utilized Skill Building as a help his mentees prepare professionally for the next chapter of their lives by discussing, "One of the main areas he and I worked on were his soft skills in preparation for job interviews...We spent several weeks practicing and did several mock interviews until he was comfortable and confident." Similarly, Beryllium utilized a soft skill approach as a way to prepare the mentee for entering the professional world when she discussed, "just those basic soft skills to help you to be able to maneuver those circles that you're going into have quite often when you have a professional role." Much like Carbon and Beryllium, Nitrogen utilized Skill Building as a way to grow his mentees professionally as he discussed, "Guiding mentees to resources is the easiest way to help them grow...Showing them the taught process, not just what to do, but why." Lithium applied Skill Building as a way to increase the resourcefulness of the mentee and to ensure his or her productivity as students by stating, ""I try to make themselves self-sufficient... You want to be able to guide them but at the same time you need to let them sometimes falter before they succeed." Fluorine applied Skill Building as a way to assist her mentees to grow as a student and a leader when she discussed, ""as they rise into leadership roles they start to

realize what this office is about and what this structure is about...so I help navigate my students' experiences with those processes. I help my students navigate those processes, protect them from those processes, or I give them the language in order to fight those processes." Lastly, Helium utilized Skill Building as a way to provide support to her mentee's through her professional role on campus when she stated, "I can support them help them in policy...Educating students and mentees about their rights and responsibilities...Sharing that knowledge with them has also been fruitful."

The tools that have the ability to build the necessary assets in the mentee needed to gain access to spaces, challenge oppositional behavior, and disrupt systems. The tools highlighted provide mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning with a better understanding of Compassion, Experiential, and Generativity as well as the value each provide to the mentee. Utilizing the concepts originated from Yosso's (2005) CCW model, the emergent form of capital and tools found in this dissertation study, a model (see figure 6.1) was developed which materialized as a result of the study's findings. The model best synthesizes the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor, the role of CCW, and the tools that are used to best serve Latinx mentor and mentees. Again, as it relates to the literature presented, cultural mentoring provides Latinx students with the varied levels of support needed in the home, school, or community (Zalaquett & Lopez, 2007). In particular, this model is one that is circular, constant, and supported by additional layers of support that the mentor brings into the mentoring relationship.

The model brings attention to the role of the Latinx mentor and the various forms of capital that surround and support the mentee so that universities have the ability to increase the academic resiliency and persistence rates of the Latinx student community (Campos, et al., 2009; Hu, & Ma, 2010; Reyes, 2011; Rudolph, et al., 2015).



Figure 6.1 The Latinx Mentor Framework

## **Implications**

The findings of this study are able to answer research question number two, how can the experiences of Latinx mentors be used as a tool to inform the work of other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning? The findings suggest that the role of CCW for mentors is significant in building a strong foundation for the mentee and academic success. The identified tools provide other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions of higher learning with the ways and methods that can attest to practices that promote growth, persistence, and resiliency among the mentees. The lived experiences of the mentors illustrate that their own CCW and the six forms of capital that they bring to the mentoring relationship are building and sustaining a mentoring relationship that has the ability to flourish and improve the lives of the mentee. The success of the mentors' experiences illustrates that Hope, Inspiration, Extension of Family, Shared Experiences, The Culture of the Family Meal, Understanding and Utilizing Networks, Skill Building, and Code Switching are critical tools for sustaining mentoring relationships.

The findings suggest that the six forms of capital, Aspirational, Familial, Linguistic, Social, Resistant, and Navigational played a prominent role in the mentoring relationships. The new form of capital, Relational Capital, its subthemes, and the tools, which emerged, provide strong opportunities for mentors to aid in the continued growth of their mentees. The forms of capital, both traditional and nontraditional, represent various ways that mentors can be part of the development of the mentee in order to reach academic success. The findings suggest that mentors should be deliberate about using this new form of capital in order to cultivate a relationship that promotes success.

For mentoring programs, the findings from this study may offer opportunities for understanding and enhancing mentoring programs. This research provides a strong foundation for discussion surrounding the value of the Latinx mentor in connection to overall academic persistence and resiliency of students in college. Moreover, the study urges that practitioners and administrators take note of mentoring programs that utilize culture based mentoring principles as part of the methodology for improving student outcomes.

