A STUDY OF LATINO MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKER COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE EMERGENCE OF A CULTURALLY ADAPTIVE NAVIGATION MODEL FOR SUCCESS

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A Dissertation

by

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________________________________________, Graduate Coordinator
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Date
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband and best friend Roman Porter, our two-year old son Mateo Nicholas Porter and my mother Guadalupe Diaz. Without their unconditional love, support and encouragement this degree would not have been possible.

Le dedico esta disertación a mi esposo y mejor amigo Roman Porter, nuestro hijo de dos años Mateo Nicholas Porter, y mi madre Guadalupe Diaz. Sin su amor incondicional, apoyo y ánimo este logro no sería posible.
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Fields of Study

Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students in higher education.
Abstract

of

A STUDY OF LATINO MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKER COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE EMERGENCE OF A CULTURALLY ADAPTIVE NAVIGATION MODEL FOR SUCCESS

by

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Latino migrant and seasonal farmworkers represent a significant group in the United States, with California having the largest concentration in the nation. California also has the largest number of identified Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, approximately one-third of the total U.S. migrant and farmworker student population (California Migrant Education Program, 2007). Latino education in the United States is a crisis, as discussed by Gándara (2008). While Latinos are the fastest growing population, their bachelor degree completion rate remains extremely low, having risen by only 3% in a 30-year span (Pew Institute, 2010). Since the migrant and seasonal farmworker student population is 98% Latino, they are part of this educational crisis.

This qualitative study examines the phenomenon of the undergraduate college experiences of 10 Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students who participated in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at California State University, Sacramento and went on to complete their bachelor’s degree at the university. The theoretical framework guiding this study is Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2011) Network Analytic Theory of Socialization. This study examines strategies used by this population...
to build the necessary social networks in order to navigate college life and successfully complete a bachelor’s degree.

While using grounded theory as the method to analyze the study findings, it became apparent that the introduction of a new conceptual framework: *The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students* was necessary, because, while various existing theories consider the characteristics of low-income, first-generation, underserved minority students, not a single one was created with the characteristics of this unique population in mind. Research findings demonstrate that providing an environment that facilitates relationships with institutional and empowerment agents increases access to valuable social capital and a sense of belonging for this growing, capable and often invisible population.

*The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students* identifies significant first-year and beyond first-year transitions, referred to as progressions, that this group of students experience throughout their undergraduate years. According to the perspectives of participants interviewed, in order for Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students to be successful, an adaptive model of practice must be adopted at the institutional level. This model identifies strategies to meet the unique needs of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students through academic support programs and/or course curriculum. This study provides programmatic recommendations applicable to other College Assistance Migrant Programs.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Migrant Students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Definitions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of the Study</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development of Policies Designed to Provide Services to Migrant Students</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The High School Equivalency Program</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) ........................................44
Facts about California’s Migrant Students ......................................................46
The Migrant Education Program in California ................................................47
Other Federal and State Programs ...................................................................48
The Educational Opportunity Program ............................................................50
Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students ............................52
Social Conditions .............................................................................................52
Cultural Conditions ..........................................................................................59
Academic Conditions .......................................................................................62
Successful Strategies for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students in Higher Education .................................................................70
Classroom Strategies ........................................................................................90
The Role of Social Capital in Migrant Students .............................................107
3. METHODOLOGY .........................................................................................129
Research Design .............................................................................................131
Setting, Context, and Population ....................................................................133
Sampling and Data Collection .......................................................................136
Role of the Researcher ....................................................................................141
Limitations .....................................................................................................142
Participants’ Rights and Ethical Protection ....................................................144
Analysis of the Data .......................................................................................146
Conclusion .....................................................................................................150
4. FINDINGS ..................................................................................................................152
  Profile of Participants ..............................................................................................167
  Profiles of Study Participants: Alumni of CAMP and Sacramento State ......167
  Discussion of Themes ..............................................................................................178
  Summary and Conclusion ......................................................................................213

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...............................221
  Overview of the Study ..............................................................................................221
  Interpretation of Findings ......................................................................................225
  A New Theoretical Lens ..........................................................................................240
  Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students ......249
  Recommendations for Action ..................................................................................263
  Transformational Leadership ..................................................................................265
  Educational Policy and Practice ..............................................................................274
  Data-driven Decision Making ..................................................................................280
  Implications for Further Study ...............................................................................286
  Reflections from the Author ...................................................................................294
  Conclusion ................................................................................................................297

6. Appendices
  Appendix A. Interview Questionnaire .................................................................303
  Appendix B. Interview Consent Form .....................................................................305

References ..................................................................................................................307
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Table 1 Migrant Education Policy Timeline</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Table 2 Conditions of Migrant Students</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Table 3 Effective Retention Strategies for Migrant/Seasonal Farmworker Students</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Table 4 Theories of Social Capital</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Table 5 Participant Demographics</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Table 6 Findings Guided by Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) Coding Family</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Table 7 Major Themes</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Table 8 Themes and Subthemes</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Table 9 Themes by Participants</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Table 10 The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Recommended Forms of Implementation</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Implied Costs of Implementation of each Recommendation for Action</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Figure 1 The Influence of Existing Theoretical Frameworks</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Figure 2 The Inter-Connection of the Big Three</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

The United States is fast becoming the most demographically diverse nation in the world (Institute of Higher Education Policy, 2005). The U.S. Bureau of the Census suggests population shifts evident in the 2010 census are dramatically altering the ratio between White and non-White groups in the country. Since the turn of the century, Hispanics have accounted for just over half of the United States population growth (Fry, 2008). The Latino population is projected to nearly triple, from 46.7 million to 133 million during the 2008-2050 period, creating an anticipated population increase of 60% (Passel & Cohn, 2008).

At a time when more Americans are attending college than ever before, Latinos have also increased their college participation rates (Gándara, 2008). However, this increase has not kept pace with the tremendous growth of the Latino population in the last decade (Fry, 2008). As of 2010, Latinos are the largest and the fastest growing minority group, with the largest concentration residing in California, followed by Texas, and Florida (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010). Latinos have college enrollment and graduation rates that are lower than most other racial and ethnic groups (Pew Institute, 2010). For example, in 1975, the percentage of Anglos who received a bachelor’s degree was 24%, and in 2005, that number rose to 34%. In 1975, 9% of Latinos held a bachelor’s degree and in the intervening two decades this educational attainment only
increased slightly, to 11% by 2005. During a similar period of time the Latino population rose two percentage points over the last 30 years (Gándara, 2008). It is apparent that Latinos are falling behind their Anglo counterparts in degree attainment and are not keeping pace with the growth in Latino population (Pew Institute, 2010).

Zalaquett (2005a) identified barriers to successful Latino college enrollment, which included minimal adult supervision, misinformation from the school and overall poorly informed choices. Latino students who are first in their families to attend college often receive little guidance from their parents and minimal guidance from school personnel in making educational choices; this is especially true of students from low-income families (p. 26). High school dropout rates are only part of the larger context of the educational attainment. In 1980, about 14% of all students who started high school eventually dropped out, but by 2007, the nation's dropout rate declined to 8.7%. However, there are differences across race and ethnicity. The Latino high school dropout rate decreased from 35.2% in 1980, to 21.4% in 2007 (Zalaquett, 2005b). These differences in dropout rates by race and ethnicity suggest that the pool of potential Latino college, students narrows prior to these students even applying to college and of those students who actually graduate from high school, not all will decide to apply to and ultimately enroll in college (Mortenson, 2007).

Compounding the lack of knowledge and college choice is the shift in state funding for public education. In response to the steep declines in state funding for public higher education over the past 10 years, many institutions of higher education have
recently tightened their admissions standards and most have undertaken efforts to further increase recruitment and enrollment of more academically-qualified students (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education [Pell Institute], 2008). In addition to the public funding reductions, this drive to increase selectivity by many institutions is also motivated by a desire to improve institutional reputation and rankings as a means for increasing revenues and resources (e.g., attracting research funding) (Pell Institute, 2008). Although many institutions have outreach programs to recruit at-risk populations, the trend toward more stringent admissions standards may negatively impact access to public four-year institutions for low-income and minority applicants who tend to be less well-prepared academically than their peers (Zalaquett, 2005b). Additionally, to address declining revenues, all of the institutions have raised tuition in recent years, in some cases drastically. As a result, many of the institutions report high and increasing levels of unmet financial need from applicants creating a common ground between academic selectivity and those who can pay the escalating fees (Pell Institute, 2008). The impact on low-income students is evident. To afford tuition, students must work more hours each week than they spend in class and/or studying, with predictable effects on their engagement and achievement on campus (Alon & Tienda, 2005; Arbona & Nora, 2007).
Latino Migrant Students

Latino migrant and seasonal farmworkers represent a significant group in the United States with California having the largest concentration of agricultural workers in the nation: totaling more than twice that of the second largest state, Texas (33.5% vs. 15.6%) (California Migrant Education Program [CMEP], 2007). California also has the largest number of identified Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, numbering 237,096 in 2007, or approximately one-third of the total U.S. migrant and farmworker student population (CMEP, 2007). The Latino educational crisis, as referred to by Gándara (2008), is of great significance and in direct correlation to the migrant and seasonal farm-working student population given that 85% of migrant children are of school age (5-18 years old), with Latino students making up 98% of the eligible migrant student population (CMEP, 2007). In addition to the already present institutional challenges experienced by being Latino, students from migrant and seasonal farmworking families are cited as being among the most disadvantaged of all groups of students in the country (Green, 2003). In fact, migrant farmworkers and their families have been referred to as an “invisible population,” due to the lack of attention received from government agencies and communities in which they reside and work (Nunez, 2009b).

Children of migrant farmworker backgrounds are one of the most academically vulnerable groups in the United States. Migrant children are faced with economic, health, and work-related problems that contribute to their interrupted schooling, limited
English proficiency, lower academic achievement, social isolation, lack of self-esteem, and higher dropout rates in K-12 grade levels (Leon, 1996; Zalaquett, McHatton, & Cranston-Gingras, 2007). Migrant students enrolled in K-12 grade levels have the highest school dropout rates ranging from 45-90% (Green, 2003). A more detailed discussion on Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker student conditions is provided in Chapter 2, “The Review of Related Literature.”

Most of the literature does not associate migrant students with the term "high achieving" (Trueba, 2004, p. 33). The fact is, compared to other student populations, little has been written about migrant students in higher education, particularly the strategies used by them to overcome significant academic and personal barriers to complete their college journey. Unfortunately, much has been said about the negative effects of Mexican-origin culture, the lack of adoption of American values, and the supposed lack of high aspirations (Trueba, 2004). But despite the dismal statistics and in the face of significant challenges, many students from migrant farm worker backgrounds persevere toward academic success and ultimately attain a college degree (McHatton et al., 2009). Thus, the principal research questions of this study:

- What are the experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State?
- What strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students develop to navigate college life and successfully graduate when so many do not?
• What can Sacramento State do to ensure more Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students graduate from college?

Statement of the Problem

During the next 10 years, 80% of the fastest-growing occupations in the U.S. will require at least an associate degree and 50% will require a bachelor’s degree or higher (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). However, due to rapidly changing demographics, the overall educational attainment of the United States is actually expected to decline in the coming years (Kelly, 2005). The fastest growing segments of the population, low-income and minority youth, (migrant students included due to comparable characteristics) have historically been the least likely to earn college degrees, and the gaps in degree attainment for these groups have only increased over time (Kelly, 2005; Mortenson, 2006; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education [WICHE], 2003).

Nearly half of all school children (44%), the future college-going population, come from low-income families (as measured by free/reduced price lunch eligibility) (WICHE, 2003). Today, there are more than 12 million children living in poverty, two-thirds of whom come from minority backgrounds (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010). The number of low-income families has been on the rise for the last 10 years (Mortenson, 2006). Therefore, in order to increase degree attainment rates in this country, there must be a major effort to improve postsecondary access and graduation rates among those
populations who have previously been underrepresented in higher education, in particular migrant and seasonal farmworker students.

The nature of migrant work is the primary impediment to success faced by migrant students. While some families follow the crops, moving seasonally—others may have seasonal work in only one location, but return to Mexico during the winter months when they have neither employment, nor income (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2007). Those living in federally subsidized migrant camps may also be forced to move when the camps close at the end of the agricultural season in late November each year (Gibson & Bejines, 2002). The National Commission on Migrant Education (1991) found that as a consequence of their life conditions, over one third of migrant students are one or more grades behind their age-appropriate grade-level and over 40% are achieving below the 25th percentile in reading and math standardized assessments in K-12. These low achievement rates may be the result of the fact that approximately 40% are in the process of learning English as a second language and the support provided at schools is sometimes insufficient (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2008). Earning a livable wage translates into repeated absences due to family obligations, such as the need of students to work to help support the family, or having to miss school to take care of younger siblings. Overwhelmingly, migrant farmworkers earn less than livable wages in the United States. According to the 2001-2002 National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), the total family income averaged between $15,000 and $17,499, which included the contributions of children and young adults who work alongside their parents and other siblings often,
according to some reports, as young as four or five years of age (Cranston-Gingras, 2003). In situating educational outcomes with politics, anti-affirmative action admissions policies in states like California, Michigan, and Washington also limit migrant students’ college access and have resulted in declining enrollments among underrepresented students in general (Nunez, 2009a).

While politics and economics inform the under achievement of Latino students at the macro level, from a macro-level the differences in the amount of social capital they possess mediates academic performance (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Coleman, 1988b; Lareau, 1987; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). During K-12, social network instability, due to high mobility rates, makes it harder for migrant students to receive the adult support from school personnel that most students need in order to succeed academically, socially, psychologically, and emotionally (Green, 2003). At home, a lack of understanding about the benefits of acquiring a college degree negatively affects the level of encouragement children receive from their parents (Duron, 1995; Gibson, 2003). Research shows that school structures and personnel can either facilitate or impede students’ abilities to handle the often difficult transitions that exist between their home and school worlds (Gibson & Bejines, 2002).