In addition, the study revealed how Latinx mentors feel about their mentoring relationships and how those feelings influenced their commitment towards mentoring. This data has the potential to be useful to influence colleges and universities to support mentoring programs and identify future mentors in order to support college and university missions to increase academic persistence and resiliency rates among marginalized student communities. The study provides administrators and practitioners with the opportunity to hear from Latinx mentors regarding their experiences and their successes with mentoring. In particular, administrators and practitioners have the ability to promote mentoring as an asset for professional development and growing one own network of resources. Marketing and promoting the skills and assets acquired by becoming a mentor will be useful in identifying future potential mentoring talent.

This specific study highlights the Latinx mentoring experience and offers universities and colleges an avenue towards examining their own programs, approach towards identifying mentors, training mentors, retaining mentors, and improving the overall experience of the mentoring programs. The Latinx mentors in this study provide a lens for viewing the importance of recognizing their worth, the capital that they bring into

the mentoring relationship, and identifying the unknown capital that has assisted them in cultivating successful mentoring relationships.

### **Implications for Research**

This study was conducted to illuminate the voices of Latinx mentors, provide insight into how Latinx mentors perceive their impact on the lives of the mentees, decipher how Latinx mentors leverage their CCW in their mentoring relationships, and provide insight into policy and practice that develop and guide mentoring programs. My analysis of data provides insight for other mentors, mentoring programs, and institution, which is useful for future research studies, informing current practices and policy within the field of higher education. By gaining a better understanding of Latinx mentoring relationships, by understanding the experiences of the Latinx mentor, and by utilizing Yosso's (2005) framework in addition to the findings generated by this study will shape the development and foundation of current mentors and mentoring programs. Further, this study and its findings will be able to better equip policy makers, administrators, educators, and researchers with a more thorough understanding of the phenomena that surrounds the Latinx mentor and his or her mentoring relationships.

This study provides a strong foundation for future research regarding cultural mentoring, psychosocial mentoring, and undergraduate mentoring. The findings of this study encourage researchers to continue to investigate experiences related to the mentor. Potential avenues for additional research in this area could focus on the design and implementation of mentoring programs that focus on this specific ethnic population, specific academic disciplines such as science, technology, engineering, art, and or math (STEAM), programs that are designed to support specific genders, and or backgrounds

such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ). Since the study focused its attention on Latinx mentors in Central Texas who mentor at public institutions, conducting future studies that include Latinx mentors from other regions of Texas or states is considered to be essential. Considering the size of this dissertation study, only a small number of participants were contacted and interviewed. However, as there is an abundance of Latinx mentors across Texas and throughout the United States, obtaining their narratives has the potential to provide even richer research as well as a more comprehensive view of Latinx mentoring that has the potential to influence policy and practice.

In addition, due to the nature of the study and its intended purpose, only Latinx mentors from four-year institutions were asked to participate in the study. The inclusion of narratives from community college mentors as well as private mentoring programs unassociated with universities are needed in order to create a more in depth understanding of Latinx mentoring and the value associated with their practice. Therefore, the ability to conduct future research on Latinx mentors from community colleges and private mentoring programs is critical to the deeper understanding of Latinx mentoring.

Furthermore, researchers are able to utilize the data and findings gathered from this study to inform future studies that examine the growth mindset of the mentor as it relates to additional training methodologies to enhance the overall experience of the mentor and mentee. Since the study illuminated the voice of the Latinx mentor and described his or her mentoring experiences as it relates to various forms of capital,

learning, and training strategies could be further studied to identify effective models for preparing current and future Latinx mentors.

Lastly, the study demonstrated the applicability of Yosso's (2005) CCW framework towards Latinx mentoring relationships. Future research could implement similar studies utilizing Yosso's (2005) framework or other frameworks that focus on academic persistence and resiliency among marginalized student communities. Similarly, studies could also focus on non-marginalized student communities to determine if findings were consistent with the study.