In the process of attaining a bachelor's degree, students must not only apply and be admitted into college, but must persist from year to year to graduate—all these milestones require “social capital.” Social capital as used in this study refers to students’ access to the social relationships that enable them to obtain the resources needed to be
successful in school (Engle, Bermeo, & O’Brien, 2006). Such relationships, and hence, the mobilization of social relations for instrumental, purposes always occur within the context of power relations, and within an economy that unequally distributes socially valued resources (Stanton-Salazar, Vasquez, & Mehan, 2000, p. 267). It is well known that students with lower social capital have significantly lower probabilities of persisting than students with higher social capital because they are unaware of how to “decode” the discourse and practice necessary to successfully navigate college life (Coleman, 1990; Cothran & Ennis, 2000; Hill, 2001). In the case of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, research shows they are equipped with the least amount of traditionally valued social capital upon college entry (McHatton, Zalaquett, & Cranston-Gingras, 2006). This assumption is narrowed and exclusionary when considering that the student population has significantly changed, yet the concept of how education is delivered is relatively the same. Nonetheless, many Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students do find ways to acquire social capital as found in this study.

In addition to the academic challenges faced by migrant and seasonal farmworker students prior to enrolling at an institution of higher education, structural factors add to their inability to attend and successfully graduate from college. In California, an overall strategy to deal with the budget deficit endured by the California State University includes student fee increases, layoffs, and significant changes in student enrollment processes (Rivera, 2010). A variety of restrictions are being instituted to reduce system-wide enrollment, including an earlier application period, strict enforcement of deadlines
and denying the enrollment to students who are not fully eligible for admission (e.g., special admits) (Ewell, Boeke, & Zis, 2010; Trombley, 2003). These new changes to the enrollment process strain the educational timelines for all students, but it is particularly damaging to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who, being low-income and first-generation college attendees, are more likely to require special admission and additional support services, and who may not know the ins-and-outs of the college admission process and therefore may miss crucial deadlines. While data shows that only 35% of graduating high school students are eligible for four-year higher education, the number of migrant students who are eligible is unknown, but it is estimated to be as low as one percent, making migrant and seasonal farmworker students one of the most underrepresented minorities in higher education (CMEP, 2007).

Nature of the Study

Social capital is fundamentally constituted in terms of resources or forms of institutional support accessible by the student through their direct or indirect social ties to other actors who assume the role of institutional agents (e.g., a school counselor) (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). The importance and utility of this idea is that people are able to accomplish meaningful goals through their access to resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1087). Foremost is the recognition that, for students to successfully meet both developmental challenges and academic demands of the school, they require resource-
full relationships and activities organized within a network of socialization agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1069).

This qualitative study examines the phenomenon of the undergraduate college experiences of 10 Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students who participated in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) and completed their bachelor’s degree at California State University, Sacramento. The theoretical framework guiding this study is Stanton-Salazar’s Network Analytic Theory of Socialization (1997, 2011). Consequently, this study examines strategies used by this population to build the necessary social networks in order to navigate college life and successfully complete a bachelor’s degree.

Grounded theory, the method used to analyze the study findings, emerged with the creation of a new conceptual framework: *The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students*. The introduction of a new conceptual framework was necessary because while various existing theories consider the characteristics of low-income, first-generation, underserved minority students, not a single one was created with the characteristics of this unique population in mind. Research findings demonstrate that providing an environment that facilitates relationships with institutional and empowerment agents increases access to valuable social capital and a sense of belonging for this growing, capable and often invisible population.
The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students identifies significant first-year and beyond first-year transitions, referred to as progressions, that this group of students experience throughout their undergraduate years. According to the perspectives of participants interviewed, in order for Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students to be successful, an adaptive model of practice must be adopted at the institutional level. This model identifies strategies to meet the unique needs of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students through academic support programs and/or course curriculum. Based on this new knowledge, this study makes institutional recommendations to improve the undergraduate experience and graduation rates of Latino migrant students at Sacramento State.

Methodology

Certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches. Qualitative research is exploratory and is particularly useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine (Creswell, 2009). This approach may be needed because the topic is new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group, and existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study (Morse, 1991). According to Creswell (2009), if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach. Since little research has been done on migrant and seasonal farmworker students, particularly the strategies used to overcome academic barriers, and there is still
a great need to better understand this unique student population, this study gathers data using a qualitative approach. To get at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of the experience of overcoming challenges in college, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection in this study.

The product of a phenomenological study is a “composite description that presents the ‘essence’ of a phenomenon, called the essential, invariant structure (or essence)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). This description represents the structure of the experience being studied. In phenomenological studies “the reader should come away with the feeling that they understand better what it is like for someone to experience something” (Polkinghorn, 1989, p. 46) (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). As mentioned above, a phenomenological approach is well suited to studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences. This study documents the way migrant and seasonal farmworker students overcame challenges to successfully graduate from college, often as the first in their family to earn a bachelor’s degree. Using semi-structured one-on-one interviews, participants share their college experiences and the strategies used to overcome the odds to graduation. The interview questionnaire includes open-ended questions (see Appendix A), and adheres to self-perceptions, values, successful strategies as well as participant’s personal recommendations about how to modify current services and programs offered at Sacramento State.

In this study, Sacramento State alumni from migrant and seasonal farmworker backgrounds are the participants. Because there is unsustainable data on the enrollment
of migrant and seasonal farmworker students in higher education other than through their participation in migrant programs such as the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), the researcher derived all participants from the CAMP program at Sacramento State. The study examines the experiences of students who participated in the program and successfully graduated using semi-structured one-on-one interviews as the primary tool to collect data. Random sampling was used to gather the contact information of 25 graduates from CAMP and Sacramento State. An introductory letter was sent to all 25 participants inviting them to participate in the study. From there, purposeful sampling was used to select the 10 participants who were ultimately interviewed for the study. According to Creswell (2007), an appropriate sample size for a phenomenological study ranges from three to 10 participants. Because participants were not contacted to obtain an average opinion that would correspond to the average opinion of the entire student population, a purposeful sample is most appropriate for this study (Creswell, 2007). Purposeful sampling is appropriate when the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insights and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Patton, 2002). In this case, migrant and seasonal farmworker college graduates were contacted precisely because of their unique experience and competence (Chein, 1981). Patton (2002) argued, “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 12) The criterion for participant selection was:

- Being of Latino descent;
Completed their first year of college as participants of CAMP (migrant and/or seasonal farmworker backgrounds); and

Completed a bachelor’s degree from Sacramento State.

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used as the method of data analysis. The basic strategy of the method is constant comparison. It consists of categories, properties and hypotheses that are the conceptual links between and among the categories and properties. The process begins with reading the first interview transcript and jotting down notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins. In this study, the overall process of data analysis began by identifying segments in the data set that are responsive to the research questions. Words, phrases, and concepts that recur throughout the data were highlighted and color-coded into classification schemes or thematic threads. The data was divided into general themes related to the literature and theoretical framework. This study uses the coding family introduced by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) as a starting point to code the data. For the purpose of this study, two additional codes were created by the researcher to better attend to the research questions of this study: categorizing themes on managing conflicting values and utilizing institutional agents to build social capital.

The coding family used as a starting point in this study includes:

1. Setting/Context Codes - settings such as descriptions of the campus, classroom settings, faculty/staff office hour visits, etc;
2. Situational Codes - how participants see themselves in relation to their undergraduate experience, such as their awareness of college expectations and influences for interpreting the past. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: How would you describe yourself as a student?

3. Perspectives Held by Participants - shared ways of thinking that capture a common understanding. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: When you think back to your first year of college, how did your perceptions change from your freshmen year to your senior year?

4. Participants Ways of Thinking about People and Objects - understanding of each other, outsiders, and the objects that make up the world. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: What are the myths and facts of being a Latino migrant/seasonal farmworker college students at Sac State.

5. Process Codes - sequence of events, change over time, or passage from one type of status to another. This code is explored through the following open-ended question: When you think back to your first year of college, how did your perceptions change from your freshmen year to your senior year?

6. Activity Codes - regularly occurring kinds of behavior. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: Which resources
available on campus did you actually utilize throughout your undergraduate experience?

7. Event Codes—activities that occur infrequently or just once. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: Can you tell me about a time you felt very accomplished as a college student (other than graduation)?

8. Strategy Codes - conscious tactics, methods, techniques, maneuvers, and/or ploys used to succeed. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: What did it take for you to graduate?

9. Methods Codes - material pertinent to problems, joys, dilemmas and the like. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: Can you tell me about a time you felt discouraged?

10. Conflicting Value Code - specific experiences, events and activities that reflected conflicting values between the student’s world at home and that of college life. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: What did it take for you to graduate? (Created by the researcher for this study).

11. Institutional Agent Code - individuals who facilitated access and the utilization of resources. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: Did you use campus personnel (e.g., staff,
faculty, and tutors) as a source of support throughout college? (Created by the researcher for this study).

The preferred way to analyze qualitative data is to do it simultaneously with data collection (Creswell, 2009). Immediately following the completion of the first interview, the researcher read the transcripts from the interviews, took written notes and wrote a separate memo to “thy self” to capture any reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas and things to pursue in the next transcript, based on what was derived from the first set of data. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to note what to ask, observe or look for in the next round of data collection.

Imaginative variation was used as a technique for phenomenological analysis. Imaginative variation involves attempting to see the object of the study—the phenomenon (Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students’ undergraduate experience) from several different perspectives. As Moustakas (1994) explained, “the task of Imaginative Variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination…approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced. For example, what is the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State?
The Theoretical Framework

In qualitative research, theory helps explain a phenomenon by providing an advocacy lens that shapes the types of questions that are asked, informs how data is collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change (Labovitz & Hagedorn, 1971). The theoretical framework selected for this study incorporates Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2001, 2004, 2011) notion of socialization which draws from empowerment theory in critical social work (Zimmerman, 2000). Stanton-Salazar’s notion of socialization is defined as a process by which young people engage with various significant others and learn to negotiate and participate in multiple social-cultural worlds. Foremost is the recognition that, for students to successfully meet both developmental challenges and academic demands of the school, they require resource-full relationships and activities organized within a network of socialization agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1069). It is through these networks that students learn effective discourse, relational competencies and protocol to access resources. The concept of social capital represents a central feature of the socialization framework and is derived from Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), from James Coleman’s (1988b) theory of obligation or social debt and from Nan Lin’s (1999) relational model and from Stanton-Salazar’s concept of counterstratification (2001). Social capital—as used here—is fundamentally constituted in terms of resources or forms of institutional support accessible by ego (e.g., a student) through their direct or indirect social ties to other actors who assume the role of institutional agents (e.g., a school
counselor). The importance and utility of this idea is that people are able to accomplish meaningful goals through their access to resources other than their own (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1087). This view of social capital compares the access to opportunity, knowledge and power of students from underserved backgrounds to those from the privileged dominant group. Stanton-Salazar’s notion of socialization (in particular the concepts of social capital and institutional agents) provide a compelling lens through which the undergraduate experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students can be examined and interpreted.

According to Stanton-Salazar (2004), because it promotes Anglo cultural standards, the process of socialization usually impedes equitable access. Consequently, underserved students are unable to internalize, identify with and conform to the dominant Anglo cultural standards and cannot establish the social capital necessary to access and navigate higher education (Sampson; Bandura & Walters as cited in Boykin & Toms, 1985). Access to important resources and opportunities requires a certain level of strategic skill not always shared across social classes and ethnicity (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011; Portes, 1996, 1998, 2000). These skills include commanding, negotiating and managing diverse relationships and personalities (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2007, 2011; Portes, 1996, 1998, 2000). The question posed is whether underserved students (Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students included due to similar characteristics) have ever had this kind of “strategic education.” It may, therefore be reasonable to assume that conventional educational provisions applied to all students
while officially designed to educate, may have always played a significant role in limiting the social capital of underserved groups. Many institutions of higher education replicate and promote the values of the dominant culture through their socialization practices and assume these apply universally to all members (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011; Roscigno & Crowley, 2001). As a result, during this socialization process, only those who align with the dominant values benefits, while the rest are at a disadvantage.

Stanton-Salazar (2011) defines social capital as “consisting of resources and key forms of social support embedded in one’s network or associations and accessible through direct or indirect ties with institutional agents” (p. 1067). Aligned with this definition is the assumption that in many instances underserved students' current social capital (e.g., bilingualism, non-individualism, socioeconomic status, race, language, ethnicity, disability and sexual identity) are not validated or enacted as useful in higher educational settings (Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Tinto, 1993). Bourdieu (1986) has argued that the laws governing the exchange of economic capital are applicable to human social relations in various forms. Thus, social capital is 1) cumulative, 2) possesses the capacity to produce profits or benefits in the social world, 3) is convertible into tangible resources or other forms of capital, and 4) possesses the capacity to reproduce itself in identical or expanded forms. Stanton-Salazar (1997) uses the metaphor of a dollar bill to represent a form of capital that can be converted into a desired service or product. In the same manner, social relations also represent forms of capital that can be converted into opportunities and resources (e.g., emotional support, internships, and scholarships).
Students from a higher social-economic status are socialized at a very early age to participate in higher education. This capital is communicated subtly through behaviors, knowledge and beliefs, which they inherit from their parents and communities (Berger, 2000; McDonough, 1997; Tierney, 1999; Walpole, 2007). While in college, these students further develop their social capital by reaching out and connecting to individual and social networks that serve as resources to important opportunities. Through these skills, individuals learn to make decisions calculated to increase their social capital in college. As a result, holders of this capital have a higher likelihood of connecting with the right people than those who came from a lower economic status, because they had a predisposition to the knowledge required to successfully navigate the system (Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003; Fong, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006). In other words, students who are privileged already know how to “decode” the language (e.g., how to behave, ask questions, who to go to, own the place) while those from underserved backgrounds must learn how to “decode” the language used to have their needs met and successfully navigate institutions of higher education.

On the other hand, due to their limited network and resources, sometimes underserved students maintain their low socioeconomic status through their own behaviors by maintaining social ties with people from the same socioeconomic groups (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2005). These networks, while well intended and come with other valuable sources of capital, do not always generate the kinds of social capital necessary to advance higher education goals or are the type typically generated from the
middle class or upper class (Gibson, Gándara, & Koyama, 2004; Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003). Underserved students, due to the fact that their own various sources of social capital are dissimilar to those of the institution, must negotiate their way through college by overcoming social, cultural and ideological forces that are often contradictory in nature (Coleman, 1988a; González, Stoner, Jovel, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011). Students who possess social capital that does not align with the institution must negotiate their way through high school and college in a much more difficult way (Gee, 1989; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998). This challenge is particularly experienced by students who come from migrant and seasonal farmworking backgrounds and who are often first-generation, low-income and English language learners. As a result, the experience of underserved students trying to accrue social capital could be so challenging it may evoke behaviors that would ultimately deny them of this much needed help (e.g., avoiding asking questions, seeking help or reaching out to others) (Lucas, 1999).