### **Implications for Policy**

This study has the ability to be used to inform academic policies as they pertain to marginalized student communities and initiatives that are centered on improving academic resiliency, persistence, and graduation rates. For instance, there are current and future programs that focus on these subsets of the student population that can benefit from instituting a cultural mentoring construct into current programs to serve specific populations. In doing so, these student populations will be provided with the necessary tools to achieve academic success by creating a support network that provides them with the tools to develop their own effective strategies for maintaining academic responsibility and achieving academic success. Lastly, the findings of this study have the ability to affect training provided by mentoring programs especially when adopting the new framework identified in this dissertation study. In addition to the new framework, the study provides the mentors with an avenue for better understanding their own mentoring experiences, philosophy, and methodology. By preparing the mentors through training and with the necessary tools to perform at a much more culturally responsive and

sensitive approach, the mentors will have the ability to build a stronger ethnic and cultural consciousness. In addition, the study has the ability to allow for mentoring programs to examine their own approach towards training and reevaluate methodologies to better equip their training programs to include a more well-rounded approach towards cultural mentoring practices.

### **Review of the Significance of the Study**

This study provided an in-depth look at the experiences of Latinx mentors who mentored Latinx college students at public institutions across Texas. The phenomenological approach to the study allowed me to contribute to the sparse literature surrounding the mentors experience specifically, Latinx mentors and the role of CCW within their mentoring relationships. The study provided a lens in which to view Latinx mentors and the wealth of services that they provide institutions when working with marginalized communities in order to increase resiliency and persistence among the student population. Although, the research demonstrated that institutions are continuously working towards improving and sustaining efforts that promote persistence and resiliency it becomes important to look at other methods that focus on specific population subsets. Through cultural mentoring, universities and colleges have the ability to change the trajectory of student's paths, set up students for success, and improve graduation rates. In addition, the work of the mentor can influence universities to develop programs that assist students in navigating and understanding the collegiate environment and focus on change as a way to address cultural aspects when marginalized communities transition to college. By focusing on the cultural validating agents, mentors can begin to create an institutional culture found inside and outside of the classrooms. Through cultural

mentoring programs, universities have the ability to ensure that a community of tolerance is created, accepted, and promotes a sense of inclusivity among the student populations.

Lastly, this study demonstrated the value and the worth that Latinx mentors bring to the mentoring arena and specifically to colleges and universities. By highlighting the experiences of Latinx mentors, their voices have been illuminated and their experiences shared with other mentors, mentoring programs, and institutions in the hopes that mentors become more part of the current and future discourse surrounding support structures for college students.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study only scratched the surface of the significant work that mentors do each day with students throughout their academic lives. As a researcher, I would suggest that others continue to study mentors and/or the mentoring process by considering mixed methods or other qualitative measures. Implementing studies that review both qualitative and quantitative data of mentors and mentoring programs could be useful for better understanding other academic outcomes faced by students that focus on leadership, service learning, or post-graduation success. I hope that fellow researchers are inspired by this study and able to continue to contribute to the literature by providing empirical evidence that becomes instrumental for practitioners who seek to implement or improve support programs.

### **Conclusion**

I chose to pursue this study as a way to examine and better understand the experiences of the Latinx mentor who use CCW as way to achieve success in his or her mentoring relationships. The study provided a thorough understanding of the role of the

Latinx mentor and the significance of CCW. However, I hope that selected approach to the study, that being phenomenology has been insightful and has benefited the work of the mentor. As a mentor myself, the study reinforced my personal belief that the mentor has the ability to change the trajectory of a mentee's life or the course of his or her actions by simply being involved and becoming an advocate for reaching his or her dreams and creating a better life.