Therefore, in order to persist, underserved students must find ways to negotiate their way through the institutional culture—even if this means breaking cultural and personal values.

Institutional agent as defined by Stanton-Salazar (2011) refers to an individual who occupies one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high-status and authority. This individual manifests the role of an institutional agent when on behalf of the student, he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of, highly valued resources. Relative to others, the individual possesses a high degree of social capital. For
migrant students, resources can include information about college admission, support programs, college application fee waivers and fieldtrips. For all students, the quality of a social network is based on the interpersonal ties to people willing and capable of providing access to opportunities and resources necessary for academic success. It is the institutional agent who serves as gatekeepers for student success, for they have the potential to facilitate access to greater institutional resources. Overall, institutional agents provide connections to resources that help decode the educational system that is bound in the cultural values of the dominant culture. For disadvantaged youth whose parents may not have attended college, institutional agents provide a second opportunity to develop appropriate motivational dispositions necessary to pursue college.

Ultimately, Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2001, 2004, 2011) notion of socialization is an interactive process between the institution and the students. Through this notion, the possession of social capital does not imply the utilization of support, but rather the potential for such utilization (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2011). The goal of this study is to utilize the collected data to recommend interventions and academic environments that can improve the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. Among underserved students, access to the right institutional support can be a life changing experience and occurs through relationships with committed institutional agents willing to provide social capital for purposes of intervention or empowerment (Gutierrez & Lewis, 1999; Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005; Kahne & Bailey, 1999; Maeroff, 1999; Schneider, 2006; Stanton-Salazar,
Vásquez, & Mehan, 2000). Stanton-Salazar’s notion of socialization not only directly addresses structural constrains, but calls for a more equitable and socially conscious level of accountability. It requires institutional agents to reflect upon their own practices and question the role one plays in facilitating, or gate-keeping, opportunities and resources available to California’s most underserved students from migrant and seasonal farmworker families.

**Operational Definitions**

The following definitions are used in this study:

1. **Latino** - natives of Latin America, often residing in the United States.

   Although Latinos are a population of notable racial and ethnic diversity, they share a common history, language, and cultural background (Padilla, 2007). In this study, the term “Latino” is used instead of “Hispanic” and is intended to be inclusive of both genders.

2. **Migrant Farmworker** - a seasonal farmworker whose employment requires travel that precludes the farmworker from returning to his or her permanent place of residence within the same day.

3. **Seasonal Farmworker** - a person who, within the past 24 months, was employed for at least 75 days in farm work, and whose primary employment was in farm work on a temporary or seasonal basis (that is, not a constant year-round activity).
4. Social Capital - the network analytical theory of socialization put forth by
Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2001, 2004, 2010) to describe the methods and
opportunities students from various social and cultural backgrounds possess
and utilize to access power and privilege in higher education.

5. Institutional Agents - as defined by Stanton-Salazar (2011) refers to an
individual who occupies one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high-
status and authority. This individual manifests the role when on behalf of the
student, he or she acts to indirectly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of,
highly valued resources. Relative to others, the individual possesses a high
degree of social capital.

Limitations

This section addresses several of the limitations inherent in conducting a
phenomenology qualitative study including the selection of participants, the researcher’s
connection to the participants as well as any potential biases during the process of data
analysis. As previously mentioned, random sampling was used to gather the contact
information of 25 graduates from CAMP and Sacramento State. From there, purposeful
sampling was used to select the 10 participants who were ultimately interviewed for the
study. The purposeful sampling selection was based on specific pre-determined
knowledge of the participants’ background to ensure a diverse sample that included
differences such as gender, generational status, long-term and recent immigrants (or U.S.-
born), grade point average, and English language ability and/or language preferences. The limitation lies in the researcher determining, on personal experience and knowledge, the meaning and selection of a diverse sample.

The role of the researcher may have also had an unknown limitation on the overall outcome of the number of participants in the study. The researcher conducting this study is the current Director of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Sacramento State and was herself a migrant student, a participant of CAMP during her first year of college and a graduate of Sacramento State. Due to the active involvement of CAMP alumni in the program, participants directly and indirectly knew the researcher in her role as Director. Nonetheless, no supervisory or authority relationship existed with the participants. In addition, all aspects of confidentiality, objectivity and respect were used to prevent any level of coercion. At the same time, the role of the researcher as a previous migrant student, participant of CAMP, Sacramento State graduate and current Director of the program may have created a positive environment as participants may have felt more comfortable during the interviews and thus shared in a more forthcoming manner than they would with another researcher. To address any potential biases from the researcher’s relationship to CAMP during the data analysis, member checking was used as a validation technique (Creswell, 2006; Patton, 2002). First, the interview transcripts were shared with the participants for affirmation and accuracy, as well as for clarifications, suggestions, deletions, and/or additions. Also, the researcher’s depiction of
each participant’s experiences was re-examined by the participants to ensure that their information concurred with the meaning of their communication.

Another limitation of the study is the location of the sample. While the findings from this study will assist researchers, policy-makers, and educational leaders to better understand the undergraduate college experience of migrant and seasonal farmworker students, as well as the implementations needed to increase their persistence and graduation, the experience of 10 graduates from Sacramento State who participated in the CAMP program cannot be generalized to the Latino population at large. Generalizing to other types of institutions—e.g., other California State Universities (CSUs), Universities of California (UCs), private universities, two-year institutions, between residential and commuter institutions or between part-time and commuter full-time institutions, may also not be appropriate. It must also be taken under consideration that the research relies on self-reported data, which sometimes suffers from a lack of full accuracy due to recall problems (Richie, 1995). Nonetheless, given the mobility of this population and the challenges of tracking college migrant and seasonal farmworker students, the sample used in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of their undergraduate experience from their unique perspective and interpretation. After all, qualitative research is not interested in a broad or vague view of a population, but rather, in an in-depth understanding of the experience of particular individuals or groups (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997).
Significance of the Study

Considerable quantitative research predicts the retention and persistence rates of college students using grade point averages, standardize tests, and/or class standing (Anderson-Snowden, 2004; Attinasi, 1989; Bolton et al., 2004; Carson-Warner, 2003; Chartas, 2001; Dalpes, 2001; Dansby, 1999; Edmonds, 2003; Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Hebert, 1997; Jalomo, 1995; Le, 2002; Lockey-Carlson, 2005; McClure & Child, 1998; Miles, 2000; Myers & Moore, 1997; Nora, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tatsugawa, 2002; Tinto, 1993; Wright, 1997). Based on a review of the academic literature, there were a limited number of research studies found on Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students in higher education, and in particular, of participants of the CAMP. Identified research studies addressed migrant student experiences in college and the support systems available to them to increase their chances at college success from the perspective of high school students and first and second-year college students. The researcher was unable to identify (though it may exist) research on the college experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students from the perspective of alumni—those who have graduated with a bachelor’s degree and can now reflect upon their undergraduate journey.

Furthermore, none of the existing literature has introduced a new theoretical framework to conceptualize the college retention, persistence and degree attainment of this unique population. A new theoretical framework is particularly necessary when efforts used by institutions of higher education to recruit, retain and graduate students
have not been modified as demographics change. In addition, deficit thinking continues to dominate in academia (Sue, 2005). Many educators still believe that low-income minority students are not interested in education or are incapable of succeeding in an academic setting and assume these are the reasons why they depart college without a degree. This assumption is narrowed and exclusionary when considering that the student population has significantly changed yet the conception of how education is delivered has relatively remained the same.

Without a new conceptual framework, the institution is not required to change. Instead, the retention dilemma is easily addressed by increasing selectivity and accepting more academically prepared students. Although many institutions have outreach programs to recruit and target at-risk populations, the trend toward higher admissions standards has a negative impact on access to public four-year institutions for low-income and minority applicants, who tend to be less well-prepared academically than their peers (Zalaquett, 2005b). Evidently, this approach does not address the root of the problem and does minimal to close the achievement gap. Grounded theory, the method used in this study, provided the opportunity to develop a new theoretical framework based on the study findings uniquely designed to retain Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students.

The current study is also critical to the success of CSU campuses in California and in particular Sacramento State. Most recently, the CSU system developed an initiative to improve retention and graduation rates of all students called The Graduation
The CSU Graduation Initiative strives to raise the freshman six-year graduation rate by eight percentage points by 2015-2016, and reduce by half the existing gap in degree attainment by CSUs under-represented minority students (CSUS, n.d.). Increasing the graduation rates of Latino migrant students is directly related to the university’s mission and goals. Therefore, the individual, social and economic implications of migrant and seasonal farmworker students not completing a bachelor’s degree makes this study a vital contribution toward understanding the persistence and graduation of disadvantaged students in institutions of higher education. The Graduation Initiative commits institutions to systematically discover and remove the roadblocks to students’ success—this study provides recommendations to help accomplish this goal.

Conclusion

Obtaining a college education is widely considered the keystone to achieving economic success and social mobility in American society (Institute of Higher Education Policy, 2005). As Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker populations increase and college-age students integrate into society, institutions of higher education are obligated to adjust to the needs of a more diverse populace (Fry, 2008). Issues of diversity are of critical importance in a world that has become more economically, socially, and culturally interdependent (Banks, 2004; Friedman, 2005). For more than a decade now, employers have articulated a need for workplace competencies associated with a diverse
society—skills that are often in short supply among graduates of higher education (Bikson & Law, 1994). Furthermore, the long-term benefits of education are well understood to reach beyond economic benefits to affect quality of life (Fischer & Hout, 2006). People with more education tend to live longer, have healthier lifestyles, and report lifetime earnings higher than those without formal education (Levin & Calcagno, 2008, p. 9). In fact, workers with a bachelor’s degree earned about $26,000 more per year, than those with only a high school education (Edwards, 2009).

Although there have been improvements in terms of access, equality in the attainment of a bachelor’s degree remains elusive for most underserved, low-income and first generation students (Mortenson, 2007). In the U.S. there is a considerable body of research on the causes of student dropout. However, according to Tinto and Engstrom (2002), knowing why students dropout of college does not tells us what institutions can do to promote student retention, at least not directly. Institutions must focus on the conditions in which students are placed, not their attributes or their lives outside the university or prior to enrollment. Even though it is true that one way to increase retention at any institution is to recruit more academically prepared students—this practice is exclusionary of all underserved populations, in particular unique populations such as Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students. The goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the undergraduate college experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, as well as provide viable institutional
recommendations that assist in establishing conditions within the university that promote success for all students, in particular, for this unique and often invisible population.

Remainder of the Study

This study contains five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study. It described the problem statement, nature of the study, and a summary of the study’s theoretical framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides an overview of recent peer-reviewed literature, as well as seminal works of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students. More specifically, studies focusing on the history and policies of Migrant Education, conditions of migrant students, successful retention strategies, and an in-depth analysis of the network analytical theory of socialization and its importance in relationship to this student population. Chapter 3 details the methodology of this study including specific information about the sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis, and issues of validity and reliability. Chapter 4 is a presentation, interpretation, and explanation of the data and contains tables and figures to illustrate significant data points. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study and addresses implications for future research and concludes with recommendations for action.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Migrant students face barriers that span demographic, cultural, schooling, and larger socio-political issues (Cranston-Gingras & Paul, 2003; Green, 2003; McHatton et al., 2006; Nunez, 2009b; Romanowski, 2003). These include poverty, mobility, lack of familiarity with English, and cultural and social isolation in schools (Garza, Reyes, & Trueba, 2004; Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Zalaquett et al., 2007). The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature that informs this study. The first section summarizes the development of policies designed to provide services to migrant students (see Table 1). The second section introduces the conditions of migrant/seasonal farmworker students (e.g., mobility, language, as well as social, emotional and physical health and financial barriers) (see Table 2). The third section reviews literature on effective retention strategies intended to increase the college graduation rates of Latino migrant/seasonal farmworker students (see Table 3). The remainder of the chapter looks at Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2011) network analytic framework of low-income minority youth, the theoretical framework used to guide this study (see Table 4).
Table 1  
*Migrant Education Policy Timeline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Harvest of Shame Documentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>War on Poverty &amp; Economic Opportunity Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Programs for Migratory Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Education Systems Corporation creates the CAMP model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981/1986</td>
<td>CAMP is established at Sacramento State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>USDE, Office of Migrant Education (OME) created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Incorporation of ESEA into No Child Left Behind Act</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2  
*Conditions of Migrant Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL</th>
<th>CULTURAL</th>
<th>ACADEMIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>The Need to Work</td>
<td>Differences between U.S. and Mexican educational systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited access to social capital</td>
<td>Family obligation</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and emotional stressors</td>
<td>Family supersedes individual obligations</td>
<td>Academic level of parents and students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  
*Effective Retention Strategies for Migrant/Seasonal Farmworker Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL</th>
<th>IN THE CLASSROOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early outreach and recruitment</td>
<td>Student faculty relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The promotion of parent involvement</td>
<td>Acknowledging migrant student’s cultural capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition and integration</td>
<td>Consciousness of racial bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-preservation</td>
<td>A social-cultural approach to literacy instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic and social support</td>
<td>Academic and social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional responsibility</td>
<td>Learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table 4

## Theories of Social Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative, produces profits and can be converted</td>
<td>Based on obligation (social debts, expectations and trustworthiness)</td>
<td>Based on strong legitimate individual personal relationships</td>
<td>The imbalance distribution that exists in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher utility when network is closed</td>
<td>Relationships are based on loyalties between two people</td>
<td>Closed networks are necessary</td>
<td>Minority students must learn “strategic education” to “decode” the institutional language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on structure rather than function</td>
<td>Focuses on immediate and constant access</td>
<td>Focuses on the quality of relationships</td>
<td>The role of institutional agents as facilitators and gatekeepers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The Development of Policies Designed to Provide Services to Migrant Students

Prior to the 1960s, Americans were ignorant about the work performed by migrant and seasonal farm workers. On November 25, 1960, *Harvest of Shame*, a monumental documentary by Edward R. Murrow, illustrated the lifestyle of migrant farmworkers and their families (Murrow & Friendly, 1960). This documentary showed the strife that was part of the daily lives of migrants, as well as the way these hard-working people were exploited by employers through loopholes in the federal and state laws (Branz-Spall, Rosenthal, & Wright, 2003). It was through this televised
documentary aired on Thanksgiving Day that many Americans became aware of the extreme poverty, lack of education, and lamentable work conditions migrant and farm workers and their children endured on a daily basis. The telecast served as a call for policy and generated a phalanx of articulate and determined advocates who campaigned for prompt government intervention to improve the conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (Salinas & Franquiz, 2004). From this movement, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the Inter-Department Committee on Migrant Labor (1961) to extend health, education and welfare services to agricultural migrant workers and their families. Within a year, the committee made 150 attempts to pass legislation through Congress but all failed, except for one (Pappamihiel, 2004).

In the initial years, urgent health issues such as high incidences of diabetes, tuberculosis, and illnesses caused by pesticides took priority over education (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004). But on March 16, 1964, in a special message to Congress, President Lyndon B. Johnson delivered his proposal for what he labeled the “War on Poverty.” For Johnson, poverty did not exist as the consequence of interference and suppression of free-market relationships of production and trade. Instead, poverty simply existed because the State did not provide opportunities to those who could not fully participate in society (Gillette, 1996, p. 13). President Johnson declared that the Act did not merely expand old programs or improve what was already being done, it charted a new course because it struck directly at the causes of poverty, not just its consequences (Gillette, 1996, p. 19). During his message to Congress, President Johnson introduced the Economic
Opportunity Act of 1964, which consisted of a series of programs in the areas of health, education, and welfare (Murray, 1984).

The Office of Economic Opportunity was the agency responsible for administering most of the War on Poverty programs during Johnson’s Administration which included Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA), Job Corps, Head Start, and Community Action Program, among others (O’Connor, 2001). VISTA allowed the federal government to recruit and train volunteers who were willing to spend a year living among the poor to work on anti-poverty projects in both urban and rural areas, and Job Corps provided vocational training in urban training centers managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Interior. Conservation camps stressed the value of discipline and physical labor in rural settings, such as forests and other outdoor recreational areas. Head Start provided education, health, and nutrition services to low-income preschool children; and the Community Action Program involved the maximum number of people in the decision-making machinery of the community to ensure that all programs were sensitive to the needs of the people in that particular community (Gillette, 1996).

On April 9, 1965, Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (P.L. 89-10), the most expansive federal education bill ever passed to date (McLaughlin, 1975). The law consists of five titles, pursuant to which the federal government provided funding to 90% of the nation's public and parochial schools. The first and most important is Title I, which provides funding and guidelines for programs to
instruct educationally disadvantaged children (McLaughlin, 1975). These programs are intended to meet the special needs of educationally deprived children and school districts with high concentrations of such students, typically from poor families (Jeffrey, 1978). The enactment of ESEA revolutionized the federal government's role in education. Prior to the law's passage, educational policy-making had been the near exclusive domain of state and local governments (McLaughlin, 1975).

Ironically, however, Title I as originally enacted, was unable to provide meaningful services to one of the most severely affected population—the children of migrant farmworkers. They were generally unable to benefit from Title I services because of their mobility and the frequent interruptions of their absences from school (Pappamihiel, 2004). This population did not figure in a school’s planning for Title I because they simply were not there, and when they entered the school, they were not likely to stay for any significant length of time (Pappamihiel, 2004). Consequently, only one of 10 migrant children in the 1960s could expect to graduate from high school (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004).

In November 1966, Congress amended ESEA to create a categorical program for children of migrant workers called “Programs for Migratory Children.” The number of migrant supporters to this amendment cannot be determined, but the entire action is attributed to William D. Ford, the author of the bill (Pappamihiem, 2004). William D. Ford was a young Michigan congressman who became a powerful chair of the Education and Labor Committee before retiring in 1994. For nearly 30 years, Ford was considered
the steward for migrant children on Capitol Hill (Salinas & Franquis, 2004). But once “Programs for Migratory Children,” was created, no one knew how to apply those dollars effectively to make a difference in the lives of migrant children (Pappamihiem, 2004; Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004).

The U.S. Office of Education, then part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, asked the states to send representatives to a meeting in Phoenix in early 1968 to work out strategies for implementing the new program (Pappamihiem, 2004; Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004). This meeting was the real starting point for the Migrant Education Program and hinged on the states to select 38 delegates, transforming the 1966 amendment into an array of services designed specifically to meet the unique needs of migrant students (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004; Pappamihiem, 2004). These services built a framework for coordination of services throughout the states (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004). Since situations differ across the nation, and approaches and strategies that work in California may be completely inappropriate for Minnesota or New York, the federal government allowed states to determine for themselves how best to assist migrant students (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004; Pappamihiem, 2004).

The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) grew dramatically in scope and size through a series of reauthorizations (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004; Pappamihiem, 2004). While ESEA has undergone many changes, programs designed to specifically address the needs of migrant children have remained relatively constant. Amazingly, as other programs have come and gone, migrant funding has remained
comparatively stable throughout the years. ESEA has been extended during each reauthorization of ESEA that has followed at intervals of six to eight years (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004; Pappamihiem, 2004). On January 8, 2002, it was given life for another re-authorization period when President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (Branz-Spall et al., 2003). In 2001, the Office of Migrant Education (OME), a department within the U.S. Department of Education, was created to address the unique needs of migrant children (e.g., Migrant Education Program, Bilingual Education, and English Language Learners) and now oversees programs for migrant and seasonal farmworker students under ESEA (Branz-Spall & Wright, 2004; Pappamihiem, 2004).

According to Anstrom and Kindler (1996), the overall purpose of the Migrant Education Program (MEP) is to “meet the complex needs of migrant students and to facilitate interstate coordination of services” (p. 53). Permissible state activities under the ESEA which are specifically related to the education of migrant students include: identification and recruitment, needs assessment, transfer of records and credits, compensatory services for interruptions in schooling, counseling and other services to help overcome social isolation, and coordination with other programs. The OME was designed to provide federal funds to state education agencies and other education and community agencies to sustain the following efforts (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Section 1301 as cited in Ramirez, 2010):
1. Support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to reduce disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves;

2. Ensure that migratory children who move among the States are not penalized in any manner by disparities among the States in curriculum, graduation requirements and State academic content, and student academic achievement standards;

3. Ensure that migratory children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet;

4. Design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to do well in school, and to prepare such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment; and

5. Ensure that migratory children benefit from State and local systemic reforms.

(pp. 47-49)

Today, every state, along with Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, participates in MEP serving through a vast array of methods, approaches, and strategies, approximately half-a-million children who meet the currently operative definitions for MEP eligibility (Ramirez, 2010). The actual number of children served, as well as the
total number of migrant children in the nation at any given time, can only be estimated, because there is no centralized database for the migrant-child population (Branz-Spall et al., 2003). Mobility is the only criteria required by MEP to make a child eligible for the program. The law defines the term “migratory child” to mean:

A child who is, or whose parent, spouse or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain or accompany such parents, spouse or guardian in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work 1) has moved from one school district to another, 2) in a state that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such district; or 3) resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles, and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in a fishing activity. (P.L. 107-110, Title 1, Part C, Section 1309 as cited in Ramirez, 2010, p. 49)

The High School Equivalency Program

In addition, the Office of Migrant Education (OME) created the High School Equivalency Program (HEP). The purpose of HEP is to assist migratory and seasonal farm workers (or children of such workers), who are 16 years of age or older, and not currently enrolled in school, to complete the requirements for high school graduation, pass a standardized equivalent high school test, and, subsequently, to gain employment or begin postsecondary education or training. To be eligible to participate in HEP, a person must also (HEP/CAMP National Association as cited in Ramirez, 2010):

- Not have earned a secondary school diploma or its equivalent;
- Not be currently enrolled in an elementary or secondary school;
• Be 16 years of age or over, or beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which he or she resides; and

• Be determined by the grantee to need the academic and supporting services and financial assistance provided by the project in order to attain the equivalent of a secondary school diploma and to gain employment or be placed in an IHE or other postsecondary education or training. (p. 50)

HEP provides intensive General Education (GED) instruction and support services to migrant students who have not completed high school. HEP provides personal, academic, and vocational counseling, health services, and housing for residential programs (HEP/CAMP National Association, 2010).

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)

In addition, the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) was created by the Educational Systems Corporation, a private educational research company which developed the original concept for the CAMP model for the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) (HEP/CAMP National Association, 2010). The program was designed to assist migratory or seasonal farmworker (or children of such workers) in enrolling in and successfully completing their first year of undergraduate studies at an institution of higher education (HEP/CAMP National Association, 2010). In 1972, the first CAMP programs were funded in Adams State College in Alamos, Colorado; California State College in San Diego, California; University of Texas PanAmerican in
Edinburg, Texas; and Saint Edwards University in Austin, Texas (HEP/CAMP National Association, 2010). In 1993, CAMP received the first five-year grant awards, where previously grants were renewed annually. Today, CAMP receives approximately $15 million annually with 38 funded programs throughout the nation, located in areas as disparate as Florida, Idaho and California (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2007). The CAMP program at Sacramento State University was informally established in 1981 and was officially funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education for the first time in 1986 (HEP/CAMP National Association, 2010). Currently, California has a total of eight programs, five at California State Universities (CSUs) and three at community colleges.

In order to be eligible for CAMP services: (1) a person, or his or her parent, must have spent a minimum of 75 days during the past 24 months as a migrant or seasonal farm worker; or (2) the person must have participated or be eligible to participate in programs like Migrant Education Program (MEP) or Employment and Training Administration (E&TA), Department of Labor (DOL), or Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs. In addition, a person must also meet the following requirements (DOE as cited in Ramirez, 2010):

1. Be enrolled or be admitted for enrollment as a full-time student at a participating Institute of Higher Education (IHE);
2. Not be beyond the first academic year of a program of study at the IHE, as determined under the standards of the IHE; and
3. Be determined by the grantee to need the academic support services and financial assistance provided by the project in order to complete an academic program of study at the IHE (p. 56).

CAMP offers pre-college transition and first-year support services to help students develop the skills necessary to stay in college and successfully graduate from college. CAMP services include recruitment and retention services designed to be an extension of the student’s family. Specific services include assistance with admissions, access to financial aid and scholarships, academic and career-based skills workshops, cultural and civic engagement opportunities, and referrals to other university services. CAMP staff assists the student in identifying housing either on-campus or off-campus, assists with the selection and registration of classes, helps adjust to college life through activities and counseling, develops study and college survival skills, obtains tutors for academic assistance, and helps them to receive supplemental financial assistance for books, supplies, health insurance and transportation. The goal of CAMP is to help every participating student become leaders and active participants in college and the community.

Facts about California’s Migrant Students

Based on the report *Improving Services for Migrant Students* published by the Legislative Analyst Office (2006), California is home to approximately 330,000 migrant students eligible for services in 565 school districts throughout the state. This accounts
for approximately one-third of the total U.S. migrant student population. Almost one-half of the state’s migrant students recently moved from Mexico to California, 43% moved from one region of the state to another, and 9% moved to California from another U.S. state. Hispanic students make up 98% of the eligible migrant student population with Hmong and Punjabi making up the remaining 2%. Forty-three percent of these students live in the 10 regions that make up California’s Central Valley area. Almost 85% of migrant children are of school age (5-18 years old). Although an equal number of male and female students are in kindergarten through grade 12, the higher number of male out-of-school youth (OSY) tips the overall percentage to 53% (LAO, 2006).

The Migrant Education Program in California

In California, migrant education supports two kinds of programs, which include locally developed programs and statewide programs. Locally developed programs focus on standards and assessment, teaching and learning, professional development; partnerships among schools; parents, families, and communities; and funding and governance. Statewide administered programs include:

1. The Bi-national Migrant Education Program – an international program between Mexico and the United States designed to provide direct services to migrant students who travel between the two countries.
2. **Identification and Recruitment** – coordinates all activities regarding eligibility requirements, recruitment and data entry professional development and student data collection.

3. **Migrant State Parent Advisory Council (SPAC)** – the mission of SPAC is to ensure that students have the same opportunities to reach excellence and meet academic standards through support and academic services. SPAC is comprised of two parent representatives from each region.

4. **Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS)** – assists migratory students in grades nine to 12 in making up credits, meet graduation requirements, or cope with scheduling difficulties outside the classroom through take home books and exams.

5. **UCLA Statewide Student Leadership Institute** – provides 10th and 11th grade migrant students the opportunity to participate in a rigorous, five-week, residential, academic program emphasizing leadership. (California Department of Education, 2009, p. 1)

**Other Federal and State Programs**

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the Migrant Education Program is strictly a supplemental program, and in and of itself cannot fully address the formidable challenges faced by migrant students (Vocke, 2007). Therefore, eligible migrant students may also qualify and benefit from federal funds, which support state programs for other target groups (e.g., TRIO Programs, Educational Opportunity Program). Authorized
under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the federally-funded TRIO programs are among the largest programs to provide services to low-income and first-generation student populations (migrant students included due to their similar characteristics) from middle school through college (The Pell Institute, 2007, p. 31):

1. The Talent Search – provides pre-college services that aim to increase college awareness and preparation among middle and high school students that include counseling, tutoring, mentoring and workshops on college admission and preparation.

2. Upward Bound – in addition to the services offered by The Talent Search, Upward Bound offers an intensive program that includes supplemental academic instruction in key college-preparatory courses after school, on Saturdays throughout the school year and during the summer. Upward Bound Math/Science helps high school students recognize and develop their potential to excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and encourages them to pursue postsecondary degrees and careers in these fields.

3. The Educational Opportunity Centers – helps adults over the age of 19 get back on the college track. The program assists participants by helping them earn their high school equivalency degrees, apply to college and secure financial aid, re-enter college, and/or successfully remain enrolled in college until graduation.

4. The Veterans Upward Bound - assists adults who have served in the military by helping them transition to postsecondary education.
5. The Student Support Services Program – serves students who are enrolled in two- and four-year institutions. The program provides services aimed at improving college persistence and graduation rates among this population, as well as increasing transfer rates from two-to four year institutions. Service include instruction in basic skills, tutoring, academic advising, financial aid, career counseling, transfer and graduate school counseling, and mentoring.

6. The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program – aims to increase the number of doctoral degrees earned by students from disadvantaged populations by preparing undergraduate students for advance degrees through the involvement in research and other scholarly activities.

The Educational Opportunity Program

In 1969, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1072 (the Harmer Bill) which established the Educational Opportunity Program at all CSU institutions of higher learning (CSU, 2010). The program is designed for first-generation, low-income, disadvantaged students who need admission assistance and support services to succeed in college. EOP services include admission counseling, academic advising, peer mentoring, courses offered in conjunction with academic departments, student success workshops, tutoring, Graduation Writing Test preparation, and supplemental financial assistance. Summer Bridge may offer courses in the areas of math, English, ethnic studies, study skills and orientation, as well as provide tutoring, academic advising, seminars and other
retention activities and services which may between campuses. The length of each program varies, as programs can be from one week to six weeks and all may not be residential (CSU, 2009). One of the primary functions of EOP is to provide access to students who do not meet the university regular admission requirements (CSU, 2009). Based on EOP eligibility requirements, most migrant and seasonal farmworker students are also eligible to receive services from EOP programs in the state of California. At Sacramento State, 99% of migrant and seasonal farmworker students enrolled in CAMP also participate in EOP.