## APPENDIX SECTION

### APPENDIX A

#### IRB Approval Letter



In future correspondence please refer to 2017725  
May 21, 2017

Blanca Gamez  
Texas State University  
601 University Drive.  
San Marcos, TX 78666

Dear Ms. Gamez:

Your IRB application 2017725 titled "The Lived Experiences of the Latinx Mentor and the Role of Community Cultural Wealth" was reviewed and approved by the Texas State University IRB. It has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects' welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

1. In addition, the IRB found that you need to orient participants as follows: (1) signed informed consent is required; (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data; (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

This project is therefore approved at the Exempt Review Level

2. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. If you expand the project at a later date to use other instruments please re-apply. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and this approval, are maintained in the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance. Please report any changes to this approved protocol to this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monica Gonzales".  
Monica Gonzales  
IRB Regulatory Manager  
Office of Research Integrity and Compliance

CC: Dr. Melissa Martinez

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

601 University Drive | JCK #489 | San Marcos, Texas 78666-4616  
Phone: 512.245.2314 | fax: 512.245.3847 | [WWW.TXSTATE.EDU](http://WWW.TXSTATE.EDU)

*This letter is an electronic communication from Texas State University-San Marcos, a member of The Texas State University System.*

## **APPENDIX B**

### **REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION-PROGRAM E-MAIL**

Greetings [Insert Program Name],

I am conducting a research study in partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Education Degree in Adult, Professional, and Community Education at Texas State University. The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore the experiences of Latinx\* professionals that work on university campuses and serve as mentors to Latinx college students, outside their formal job duties, through mentoring programs on their university campuses. The study will give voice to the Latinx mentor and contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding academic persistence and resiliency of Latinx college students through mentoring programs.

Participants for this study will be selected from various universities in Central Texas who meet the primary criteria for study inclusion (a) identify as a Latinx professional who is a formal mentor outside of their professional role, (b) formally mentored for five or more consecutive years, (c) serve as a mentor at their respective institutions of higher learning, (d) mentor Latinx college students, and lastly (e) willing to participate in the study and share their experiences.

If you know of a potential participant within your program who meets the qualifications listed above and would like to participate in this study, please contact me at [bj1103@txstate.edu](mailto:bj1103@txstate.edu) and include the potential participant's name and e-mail address so that I may contact the individual.

Should you have any questions about participation in this study, please contact Blanca Gamez by phone at (512) 709-2625 or by e-mail at [bj1103@txstate.edu](mailto:bj1103@txstate.edu). You may also contact the IRB Chair, Dr. Jon Lasser 512-245-3413 – ([lasser@txstate.edu](mailto:lasser@txstate.edu)) or Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2314 - ([meg201@txstate.edu](mailto:meg201@txstate.edu)), if any concerns arise during the course of the study.

Thank you,  
Blanca Gamez, MPA, BS  
Doctoral Candidate  
Adult, Professional, and Community Education Ph.D. Program  
Texas State University  
Phone: (512) 709-2625  
E-mail: [bj1103@txstate.edu](mailto:bj1103@txstate.edu)

\* The term “Latinx” is an inclusive gender-neutral term to individuals of any Latin descent and accounts for the intersection of social identities including gender, race, and class (Scharróndel Río & Aja, 2015)

## **APPENDIX C**

### **REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION-IDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT E-MAIL**

Greetings [Insert Participant Name],

I am conducting a research study in partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Education Degree in Adult, Professional, and Community Education at Texas State University. The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore the experiences of Latinx\* professionals that work on university campuses and serve as mentors to Latinx college students, outside their formal job duties, through mentoring programs on their university campuses. The study will give voice to the Latinx mentor and contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding academic persistence and resiliency of Latinx college students through mentoring programs.

Participants for this study will be selected from various universities in Central Texas who meet the primary criteria for study inclusion (a) identify as a Latinx professional who is a formal mentor outside of their professional role, (b) formally mentored for five or more consecutive years, (c) serve as a mentor at their respective institutions of higher learning, (d) mentor Latinx college students, and lastly (e) willing to participate in the study and share their experiences.

If you meet the qualifications listed above and would like to participate in this study, please [click here](#). If you are unable to access the website, please type the following web address into your browser.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdt8n0KUUKNuBlRXeiIaYu6mekY0EZ5ePyXkfJ6B10swbax3A/viewform>

Should you have any questions about participation in this study, please contact Blanca Gamez by phone at (512) 709-2625 or by e-mail at [bj1103@txstate.edu](mailto:bj1103@txstate.edu). You may also contact the IRB Chair, Dr. Jon Lasser 512-245-3413 – ([lasser@txstate.edu](mailto:lasser@txstate.edu)) or Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2314 - ([meg201@txstate.edu](mailto:meg201@txstate.edu)), if any concerns arise during the course of the study.