In the case of migrant and seasonal farmworker students, state legislators and regulators have presented relatively little resistance to federal involvement. Migrant students’ mobility makes their educational needs uniquely national, preventing any one state from fully addressing these needs. Providing an adequate education for migrant students demands interdependence among states and education systems throughout the country (Interstate Migrant Education Counsel [IMEC], 2008). This section of the Literature Review discussed the development of policies designed at providing services to migrant students. The next section discusses the unique conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworker students and the reasons this population is considered so academically vulnerable.
Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students

Decades after the emergence of federal and state programs and services, migrant farmworkers and their family members continue to face social, cultural, and educational barriers (Nunez, 2009b). Migrant students have special educational needs related to their families’ mobility including high levels of poverty, English language proficiency and absenteeism, among others (Gibson & Bejines, 2002). Each of these factors work together to impede migrant students’ ability to keep up academically with other students. Prior to examining the effective retention strategies it is important to consider students’ initial conditions when entering college (see Table 2). The section of the Review of Related Literature titled Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students discusses in greater detail the social, cultural and academic challenges of migrant and seasonal farmworker students with an aim at providing a better understanding of this population’s unique needs.

Social Conditions

Mobility

The nature of migrant work is the primary impediment to success faced by migrant students. While some families follow the crops, moving seasonally, others may have seasonal work in only one location but return to Mexico during the winter months when they have neither employment nor income (Vocke, 2007). Those living in federally subsidized migrant camps may also be required to move when the camps close in late
November each year, at the end of the agricultural season (Gibson & Bejines, 2002). For migrant students, mobility is not just another variable in their lives; it is the child’s life. It defines the child’s world and his/her relationship with the world (Vocke, 2007). Children may live for short periods of time during each year in several communities, sometimes in multiple states (Zalaquett et al., 2007). Their length of stay is determined by the weather, the labor supply, the crops to be harvested, and the availability of housing (Coles, 1971; Rothenberg, 1998; Valle, 1994).

Migrant students arrive late and leave early from the academic school year. Because of the lack of synchrony between the family’s migration pattern and the traditional school year, migrant students experience considerable disruptions to their education (Romanowski, 2003; Salinas & Franquiz, 2004; Vocke, 2007). Even with the support of summer programs and the Portable Assisted Study Sequence Program (PASS), designed to assist migratory students in grades nine to 12 make up credits to meet graduation requirements or cope with scheduling difficulties, it is often difficult for these students to accrue enough academic credit to maintain the appropriate grade level with their peers (Kindler, 1995). Migrant students also experience problems with records and credit transfers. Some high schools do not have migrant education programs that work to transfer school records, accelerate instruction, and accrue credits. For bi-national students from Mexico and other countries, records and credits from abroad are difficult to obtain and credits often do not transfer into U.S. schools (Kindler, 1995).
Because the lives and livelihoods of their families are dependent on numerous external factors, many students lack an awareness of their individual ability to exercise some control over the circumstance impacting their school life (Romanowski, 2003; Salinas & Franquiz, 2004; Vocke, 2007). Considering the peer acceptance needs of adolescents, the constant change of schools is also frightening to high school students and can lead to isolation, stress and lack of motivation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Because of their type of work and language differences, migrant farmworker families often occupy a low status in communities where they live (Romanowski, 2003). Therefore, many migrant children sense they do not belong, and their feelings of inferiority are often reinforced by their peers’ rejection and teasing (Vocke, 2007). This social isolation hinders student’s academic development and plays a significant role in promoting low self-esteem (Romanowski, 2003). According to the Interstate Migrant Education Council (1999), the fact that migrant children are less able to participate in school activities further reduces the reasons to attend school in the first place (CMEP, 2007).

More generally, research has documented that underrepresented students have limited access to social capital because they are less likely than their majority counterparts to attend schools that provide access to high-level college preparatory courses, adequately qualified teachers, and counselors available to guide them in the college application process (McDonough, 2005; Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, & Morrell, 2002; Oakes et al., 2006). Migrant students are often placed in vocation, technical and/or remedial courses and not on the college preparatory path even when academically ready.
Since many times they arrive late in the year, college preparatory courses are filled and they are registered in whatever courses are left available. The way of life circumstances such as language, family responsibilities, not having a space to study at home, a time designated for homework or parental assistance can lead to migrant students falling behind in school as early as elementary levels. According to Gibson (2003) only one-third of migrant students are placed directly into college preparatory English and math courses. Many migrant educators cite gangs as a problem that pulls students from rigorous academic work (Gibson, 2003). If students do not feel accepted in the mainstream society of a school or have developed low self-esteem due to academic failure and alienation, gangs can fulfill an important emotional need for acceptance (IMEC, 2008).

In addition, mobility makes it more difficult to receive the adult support from school personnel that most young people need in order to succeed academically, socially, psychologically, and emotionally (Green, 2003). School systems must deal with students who come and go at varying times during the academic year, making the integration of this population into the classroom and larger community very difficult. According to Sue (2005) and Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1993) stereotypes and personal biases remain the dominant paradigm of educators and their beliefs about students of color, their families, and their communities. In fact, much of what has been written about migrant students has been based on disadvantaged, deficit, or at-risk theories of academic failure (Trevino, 2004). Many schools use cultural perspectives that define Latino migrant and seasonal
farmworker students by what they do not have, rather than what they add to the school environment (Rolon, 2003). Many educators still believe that Latino children are not interested in education or are incapable of succeeding in an academic setting and assume these are the reasons why they drop out from school. This adds to the reasons why children of farmworkers receive a fragmented education, have only short-term relationships with teachers and friends, and do not become a permanent part of the larger community (Vocke, 2007).

*Physical and Emotional Stressors*

Migrant students have unmet health needs that interfere with their academic success, such as psychosocial and chronic health conditions (Vocke, 2007). Furthermore, migrant farmworkers work extremely long hours without resting, experience excessive physical strain, suffer malnutrition, and are regularly exposed to toxic chemicals and/or disease-carrying animals. Many migrant families live in substandard housing that at times lack basic services. Poor housing quality and overcrowding can increase the transmission of diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza. Migrant families, in an attempt to reduce expenses for housing and childcare, will share housing with other family members and friends (Vocke, 2007). The Housing Assistance Council (Holden, Lance, & Smith, 2001) found that 52% of migrant workers were living in overcrowded housing, not in code to the standard set by the federal government. Of those households living in crowded units, 74% of the families reported having children.
The statistics indicate that migrant families do not gain access to health services at the rates comparable to those for the general population. For health services to be effective, individuals must be able to gain access to local services in a language they can understand and during hours convenient to them. A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation (Rosenbaum & Shin, 2005) on migrant families found that in 2000, 85% of migrant families compared to 35% of low-income families in California lacked health insurance. A study of California agricultural workers’ health (Villarejo, Lighthall, Williams, Souter, & Mines, 2001) found that 50% of the respondents who reported seeking health care sought care in Mexico because of the expense of health care and language barriers in the United States. More recently, a report by the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the uninsured found that 85% of migrant farm workers families were uninsured compared with 37% of the general population (Rosenbaum & Shin, 2005).

Untreated dental cavities also cause pain and suffering for children, particularly because untreated conditions often require more extensive care when it is ultimately delivered. The lack of early and regular oral care for economically disadvantaged children also causes poor nutrition, school absences, and an overall decrease in social functioning. Studies on the overall health needs of migrant children show that oral health ranks among the top five health problems (Dever, 1991). A major contributor to the poor oral health of migrant children is the lack of preventive care (Enwistle & Swanson, 1989). Emergency care, often the only source of health care for that group, rarely, if
ever, contains provisions for follow-up preventive efforts. As a result, prevention is an element of the care that migrant families do not commonly receive.

Children who lack proper social and emotional development early in life often exhibit behavioral problems in school and within their community. The negative experience for migrant children are numerous, including limited-English proficiency, constant mobility, and frequent transfers to schools, and being older than fellow classmates (Wright, 1991). These events can affect the emotional and social development of migrant children. Migrant children have been found to experience rejection from peers and adults in the community for exhibiting aggressive and unconventional behaviors (Kupersmidt & Martin, 1997). Coles (1965) found that migrant children suffered from relatively high rates of emotional and social problems; yet, they seldom receive professional assistance. Kupersmidt and Martin (1997) also found that nearly 60% of migrant children exhibited one or more psychiatric disorders. Among the disorders were generalized anxiety, separation anxiety, disruptive behaviors, and depression. Around the age of 9 or 10, the depression of some migrant children manifests itself as some kind of self-destructive behavior (Huang, 1993). The consequences of depression in migrant children and youth exacerbate issues of poverty and illiteracy. Often, delinquency, truancy, gang involvement, alcohol and drug abuse further compound their physical and emotional poverty. Additionally, because of residency problems, language barriers and unfamiliarity with available local resources,
most migrant families receive few social, economic, health, or educational services (Government Accounting Office, 2006).

Not surprisingly, migrant families experience health disparities compared to the general population (Huang, 2003; U.S. Bureau of International Labor Affairs [ILAB], 2005) and few migrant farmworkers and their children receive appropriate medical care (ILAB, 2005). Generally, migrants have higher rates of tuberculosis, pneumonia, asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and intestinal parasites (Huang, 2003). Thereby, many migrant students suffer educational disadvantages stemming from poverty and poverty-related health problems that can directly affect academic achievement by decreasing the number of days in school (i.e., lower attendance), thus reducing the time they are academically engaged. Poor nutrition, poor health, and poor health care reduces a child’s energy, attention span, and motivation (Strange & Gutmann, 1993).

Cultural Conditions

The Need to Work

Since earning an adequate income takes precedence in migrant families, moving, working and taking care of siblings is the essence of a migrant youth’s existence. There are notable numbers of children working in the fields. The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) estimates that 24% of children working in the fields are between the ages of six and 13 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006). It is not certain how accurate these numbers are because many young children work without individual
contracts, by working alongside their parents in the fields. In the United States, agricultural work is exempt from child labor laws, and few protections exist for children who work in the fields by choice or necessity. Children and adolescent farmworkers are exposed to pesticides and constantly come into contact with unguarded, unsafe machinery that they are not trained to operate safely. Serious work-related injuries have also been observed in adolescent farmworkers, who are estimated to make up from 5 to 10% of all farmworkers (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Migrant families may also expect their children to care for younger siblings when the parents are working (Chavkin, 1991; Martinez & Cranston-Gingras, 1996). The numerous absences related to family responsibilities and work related illness and accidents result in missed tests, falling behind and ultimately dropping out of school.

As they get older, adolescents can make a significant contribution to their family’s income by working after school, weekends and summers (Kindler, 1995). This is understandable with wages of migrant workers often being below the minimum wage. According to a 2005 report from the U.S. Department of Labor, the median income for farmworker households was between $15,000 and $17,000. Thirty percent of farmworker households live below the poverty level, and this number is increasing (U.S Department of Labor, 2005). Despite this pervasive poverty, many of these laborers are ineligible for social services because of their tenuous and often uncertain immigration status. Pride also keeps them from not seeking assistance even if they are eligible (Vocke, 2007). The long-term opportunities an education provides through better paying
jobs is the most significant reason parents send their children to school, yet these children may also need to work in the fields to earn money for the family’s immediate economic survival.

Parents want what is best for their children but often do not know how to set them on the path to academic success. The tradition of family obligations also sometimes gets in the way, as does the transitory nature of the parents’ work (Vocke, 2007). Parents do not always understand that asking children to work in the summer or weekends takes them away from other academic opportunities (e.g., internships, summer school). Research shows that working more than 20 hours a week while attending college has a negative impact on the persistence of first-generation students because it reduces the number of courses they take, the amount of time they spend studying and the amount of time they spend on campus interacting with peers and faculty (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). College life that requires student initiation, independence, and self-monitoring can be challenging and stressful for incoming, inexperienced students (Bryde & Milburn, 1990; Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1985). When students are faced with academic demands, the way they approach academic tasks and view themselves can play a significant role in their academic success.

The cultural belief that the welfare of the family supersedes individual aspirations is also fairly fixed in the various migrant communities and can cause students not to prioritize studying in their lives and instead work to bring an additional paycheck into the household. These cultural attitudes are often due to migrant parents having attained low
educational levels and results in a failure to encourage children to acquire the skills that promote academic success (Romanowski, 2003; Vocke, 2007). School attendance for most migrant children is dictated by the needs of the family, and those needs may change from day to day depending on general economic conditions (Salerno, 1991; Strange & Gutmann, 1993; Valle, 1994).

Academic Conditions

*Parental Educational Attainment*

It is often assumed that the socioeconomic status of a student’s parents will determine a student’s potential for academic achievement (CMEP, 2007). The educational attainment of farmworkers is low in comparison to the general population. Thirty percent of farmworkers have less than a ninth grade education, 28% are high school graduates, and only 20% have some college education (Hertz, 2008; Kandel, 2008). A National Agricultural Workers Survey of 6,472 crop farmworkers revealed that, on average, the highest grade completed by crop workers was seventh grade (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Consequently, migrant parents have varying degrees of experience with school and education. While some have been well educated, and have taken an interest in their children’s education from the start, others have had negative educational experiences themselves and steer clear of getting involved. Those with minimal or negative experiences may not be able to advocate for their children’s educational needs or rights.
It is widely recognized that parental involvement in a child’s education plays an important role in student success. Both research and experience of migrant staff and families demonstrate that when parents are well-informed and active in assisting at home, their children are more likely to reach higher academic levels (CMEP, 2007). Although Latino migrant parents value education, they face multiple challenges that prevent them from fully participating in their children’s school. For example, they speak a different language, both parents spend long days working in the fields and parents are unfamiliar with the U.S. requirements to graduate from high school or enter college (Hyslop, 2000; Vocke, 2007). Parents usually have limited proficiency in English and they often rely on their children who have learned English in U.S. schools to translate for them, placing their children in adult situations at an early age (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Latino parents often want to support the educational aspirations of their children, but providing academic help is a very challenging task for them. In addition, many educators provide little guidance about higher education or show little interest in future of Latino students (Auerbach, 2004). Therefore, parents cannot draw from their own experiences to determine what information is needed, what questions to ask, or where to go for answers. The lack of information usually ranges from not knowing how to complete their college application to not knowing the cost of postsecondary education and the availability of financial aid. This causes students to make poor choices about postsecondary education, choices that might hinder or delay their chances to achieve a higher education degree.
Differences between the U.S. and Mexico’s Educational System

Family involvement has always been stressed as essential to a successful education, but the typical U.S. school system is not equipped to overcome the hurdles needed in incorporating parents. However, school culture is geared toward middle and upper class values (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). The marginalization of migrant children is often the result of a disconnection between the family and the educators. Latino parents need to know what the school means by parental involvement and what the school expects from Latino parents. According to Cotton and Wikelund (2001), parental involvement includes attending school functions, responding to school obligations, helping children improve their school work, providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modeling desired behavior, monitoring homework, and actively tutoring children at home. Latino parents, however, may interpret involvement as interfering with schoolwork (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Latino culture is not familiar with the concept of teaming up with the school system. Latinos have a high level of respect for educators and treat them as professionals who should be left alone to do their job. Parents often feel that their engagement with school activities would be counterproductive (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004).

Because many Latino students and their parents do not speak English as their first language, there is a perceived insurmountable wall around essential communication. In schools, language supports the communication so necessary to establishing viable collaborative partnerships. The key to overcoming communication issues is a willingness
at all levels of the school system and community to reach beyond these perceived obstacles. The school’s main focus must be on inclusion, which will allow all students and their families to interact more fully with their teachers. This inclusiveness is predicated on the realization that teachers are in a powerful position to change attitudes and behaviors as they establish and maintain dialogues with the families of their students. The basic needs of housing, transportation, and employment are likely to be the first orders of concern. Parents enroll their students in school, but they are unlikely to become involved, because they are uncertain about how to approach school staff, are uncomfortable in the academic setting, and do not have time to visit the school or a way to get there (Vocke, 2007).

*Linguistic Barriers*

The majority of migrant farmworkers are foreign born (8 out of 10) and are predominantly from Latin American countries (Zalaquett et al., 2007). According to CMEP (2007), the percentage of migrant students who speak Spanish as their first language is 90%. Migrant students learning English as a Second Language is 70% in comparison to non-migrant Latino students at 23%. Aside from that tremendous task of learning a new language, the language learner migrant student does not acquire English at the expected rate of development. Some of the reasons include 1) migrant students tend to miss more school than mainstream students; 2) because of frequent moves, migrant students may not receive continual language development instruction, or the instruction may not be articulated; 3) migrant students tend to live in isolated and low socioeconomic
conditions, and therefore, they might have less exposure to academic English; and 4) many migrant students move with their families between the United States and Mexico or between rural Spanish-speaking communities in the United States (CMEP, 2007).

In addition, there is considerable controversy over the exact amount of time that it takes the average English learner to reach proficiency in the language compared to the time needed for native English-speaking peers (Baitinger, 2005). State and federal laws require that English learners acquire as rapidly, efficiently, and effectively as possible (Baitinger, 2005). The California Education Code (Thomson Reuters, 2010), as a result of the passage of Proposition 227\(^1\) recommends that English learners be placed in a specialized English program for a period not generally expected to exceed one year. However this time frame is not supported by current research. The National Literacy Council recommends spending approximately one to three years on the basis of various backgrounds and contextual factors, but students appear to take from four to seven years to reach full grade-level academic and literacy skills in English (CMEP, 2007). The data clearly shows that although migrant English learners begin learning English at the same rate as other English learners do, migrant students fall approximately one and a half years behind other English learners during the several years that it takes students to reach the advanced levels of proficiency. Therefore, migrant students whose first language is Spanish have to contend with a school system that demands proficiency in English, yet contradicts itself regarding the method of teaching it (Vocke, 2007).

\(^1\) Legislation passed in 1998, requiring all public school instruction to be conducted in English with minimal exceptions
Nonetheless, once the language is acquired, research shows that bilingual students may have an advantage over working-class English dominant students in gaining access to social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). Based on Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) theory of social reproduction, bilingualism represents a sector of the Latino-origin student population that receives special consideration for institutional sponsorship. According to Ogbu (1991), bilinguals are known to have a significant level of trust in “the system” and in its gatekeepers—they trust the school officials, teachers and overall process. Typically, bilingual students have acquired sufficient mainstream cultural capital to utilize the resources available to the dominant group, yet due to their success in learning English, have retained sufficient trust in the system which generates help-seeking and therefore genuine support from institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2004).

Academic Levels

The largest area of research focuses on the student characteristics that predict success (Astin & Oseguera, 2005). A student’s level of academic preparation in high school, grade point average and college entrance examination scores are all positively correlated with success in college (Adelman, 1999; Astin & Oseguera, 2005; Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002). Due to their lifestyle conditions, migrant students enter kindergarten significantly over age (CMEP, 2007). As a result, migrant students quickly get behind academically in Math and English (Gibson, 2003). At the high school level, CMEP (2007) found that significantly fewer migrant students are passing the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) compared with the rate for the general student
population. In the tenth grade, the first opportunity to pass the CAHSEE, only 51.6% of migrant students are successful, compared with 77% of non-migrant 10th-grade students. When the CAHSEE is administered in the 11th and 12th grades, passing rates decline nearly 15%, while more than 30% of the general student population passes (CMEP, 2007). Research shows that many of the students unable to pass the CAHSEE ultimately drop out of high school (CMEP, 2007). In fact, the high school dropout rates for migrant students are cited at 62% in comparison to 50% for the general student population (CMEP, 2007).

And of those migrant students who actually graduate from high school, not all will decide to apply to and enroll in college (Engle, Bermeo, & O’Brien, 2006). While data shows that only 35% of graduating high school students are eligible for four-year higher education, the number of migrant students who are eligible is unknown (CMEP, 2007). However, research shows that only one-third of migrant students are placed directly into college preparatory classes. California’s benchmark for higher education eligibility is found in the University of California’s A-G requirements. The purpose of these requirements is to ensure that potential college and university students have a minimum educational background. Unfortunately, many migrant students fail to graduate from high school with the prerequisite course work needed to be eligible to attend four-year colleges and universities.

Many factors may prevent migrant students from meeting the A-G requirements, including the tracking of students into basic skills course work. At the secondary school
level, migrant students are vulnerable to being placed in mathematics courses based on
criteria other than their skill level. Most schools typically have more than one series of
mathematics courses, and some series are designed to prepare students for entrance to
college, and others are not. Migrant students may not be properly assessed if they enter a
school halfway through the year or transfer from another district, and records of their
previous courses are not always available. The basis for the placement of migrant
students may simply be the availability of space in a classroom, without sufficient
attention to the students’ needs or skill level.

There are numerous factors that influence retention among Latino migrant
students, including financial need, socioeconomic status and a sense of belonging
(Nunez, 2009b; Zalaquett et al., 2007). The efforts used by institutions of higher
education to recruit, retain and graduate students must be modified as demographics
change. For instance, as strategies to address the special conditions of migrant students
are created, the students’ total environment must be considered (in particular their unique
background conditions) (Phelan, Link, Moore, & Strueve, 1997). The following section
of the Review of Related Literature titled Successful Strategies for Migrant and Seasonal
Farmworker Students in Higher Education introduces outreach, retention and graduation
strategies designed to promote success among this student population. This section
provides a greater understanding of the strategies that are effective in promoting college
graduation among migrant students.
Successful Strategies for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students in Higher Education

Although this study focuses on Latino migrant students in general, it is important to note that just as alarming as the college completion gaps that exist for minorities in the U.S., the gender gap that persists in college completion is widening. In general, proportionally fewer college-age males are actually enrolling in college than in years past (Cerna, Perez, & Saenz, 2007; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005). Currently, just 26% of African Americans, 24% of Native Americans and Pacific Islanders, and 18% of Hispanic Americans have at least an associates degree. In addition, in each racial and ethnic group young women are outperforming young men with respect to the attainment of high school diplomas, with even more pronounced disparities at the postsecondary level (Ranson, 2010).

Early Outreach and Recruitment

Research implies that Latino students are often poorly informed or misinformed about the postsecondary application processes and opportunities and usually ranges from not knowing how to complete their college application to not knowing the cost of postsecondary education and the availability of financial aid (Romanowski, 2003; Salinas & Franquiz, 2004). This lack of knowledge causes students to make poor choices about postsecondary education, choices that might hinder or delay their chances to achieve a higher education degree (Engle et al., 2006). Additionally, in response to the steep declines in state funding for public higher education over the past 10 years, most institutions of higher education have recently increased their admissions standards
making the admission process even more challenging. A variety of restrictions are being instituted to reduce system-wide enrollment, including an earlier application period, strict enforcement of deadlines and denying the enrollment to students who are not fully eligible for admission (e.g., special admits) (Rivera, 2010). These new changes to the enrollment process strain the educational timelines for all students, but it is particularly damaging to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who, being low-income and first generation college attendees, are more likely to require special admission and additional support services, and who may not know the ins-and-outs of the college admission process and due to this, may miss crucial deadlines. Therefore, more than ever, early outreach is crucial to ensure Latino migrant enrollment in higher education.

To increase the number of Latino migrant students in college there must be preparation, support and intervention for students starting as early as elementary school. The seed must be sown early enough to motivate students to make the right choices in coursework throughout junior high and high school. For example, students and parents must understand the importance of college preparatory course, especially since the math track to college starts with eighth-grade algebra. But since parents may not have the academic preparation themselves, information on existing support services provided by the school such as after school tutoring is very important. College literacy workshops can help ease some of the anxiety many parents feel about their children going to college, where discussing topics such as college admission, the cost of college, financial aid, housing, differences between the U.S. and Mexican educational system, expectations
about student life, among other topics can empower parents with the necessary knowledge to better understand the process and better support their children. To be effective, these workshops must be conducted in Spanish, during convenient hours for parents and by facilitators sensitive to the migrant culture (Vocke, 2007). When possible, these information sessions should be provided at a college campus to get families acquainted with the environment.

The Promotion of Parental Involvement

Mexican families have been largely depicted as a burden for college students. Their lack of familiarity with college life and expectations, their insistence on maintaining physically close contact with their children, and their expectations that daughters not leave the home to pursue a college education were traditionally considered to be some of the family influences that impeded Latinos from obtaining a college degree. While these perceptions have been largely refuted by empirical research (Aguirre & Martinez, 1993; Astin & Burciaga, 1981; Delgado Bernal, 2001; Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Olivas, 1986; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997) and although most parents cannot provide financial support to their children, most students would never trade the moral support received from their family for financial support (Villalpando, 2003). In fact, as reported by other researchers (Trevino, 2004; Zalaquett & Feliciano, 2004) most Latino college graduates attribute their success to the support and influence of their families, particularly their parents (Araujo, 2006).
Evidently, family occupies a central position in the education of Latino students (Zalaquett, 2006b). Regular reminders from parents of how crucial an education is to a stable future; the sharing of the challenges they experienced by coming to this country; how difficult it was to get a job because, not only did they not know how to speak English, but also because they never made it through high school; and how not having an education seriously hindered them from demonstrating and exercising their true capabilities serves as inspiration for many Latinos to go beyond a high school diploma. While much is feasible during the K-12 years, institutions of higher education must do a better job at incorporating parents into the college life of their children. During the admission process, the institution provides various opportunities for parents to participate in this major life-changing event (e.g., Open House, Orientation); however, once the student begins classes, their parents are never invited to campus again. Overall, events should present opportunities for students to share their new experiences with their parents and for parents to leave with a better understanding of what their children are going through and how to better support them. This type of activity honors the importance of family in a culture where family values are dominate while promoting continued parental involvement throughout the college years.

Transition & Integration

Families and peer groups are primary arenas where young people negotiate and construct their realities. For the most part, the complexity of students’ movements and adaptations from one setting to another are taken for granted (Phelan et al., 1993). This is
particularly important because transitions frequently require students’ efforts and skills, especially when context is governed by different values and norms. In our society, many adolescents are left to navigate transitions without direct assistance. Students’ competency in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a stepping stone to further their education, create productive work experiences, and live a meaningful life (Phelan et al., 1993). Many students making the transition from high school to college are overwhelmed by the change of location and social environment (Tinto, 1993). While this time is filled with intense, peer pressure and the need for acceptance are strong, migrant students, as a mobile population, may lack the language proficiency to feel confident enough to make new friends and may also lack long-term social connections to resist forces that prevent them from succeeding academically (CMEP, 2007).

The first year of college is widely recognized as a crucial point for all students (Tinto, 1993). “Being a first-generation student confers its greatest liability in [the] initial adjustment to, and survival in, postsecondary education” (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2003, p. 429). Implementing strategies such as bridge courses and programs during the summer between high school and college, orientation sessions and courses before and during the freshman year, and first-year learning communities have all been shown to ease the transition to college by helping students integrate into the social and academic communities of their institution and acquire the skills and knowledge needed to become successful learners in those communities (Lotkowski, Robbins, &
Noeth, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, & Gabelnick, 2004; Tinto, 2003; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2004). These services are most likely to reach low-income and first-generation students when they are mandatory for all students. However, it is important to identify and remove the barriers that may limit these students’ participation (e.g. cost) before making such programs mandatory (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

Research shows that the part of the educational experience in which students are least satisfied with is advising (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). Recent large-scale studies have found that institutions with high graduation rates have proactive advising programs in place (i.e., “intrusive” advising and early warning systems) that actively monitor student performance, intervene early when students experience academic difficulty, and follow-up on student progress (American Association of State Colleges and Universities [AASCU], 2005; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005). Because student success is not always measured so much by quarters or semesters as one course at a time, institutions can help keep students on track of their coursework by developing early warning and/or advising systems to monitor student progress and to intervene when necessary. Such systems provide information to faculty, staff, and students in time to take action and improve performance before it’s too late and a student fails or faces academic discipline (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Tinto, 2000). Actions triggered by monitoring systems may include performance contracts that commit students to receiving advising, counseling, and tutoring and/or enrolling in study skills
workshops/courses (Engle & Tinto, 2008). In order for such systems to work, there needs to be a high degree of collaboration and information-sharing between faculty in the classroom, staff in academic and social support programs, and the students themselves (AASCU, 2005; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005).