Thank you,  
Blanca Gamez, MPA, BS  
Doctoral Candidate  
Adult, Professional, and Community Education Ph.D. Program  
Texas State University  
Phone: (512) 709-2625  
E-mail: [bj1103@txstate.edu](mailto:bj1103@txstate.edu)

\*The term “Latinx” is an inclusive gender-neutral term to individuals of any Latin descent and accounts for the intersection of social identities including gender, race, and class (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2015)

## APPENDIX D

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND QUALIFYING INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey asks demographic question for selecting study participants. All information on this survey will remain secure and confidential. The principal investigator, Blanca Gamez and the supervising faculty, Dr. Melissa Martinez will be the only two with access to the survey responses.

This survey will take no more than five minutes to complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Blanca Gamez at [bj1103@txstate.edu](mailto:bj1103@txstate.edu)

Thank you for participating in the study. You will have the ability to skip questions, which you do not wish to answer.

What is your name

Please provide your e-mail address

What gender do you identify as?

Do you identify as Latinx? *An inclusive gender neutral term that refers to individuals of Latin descent and accounts for the intersection of social identities including gender, race, and class (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2015)*

Yes

No

What is your age?

20-25

26-30

31-35

35-40

41-45

46-50

50+

What is your professional title?

What institution do you work at?

Are you a formal mentor outside of your professional title or does your title include formal mentoring as a requirement?

Yes

No

Have you mentored for five or more consecutive years?

Yes

No

What University do you mentor at?

Do you formally mentor Latinx college students?

Yes

No

Are you willing to participate in this study? Please note, the study will consist of two interviews (in person, over the phone, or via Skype). The first interview will last between 60-to-90 minutes. The second interview will serve as a member check and follow up interview after the initial analysis has been completed. This interview will also last between 60-to-90 minutes.

Yes

No

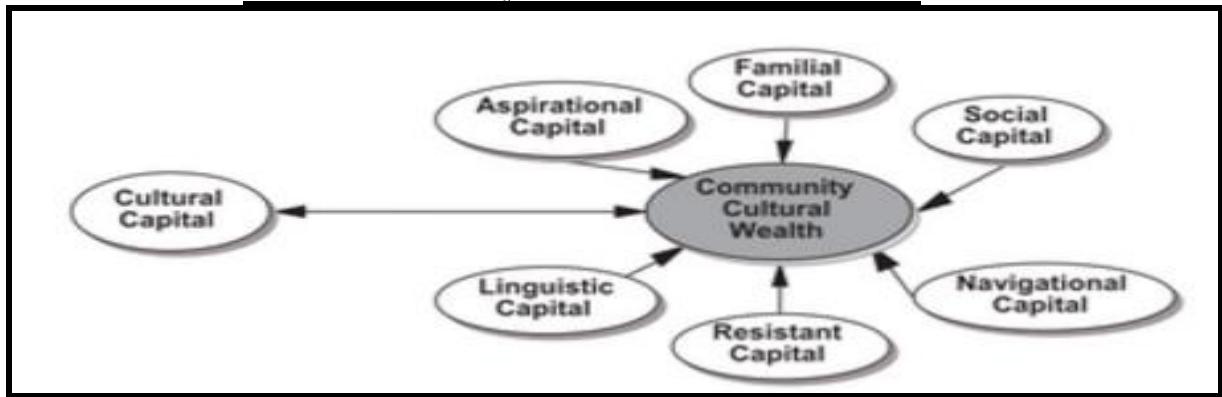
## Appendix E

### PRE-INTERVIEW HANDOUT

Greetings [Insert Name],

Thank you again for participating in the study. This document serves as a guide to understanding Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model. Provided are the six forms of capital and their respective meanings developed by Yosso. Please review this document, reflect on the six forms of capital and what each form of capital means to you and your practice prior to our intial meeting.