Phelan et al. (1993) conducted the Students’ Multiple World Study, a two-year longitudinal study to understand the lives of secondary school students as they move from one social setting to another and to draw implications for learning. The study describes the difficult transition that many students experience as they move between worlds, particularly when the lines between these worlds become politicized (Phelan et al., 1993). While students can navigate across cultural, linguistic, and social borders, this movement may incur personal and psychological costs that are often invisible to their teachers. By examining students’ interrelationships with family, school, and peers—perceptions of boundaries between worlds, a model emerged identifying four types of students. These four types present the nature of boundaries and processes of movement between worlds, as well as the strategies students employ to adapt to different contexts and settings. This study is applicable to migrant students whose boundary crossings are increased by their social, cultural, and academic conditions. In order to create environments that support transition and integration, institutions of higher education must facilitate boundary crossing that do not require students to give up or hide important features of their lives (Phelan at al., 1993).
The first type of student identified through Phelan et al. (1993) Multiple World Study comes from a two-parent household that values family cohesiveness and functions in a world that is congruent and offers smooth transitions. Commonalities among worlds override differences and makes movement from one setting to another harmonious and uncomplicated. Everyone’s perceptions of this student including the student’s perceptions of himself are remarkably similar. Parents are involved in school; his friends live in the neighborhood and hang out at the student’s home, and interact comfortably with each other’s parents. Rarely, does this student or their friends intermingle with students in other peer groups. Type I frequently includes white, middle to upper-middle class, and high achieving adolescents. Although many migrant students come from a two-parent household most do not fall under this type due to the complicated boundary crossing required from their unique cultural, social and academic conditions.

The second type of student in Phelan et al.’s (1993) study belongs to a world that is different with respect to culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or religion, but within which the student successfully manages to traverse boundaries. Type II students present few problems, as they appear to “fit in” and their behavior is in accord with acceptable classroom and school norms. However, this does not mean that crossings are easy or adjustments are made without personal and psychic costs. However, even though many Type II students are able to cross perceived boundaries successfully, they are frequently forced to deny certain aspects of who they are. Because values and conflicts are often contrary to those found in school, Type II students keep the actors of
their worlds separate and feel tremendous discomfort when unable to do so. Type II students seek a different atmosphere so they enter worlds that are unfamiliar to them regardless of how painful or difficult it may be. This particular student feels like an outsider who must always hide a part of who they are. High achieving migrant students adopt the Type II student characteristics as a survival mechanism to succeed. In order to embrace school, they consciously separate from their community’s values and beliefs, which mitigate their successful adaptation to school.

The third type represents students whose worlds are different and who cross boundaries only under certain conditions. In this case, there is a lack of separation between their peer and family worlds and the actors in these spaces intermingle regularly. Peer and family expectations, such as putting other interests first, sometimes has a negative effect on school performance. If there are troubles with family or peers their attention to school work declines. For Type III students, classroom and school climate conditions can mean the difference between staying in school and dropping out. Type III students do well in classrooms where they perceive the teacher as caring and where the norms and behaviors value group over self, listening and empathizing with others. In traditional classrooms, their attention shifts to peer and family concerns. Because the blame for the students’ failure is constantly placed on students’ personal characteristics (e.g. bilingualism, low-income, migrant) the student finds transition risky and not always worth taking. Average or low performing migrant students fall under the Type III student. This student feels unable to change or mask their conditions as migrant and
crosses boundaries only under certain conditions, but not sufficiently enough for school success attainment.

The fourth type includes those who describe boundary crossing as impenetrable and insurmountable. Classroom and school climate features do not support their needs. Type IV students describe instances of insensitivity or hostility from teachers and other students, which threaten their personal integrity or devalue their background circumstances. When border crossing is attempted, it is frequently so painful that, over time, this student develops reasons and rationales to protect themselves against further distress. Many of these students enter school speaking Spanish, maintain orientation towards Mexican heritage, many peer worlds consists of socio/cultural components fundamentally different from and opposed to those that are required both for success in school and the wider society. Because they are unable to visualize themselves as part of the system, they do not plan much towards the future, think less about the consequences of taking risk, get involved in unlawful activities either as participants or accomplices, and as a result may get in trouble with law enforcement and school authorities.

Unfortunately, many migrant and seasonal farmworker students, especially recent immigrants fall under this student type. While their inability to cross boundaries does not imply that they are opposed to school, borders between home, peer and school are essentially opposed to each other. Since teachers are unaware of their intense discomfort, few features in class operate to pull them in and ensure their inclusion as a respected and valuable member of the school.
Phelan et al. (1993) provided a detailed analysis of various students’ worlds, their perceptions of boundaries and distinct patterns among students as they migrate across borders. Due to the power differential that exists between themselves and members of the dominant society, creating a sense of belonging to the school community is especially important for transitioning and integrating migrant student populations. The multiple world model demonstrates how families, peers and school, as distinct entities, can affect the direction in which students are pulled. The multiple world model has important implications for institutions of higher education. Perhaps most significantly, it provides a way of thinking that considers the importance of using a holistic approach. Research shows that students who feel they can bring their whole selves to school and have their multiple identities affirmed, or at the very least allowed, are more likely to feel they belong in school and are more likely to engage with the schooling process than those who do not (Phelan et al., 1993).

Scholars have established that involvement in college activities, both academic and social influence the level of persistence among college students (Mortenson, 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2000). Tinto (1993) developed a model explaining the reason for college student attrition that makes important assumptions regarding what must be done by students to successfully navigate and complete postsecondary education. Tinto based his model of college student retention on the work of Durkheim (1951) and Van Gennep (1960). The contention is that different groups of people participate in initiation rites that allow group members to move from one status to another (Giroux,
Tinto’s notion views college as an initiation ritual, with the success of the students being dependent upon the degree to which they are able to integrate into the social and academic life of postsecondary institution. Consequently, according to Tinto’s model, college students must undergo a form of cultural suicide, whereby they make a clean break from the communities and cultures in which they were raised and integrate and assimilate into the dominant culture of the college they attend similar to the survival mechanism adopted by the Type II student in the Phelan et al. (1993) Multiple World’s Study. Tinto concluded that the more these students positively integrate and interact within the university, the more likely they are to continue in college.

Although Tinto presents one form of integration into postsecondary education that may work for some students, his model has been widely criticized for discarding students’ cultural backgrounds as irrelevant to their successful collegiate experience, and supposing that holding on to one’s cultural background is detrimental to a successful collegiate transition and integration. In order for Latino migrant students to participate in mainstream activities, activities must be specific to Latino migrant student interest (Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997). According to Tierney, William, and Twombly (2000) it is impossible to shed one’s cultural heritage (p. 96). Tierney et al.’s (2000) concept of cultural integrity establishes that when college students are able to affirm their own cultural identities, their chances for graduation increase. By this, Tierney et al. does not suggest that the mere celebration of minority cultures on college campuses is sufficient to enable individual students of color to overcome any socioeconomic obstacles.
they may face. However, if postsecondary institutions make meaningful efforts to affirm these students’ cultural identities, they stand to gain increased possibilities for ensuring success in college—if the structure of the education these students receive also involves a commitment to high academic, social goals and active learning. Cultural integrity transfers the problem of educational inequity from the student to the institution and identifies cultural background as an essential element for academic success.

_Self-preservation_

Loo and Rolison (1996) modified Tinto’s framework and suggested that, for minority students, peer group interactions can be conceptualized in terms of the fit of the student with the overall student community, as well as, with her ethnic student subculture. Therefore, it is possible for a minority student to feel alienated from the larger campus community but well integrated into his or her own ethnic subculture. Nonetheless, the process of balkanization (defined as students of color self-segregating from the university’s predominantly white student body and into their respective racial “enclaves”) purported to have a negative effect on a range of post-college educational (cognitive) and behavioral (affective) outcomes for students of color (Bérubé & Nelson, 1995; D’Souza, 1991) may actually have a positive effect on Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students (Altbach & Lomotey, 1991; Astin, 1993; Duster, 1991, 1993, 1995). For students of color it is presumed to have a negative effect on their learning, behavior, and values after college (Bloom, 1987; Duster, 1995; Schlesinger, 1993). However, students of color do not self-segregate any less than the majority white students. The
same-race peer associated patterns typically do not attract much attention when it is white students who are hanging out together. However, when students of color are observed associating with each other, their same-race affiliations are lamented in the public and private discourse as the cause for the racial balkanization of college campuses (Bloom, 1987; D’Souza, 1991).

Villalpando (2003) discovered that same-race peer group affiliation for students of color does not have a detrimental impact on their post-college outcomes, but rather, benefit them in important ways. Villalpando (2003) concluded that when Latinos affiliate with other Latinos during college, their socially conscious values are reinforced, they increase their likelihood of pursuing career in service of their community, and they are more inclined to become involved in community service activities after college; but when white students interact primarily with other white students, they do not derive any of the benefits accrued from interacting with Latinos. Peer groups are not culturally deficient or deprived, but may actually possess cultural resources and assets that sustain and foster positive dispositions among individuals (p. 34). According to Villalpando (2003) the arguments supporting the “racial balkanization” myth are framed by institutional racism, and reveals how and why Latino college students benefit from associating with their Latino student peer group by drawing from their cultural resources to mitigate the racialized barriers constructed over time by universities.
Academic and Social Support

The availability of academic and social support in the form of developmental education courses, tutoring, study groups and academic support programs such as supplemental instruction is an important condition for students’ continuation in higher education. According to IMEC (2008), the following factors are of great importance for migrant students (p. 112):

1. A student must feel welcome when he/she enrolls in a college – social anxiety is one of the greatest obstacles when entering college. Will I fit in? Will I make friends?

2. An individualized approach is essential – student academic progress must be monitored at all levels to promote early identification of students who are having academic difficulty and to determine unmet needs; a student success plan (SSP) for these students should be developed and updated cooperatively with students during periodic reviews and each student should be continually monitored.

3. Mentoring and monitoring is critical – there should a periodic review of academic performance, credit accrual, attendance and behavior. These students should know there is always a person available with whom they can talk and who will be helping them achieve the goals of their (SSP).

4. Parental involvement is important – especially in college—virtually every migrant student who has been academically successful will cite parental support and encouragement as a key reason for his or her success (Trevino, 2004).
5. Cultural awareness is necessary – provides a means for administrators, counselors, faculty and support staff to understand the challenges of a migrant lifestyle.

Hurtado et al. (1997) established that when individuals experience a sense of community among students in an institution of higher learning, they become more motivated because they see their interests reflected in the institution. It is possible for minority students to feel like they belong without conforming or acculturating to the predominant group (Hurtado et al., 1997). Scholars have also identified “the privilege of whiteness” and “possessive investment of whiteness” in various social settings, education being one of them (Kivel, 1996; Lipsitz, 1998; McIntosh, 2001). Institutions of higher learning that help students create a climate where they can retain their cultural identity while they develop a sense of belonging will improve the students’ chances of persisting in such institutions (Hurtado et al., 1997). Examining group associations among minorities will help build understanding that repressing cultural heritage to create a sense of belonging on college campuses is not necessary, as previously suggested by Tinto (1993).

Institutional Responsibility

Rather than viewing the academic world as a place into which students need to fit and assimilate or face intellectual suicide, Tierney et al. (2000) views the academic world as ripe for reinterpretation and restructuring (p. 13). According to Tinto (1993), although typically a top item on the agenda in most institutions of higher education, very few
colleges invest the necessary resources in students, and as a result, minimally change the essential character of the institution. Retention will finally begin to be addressed once institutions recognize that the roots of failure lie not only in their students’ decisions but also in the very character of the educational settings. The focus must be placed on the conditions in which students are placed, rather than on the attributes of students themselves. After all, personal attributes are beyond institutional control while the settings are within institutional control. Institutional commitment is a condition for student retention. Simply put, institutions that are committed to the goal of increasing student retention, especially among excluded groups, seem to find a way to achieve that end. Commitment is the willingness to invest the resources and provide the incentives and rewards needed to enhance student retention (Tinto & Engstrom, 2002).

Although structural diversity increases the probability that students will encounter others of diverse backgrounds, given the U.S. history of race relations, simply attending an ethnically diverse college does not guarantee that students will have meaningful intergroup interactions. Allport (1854) suggests that intergroup interactions are important for the reduction of racial prejudice. For this reason, a second definition of racial/ethnic diversity is important, one that involves both the frequency and the quality of intergroup interaction as keys to meaningful diversity experiences during college, or what we term “information interactional diversity.” Although these informal interactions with racially diverse peers can occur in many campus contexts, the majority of them occur outside the classroom. Such interpretations may include informal discussions, daily interactions in
residence halls, campus events, and social activities (Chang, 1996). Finally, a third form of diversity experience includes learning about diverse people (content knowledge) and gaining experience with diverse peers in the classroom, or what we term classroom diversity (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002).

However, not only must students fit into the academic culture, but educational organizations must also accommodate for, and honor, students’ cultural differences (Tierney et al., 2000). Students arrive on college campuses with an enhanced awareness of their cultural identity that equips them with the sense that they belong there. Certainly, such a sense of identity and self-efficacy is manifested when an adolescent has the linguistic and mathematic abilities to do college-level work, yet it also derives from an identity framework that affirms and supports notions of the students’ cultural background. In effect, this occurs when the thought of being stereotyped is replaced with a structure of support and assumes that students have or can gain the requisite skills to be admitted to and thrive in college. Rather than demand that students of color attending mainstream institutions of higher education undergo initiation rites that inevitably lead to their cultural suicide, campuses must be able to affirm, rather than reject, who they are. In such settings, students of color will not only have a greater likelihood of gaining access to institutionalized capital, but the campuses themselves will become more democratic spheres of educational opportunity.
Financial Aid

In response to budgetary constraints, most institutions of higher education have raised tuition in recent years, in some cases drastically. At some institutions, tuition has increased 100% over the last decade, with double-digit hikes in the last several years (Engle et al., 2006). As a result, many institutions report high and increasing levels of unmet financial need. Stagnant funding for federal aid such as the Pell Grant and Work-Study programs, as well as federal loan limits, have only exacerbated the problem by increasing the economic burden on students (Engle et al., 2006). The impact on low-income students is obvious. Students are working more hours each week than they spend in class and/or studying, with predictable effects on their engagement and achievement on campus. In addition, the more students earn, the less aid they get because they supposedly make too much money, although not enough to pay for the costs of attending a four-year institution (Engle et al., 2006). According to one financial aid administrator, this is due to the negative incentive to work in the federal financial aid methodology. The severity of this problem may be under-recognized because many faculty and staff attended college at a time when it was financially possible to work your way through (Engle et al., 2006). Unfortunately, funding for the Federal Pell Grant and Work-Study programs has not kept pace while tuition and fees have increased dramatically in recent years.