#### **Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Framework**



**Aspirational Capital** “refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).

**Linguistic Capital** refers to “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78).

**Familial Capital** refers to “cultural knowledge’s nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).

**Social Capital** refers to the “networks of people and community resources” that an individual utilizes to navigate social institutions (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).

**Navigational Capital** refers to the “skills of maneuvering through social institutions” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

**Resistant Capital** refers to “those knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

The purpose of this research study is to capture the lived experiences of the Latinx mentor. In addition, I am researching if community cultural wealth, a framework developed by Tara J. Yosso (2005) that focuses on an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by Communities of Color, is utilized in the mentoring relationships. With your permission, I will audio record the interviews for analysis purposes only. In addition, to protect your identity, a pseudonym will be used. No one else will have access to your interview other than myself. Please note, as a volunteer in this study, you have the right to refrain from answering particular questions and that at any time you can leave or stop the interview.

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
  - a. Probe: Where are you from?
  - b. Probe: What is your profession?
  - c. Probe: How long have you been in your profession?
2. How would you define the term mentor?
  - a. Probe: what does being a mentor mean to you?
  - b. Probe: what do you think mentoring means to the individual being mentored?
3. What type of preparation have you previously had to assist in being a mentor?
  - a. Probe: What else has prepared you to become a mentor?
  - b. Probe: Reflecting on the mentoring program in which you participate, how were you trained? How do you utilize your training?
4. Tell me about your mentoring experience thus far?
  - a. Probe: How many have you mentored?
  - b. Probe: For how long did each mentoring relationship last?
  - c. Probe: What were the relationships like? Were they meaningful, inspiring, difficult, etc.
  - d. Probe: Was a cultural, gender, or other social identifier match important? If so, why? If not, Why?
5. Tell me about a specific mentoring relationship
  - a. Probe: What about the experience did you enjoy? Not enjoy?
  - b. Probe: How did mentoring make you feel?
6. What are some of the benefits you received from being a mentor?
  - a. Probe: Were these benefits expected?

7. What are some of the challenges or things you didn't expect to encounter in the course of being a mentor?
  - a. Probe: How did you overcome or resolve these challenges?
  - b. Probe: What type of effect did experience have on you as a mentor?

The following questions pertain to forms of capital that you may have used as a mentor in your current/past mentoring relationships. I will read you a definition of each form of capital prior to asking the question that pertains to the form of capital. Please keep in mind that the forms of capital often work in conjunction and are evident together, not necessarily exclusive.

#### **Familial Capital**

Refers to cultural knowledge nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition. For example, how do mentors recognize the value from the mentee's community, culture, memory or history as use it as a resource in the mentoring relationship?

8. When you read about familial capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?
9. Tell me how the role of familial capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all. (Describe an experience in which this form of capital was influential)
10. Are there certain familial type skills or tools that you use as mentor that assist you in mentoring?
  - a. Probe: Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital? Describe
  - b. Probe: Do you consider your own familial capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe.

#### **Aspirational Capital**

Refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers.

11. When you read about aspirational capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?
12. Tell me how the role of aspirational capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all. (Describe an experience in which this form of capital was influential)

13. Are there certain aspirational type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?
- a. Probe: Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital? Describe
  - b. Probe: Do you consider your aspirational capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe.

### **Linguistic Capital**

The intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.

14. When you read about linguistic capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?
15. Tell me how the role of linguistic capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all. (Describe an experience in which this form of capital was influential)
16. Are there certain linguistic type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?
- a. Probe: Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital? Describe
  - b. Probe: Do you consider your linguistic capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe.

### **Social Capital**

Networks of people and community resources.

17. When you read about social capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?
18. Tell me how the role of social capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all.  
(Describe an experience in which this form of capital was influential)
19. Are there certain social type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?
- a. Probe: Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital? Describe
  - b. Probe: Do you consider your social capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe.

### **Resistant Capital**

The knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

20. When you read about resistant capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor? Why? If not, why?
21. Tell me how the role of resistant capital assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all.  
(Describe an experience in which this form of capital was influential)
22. Are there certain resistant type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?
  - a. Probe: Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital? Describe
  - b. Probe: Do you consider your resistant capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe

### **Navigational Capital**

Skills of maneuvering through social institutions.

23. When you read about navigational capital, does this form of capital resonate with you as a mentor and why? If not, why?
24. Tell me how the role of navigational capital has assisted in your mentoring relationships, if at all. (Describe an experience in which this form of capital was influential)
25. Are there certain navigational type skills or tools that you use as a mentor that assist you in mentoring?
  - a. Probe: Do your mentees respond positively or negatively to this form of capital? Describe
  - b. Probe: Do you consider your navigational capital to be an asset in adapting to each unique mentoring relationship? Describe
26. Reflecting on your experiences what would you consider to be critical to inform other mentors, mentor programs, and/or institutions?
27. Are there any other particular characteristics, attributes, or experiences that you've drawn from that you haven't yet mentioned that have assisted you in your mentoring relationships?
28. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about the mentoring relationship that I did not include in the interview?

**APPENDIX G**  
**CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW**



**INFORMED CONSENT**

Study Title: Lived experiences of the Latinx mentor and the role of community cultural wealth

Principal Investigator: Blanca Gamez

Co-Investigator/Faculty Advisor: Dr.  
Melissa Martinez

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this research study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate as well as any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. We encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

**PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to examine your lived experiences as a Latinx formal mentor and the role of community cultural wealth in your mentoring relationships with Latinx college students in Central Texas. You are being asked to take part in this study because you currently serve as a formal Latinx mentor for Latinx college students in Central Texas. Should you volunteer to take part in this study, your responses to the demographic survey and interview responses will be used. As a participant, you will be invited to take part in two 60-to-90 minute interview sessions. The interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

**PROCEDURES**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in one short online demographic survey and two interviews. Each interview will be scheduled for a location that is convenient and comfortable for the participant. Each interview will last approximately 60-to-90 minutes. During the interviews, you will be asked to respond to interview questions that pertain to your experiences as a formal Latinx mentor and your thoughts on the role of community cultural wealth in your mentoring relationships. The

interview will be audio-recorded and the researcher may take notes as well.

### **RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

There is little risk in participating in this study as you will be discussing your own experiences and opinions. However, during the interview you may become uncomfortable in sharing certain experiences with the investigator. Should you feel uncomfortable, you may choose to not answer any of the questions.

The online demographic survey will include a section that asks for information that may make an individual person identifiable, though this is unlikely. As the investigator, I will make every effort to protect the participant's confidentiality. Your name or place of employment will not be attached to any documents. However, should you feel uncomfortable at any time releasing certain information, you may choose to refrain from answering any question.

In the unlikely event that some of the survey or interview questions make you uncomfortable or upset, you are always free to decline to answer or to stop your participation at any time. Should you feel discomfort after participating and you are a Texas State University student, you may contact the University Health Services for counseling services at list phone number. They are located list physical location.

### **BENEFITS/ALTERNATIVES**

As a participant, you will gain a deeper knowledge and understanding regarding mentoring. In addition, the study will produce findings that will be of benefit to postsecondary institutions, mentoring programs, mentors, and policy makers. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge surround the mentoring experiences of the Latinx mentor. As a result, we will be able to learn from the unique experiences of the Latinx mentor and provide enhanced mentoring initiatives to postsecondary institutions, mentoring programs, mentors, and policy makers.

### **EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

### **PAYMENT/COMPENSATION**

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

**PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY**

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw from it at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Blanca Gamez, at bj1103@txstate.edu.

This project [insert IRB Reference Number or Exemption Number] was approved by the Texas State IRB on [insert IRB approval date or date of Exemption]. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB Chair, Dr. Jon Lasser 512-245-3413 – (lasser@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2314 - (meg201@txstate.edu).

**DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT**

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand I can withdraw at any time.

---

**Printed Name** of Study Participant

---

**Signature** of Study Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

---

Date

**APPENDIX H**  
**RESEARCH TIMELINE**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>
Spring 2017	Defended Proposal
Summer 2017/Fall 2017	Conduct Research
Fall 2017	Final Defense

## REFERENCES

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