Studies have shown that students with a high socioeconomic status are more likely to persist and attain a college degree than are students with a lower economic status.
(Astin, 1993). Past research has also shown that financial factors, such as tuition, housing, and financial aid, have an effect on persistence (Bettinger, 2004; Paulsen & St. John, 2002). Research on financial aid has generally found that grants, scholarships, and work-study increase student persistence rates. Work-study, in particular, seems to produce positive effects more consistently than other types of aid, most likely because students become more involved and attached to the campus and its staff (Adelman, 1999; Blanchfield, 1971; DesJardins, Ahlborg, & McCall, 1999; Li & Killian, 1999; Somers, 1995). Loans have been shown to have a negative impact on student retention when compared to grants, but a positive impact when compared to not receiving any aid (Blanchfield, 1971; Hu & St. John, 2001; Li & Killian, 1999; Somers, 1995). Targeting more financial aid toward the migrant and seasonal farmworker population could greatly expand their options with respect to where and how they go to college. With adequate resources, more low-income, first-generation students could afford to enroll in four-year institutions or attend full-time, both of which would increase their chances of completing college with four-year degrees.

On the other hand, according to Tierney (1999), an underlying assumption is that low-income and working-class youth are not able to, or believe they cannot, afford the costs of college. Although very important, financial aid is not sufficient to equalize college opportunities for the poor and is not a sufficient remedy to independently resolve the dilemma of college student access and retention. Minority students often need financial aid to pursue their educational goals after high school, but they also need to
acquire the social capital such as access to books and application forms and the ability to score well on standardized tests. Last, but not least, they need institutionalized capital such as a bachelor’s degree.

Classroom Strategies

It is well-established that a students’ academic and social engagement is central to their success (Astin, 1997; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2003). To the extent that faculty can structure classroom activities in ways that require students to become more involved in the learning process and with their peers, such as using cooperative and problem-based learning, they can improve student engagement and success (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000). However, much of what passes as teaching on college campuses has little to do with engaging in a dynamic learning situation and more to do with transmitting previously digested material. An instructor lectures to students while students passively listen. The instructor may at times pose questions and selectively call on students to answer; however, the communication pattern is more a monologue than a dialogue. While acknowledging that students of today are vastly different from students of the past, we must also recognize the need for a paradigm shift in classroom teaching strategies from the “sage on the stage” to the “guide on the side” (Friedman, 1995, p. 33). Friedman (1995) states that the stage and the classroom are alike in many respects where both actor and teacher must command and focus attention, stimulate emotion and response, and engage the audience and students in the material.
Caring Faculty-Student Relationships

Improving the number, the kind, and the quality of faculty-student interactions both inside and outside of the classroom is an essential factor in promoting the academic success of migrant students. Student relationships lead us to the concept of “caring.” Scholars who have examined caring in an educational context contend that it is at the heart of successful teacher-student relationships and that it can make “the difference between positive school experiences and frustration or alienation” (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995, pp. 667-668). Caring is always teacher initiated, and it requires reciprocity and response. For a caring relationship to be complete, the learner must respond with engagement (Noddings, 1984, 1992). When students lack caring relationships with teachers, they are less likely to feel membership in the school community and to gain access to beneficial social and academic knowledge. To form caring relationships, teachers need to understand students’ lives outside of school and their impact on both teaching and learning (Lipsitz, 1995; Noddings, 1984). Teachers must have an “antenna out to capture the ‘unsaid’ in students’ lives” for caring is never formulaic (Altenbaugh, Engel, & Martin, 1995, p. 164; Noddings, 1992, p. xi). Caring on behalf of the faculty can also be augmented by eating and socializing with students outside the classroom. We must recognize that for both faculty and students their academic careers begin and end primarily at the departmental level. With support and encouragement from the top, department chairs can allocate sufficient resources, even in times of scarcity, to achieve
important diversity goals. In addition, faculty involvement as advisors to student organizations and committees can also send the message of caring.

When working with migrant students, it is important to keep in mind that some migrant students experience difficulties speaking with unfamiliar people. Also, some are not accustomed to looking directly at an authority figure or an older person. They may feel more comfortable looking down or away. This is a sign of respect in some cultures (Sue & Sue, 2003). They may smile or nod, seeming to indicate that they understand what is being said, when, in reality, they do not. Faculty could address this by making eye contact and smiling or reaching out to the student to offer individual coaching and supporting. Some students may be apprehensive about speaking out in a group, either because the faculty—who is seen as a respected “elder”—is present, or because they may not have anything specifically meaningful to say. Silence may be a sign of respect rather than a sign of an inability or a refusal to participate. Many migrant students prefer to work cooperatively on assigned tasks. Others may prefer to work individually. Misunderstandings because of communication problems or cultural differences are quite common. Therefore, educators could promote the learning of, and practice of, using multicultural competencies in school.

Acknowledging Migrant Student Cultural Capital

Erikson (1946, 1956) introduced the concept of identity and argued that late adolescence and early adulthood the unique times when a sense of personal and social identity is formed (Gurin et al., 2002). Students should not be seen as broken or “at risk”
but instead viewed as valuable resources for their communities and society-at-large. According to Yosso (2005), Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital has been used to assert that some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor. This interpretation of Bourdieu exposes White, middle class culture as the standard and therefore other forms and expressions of culture are judged in comparison to this norm. In other words, cultural capital is not just inherited or possessed by the middle class, but rather it refers to an accumulation of specific forms of knowledge, skills and abilities that are valued by privileged groups in society. Instead, there are forms of cultural capital that marginalized groups bring to the table that traditional cultural capital theory does not recognize or value. Yosso (2005) examines some of the under-utilized assets students of color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

Yosso (2005) describes community cultural wealth as an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression. According to Yosso (2005), communities of color nurture cultural wealth through at least six forms of capital such as aspiration, navigational, social, linguistics, familial, and resistant capital (Auerbach, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1997, 2001; Orellana, Dorner, & Pulido, 2003b; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). These various forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static, but rather are dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth (p. 22).
1. *Aspirational capital*—is the ability to hold onto hope in the face of structured inequality and often without the means to make sure dreams can become reality. This resilience is evidenced in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals.

2. *Linguistic capital*—includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style (Orellana et al., 2003a). Students of color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills. For example, most often they have been engaged participants in the skills of storytelling tradition which include many other skills such as memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial effect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme as well as the ability to communicate via visual art, music and poetry.

3. *Familial capital*—refers to cultural knowledge nurtured among family values. From these kinship ties, students learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to their community and its resources. As a result, isolation is minimized as families become connected with others around common issues and realize they are not alone in dealing with their problems (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, p. 54).
4. **Social capital**—the tradition of ‘lifting as we limb’ (Gaitan, 2001) communities of color give the information and resources they gain through institutions back to their social networks.

5. **Navigational capital**—skills of maneuvering through social institutions not created with communities of colors in mind. For example, strategies to navigate through racially-hostile university campuses draw on the concept of academic invulnerability, or students’ ability to sustain high levels of achievement, despite the presence of stressful events and conditions that place them at risk of doing poorly at school and, ultimately, dropping out of school (Alva, 1991, p. 19; Aurbach, 2001; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000;). People of color draw on various social and psychological ‘critical navigational skills’ (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998) to maneuver through structures of inequality permeated by racism (Pierce, 1974, 1989, 1995).

6. **Resistant capital**—refers to knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequalities (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1997; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). For example, Villena and Moreno (2001) describe a group of Mexican mothers who teach their daughter to *valerse por si mismas* (value themselves and be self-reliant) within structures of inequality such as racism, capitalism and patriarchy.

The main goals of identifying and documenting cultural wealth are to transform education and empower people of color to utilize assets already abundant in their
community. Communities of color are places with multiple strengths. These forms of capital draw on the knowledge students of color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) contends “existing classroom practices underestimate and constrain what Latino and other students are able to display intellectually.” He believes the secret to literacy instruction is for schools to investigate and tap into the “hidden” home and community resources of their students. Similarly to Yosso (2005), Moll’s (2001) research calls the “deficit model” of student assessment into question.

It is common for educators, to adopt mistaken, yet widely held, attitudes toward cultural groups who are treated as inferior simply because they differ from society’s dominant groups. Moll’s research team (1992) performed an ethnographic analysis of Tucson’s Latino community where interviewers gathered data about the origin, use, and distribution of the knowledge and skills in the community. They basically talked with individual family members to learn the personal and labor history of the families of their students. These home investigations revealed that many families had abundant knowledge that the schools did not know about—and therefore did not use in order to teach academic skills. This approach is particularly important in dealing with students whose households are usually viewed as being “poor,” not only economically, but in terms of the quality of experiences for the child. A major success of this project lies in the transformation of teachers’ knowledge of their students, their communities, their own
agency as teachers, of their relationship to students and their families, but also to critically examine their own perspective and assumptions (Bateson, 2000).

Many teachers care for their students, but unless they care enough to attempt to learn, understand, and know their students’ political, historical, and personal situations—their “funds of knowledge”—then they are not taking the important steps to use what the students bring from their own backgrounds into the classroom. To truly understand their students, teachers must develop deeper understandings of their students’ rich cultural linguistic backgrounds. While an ethnographic project may not be possible at the postsecondary level, faculty can utilize classroom assignments and group projects to provide students opportunities to share their personal and family histories. Some examples of effective activities include writing an essay about the student’s experience crossing the border to college, bringing to class an object of meaning to the student’s family, and using oral history as an opportunity to have students interview a parent or relative and share their findings with the class.

Consciousness of Racial Bias

Faculty development programs must go beyond the diversity awareness model and assist faculty in examining their conscious and subconscious views of race and gender (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Faculty need to examine their ideas concerning their own academic socialization and how that socialization process has interacted with their social and cultural background, and how these ideas have affected their beliefs and assumptions with regard to teaching and learning in multicultural environments (Noel &
Smith, 1996). The deeper faculty question their cultural assumptions and how these cultural assumptions affect their education values and beliefs, the more aware they will become of the cultural and social baggage they bring to the interactions with students from different social and cultural backgrounds (Cones, Janha, & Noonan, 1983).

According to Sue (2005), people and communities often do not wish to deal with such a potentially explosive topic because it elicits strong emotions of defensiveness, guilt, anger, hopelessness, and discomfort (Sue, 1999. p. 33). “They fear that it will open up a can of worms… but just because the can isn’t open, it does not mean that the worms aren’t there,” explains Sue (2005).

Sue (2005), adds that when most of us think about racism they believe that (a) it resides in individual acts of discrimination against others; (b) it is most associated with overt and dramatic hate crimes perpetrated against persons of color; (c) it does not exist in good, decent, and moral individuals; and, consequently; (d) we, personally, are not racists, nor do we engage in such acts. It creates the myth that racism is a result of extreme pathology, a sickness, unhealthy, and the function of disturbed minds.

Individual racism actually represents a very small part of the racism problem. Studies suggest that racism is very pervasive, that it is present in nearly everyone and that it is the more subtle and unintentional expression that truly does the greatest harm to persons of color (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Pettigrew, 1981). Pettigrew (1981) found that only 15% of the population could be described as extreme racist but that another 60% could be described as conforming to the
racist ideology of the society, and another 25% would actively combat it if they recognized it.

The consequences of unintentional and subconscious racism are great and account for most of the damaging impact on people of color. Educational curricula that pathologize the lifestyle and cultural values of minority groups, a health care system that provides inferior treatment to people of color, the loss of languages and cultural traditions because of attempts to “civilize the Indians,” and the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II for national security reasons were not the work of white supremacists (Sue, 2005, p. 20). The fact that white males occupy 80% of tenure positions in higher education, 80% of the House of Representatives, 80% to 90% of the U.S. Senate, 92% of Forbes 400 executive CEO level positions, 90% of public school superintendents, 99.9% of athletic team owners, and 99% of U.S. presidents is not because of white supremacists. These statistics are even more glaring when realizing that white men constitute only about 33% of the population (Sue, 2005, p. 25).

Racism is deeply embedded at the individual, institutional, and societal levels. It acts as an invisible veil making it difficult for well-meaning white people to see how they or their institutions discriminate (Sue, 2005). Because most faculty and staff are generally well intentioned, it is painful to consciously acknowledge racism. As a result, many engage in actions that aid in self-deception—a product of cultural conditioning that teaches that certain groups are lesser than others and they deserve inferior treatment. However, according to Sue (2005) racism harms white people as well for they have
unknowingly conspired with a part of the system that advantages them while disavantaging people of color (Jones, 1997; McIntosh, 2001; Sue, 2003). The victimization of white people, however, is different from that of people of color. Most whites were socialized into oppressor roles yet taught concepts of social democracy, fairness, justice, and equality. There is no social democracy or fairness when the racial reality of White America is not the racial reality of people of color (Guthrie, 1997; Hanna, Glowacki-Dudka, & Conceicao-Runlee, 2000; Parham, White & Ajamu, 1999).

While the U.S. was founded on the principles of freedom, equality, and democracy, its legacy is one of racial oppression (Jones, 1997; Ridley, 1995; Sue, 2003). It has attempted to make minorities second-class citizens and imprisoned people of color on reservations and in concentration camps, inferior schools, segregated neighborhoods, and prisons (Sue, 2003, 2004, 2005). It has attempted to strip identities, take away dignity, and destroy peoples, cultures, and communities (Sue, 2003, 2005). It violates everyone’s self-image and challenges everything that has been taught about American principals and values. To continue allowing systems of injustice to exist and to deny complicity in the oppression of others means denying reality. People who oppress must, at some level, become callous, cold, hard, and unfeeling toward the plight of the oppressed. To continue being oblivious to one’s own complicity in such acts means objectifying and dehumanizing people of color. Racism flourishes when one sees other beings as lesser than someone else (Sue, 2003, 2005).
Romanowski (2003) conducted a study with educators in a summer migrant education program and found that the teachers often lamented the stereotypes of migrant farmworkers that they encountered: The questions formulated as a result of Romanowski’s work are necessary ones, and they can be used as discussion points for staff meetings and cultural sensitivity workshops (p. 27):

1. What stereotypes do I hold of migrant students?
2. Have these stereotypes influenced my thinking decisions, or behaviors?
3. In class, what hidden messages do I transmit regarding these students?
4. What role do I play in changing students and other faculty members’ attitudes towards transient students?
5. To what degree should migrant students be forced to assimilate?
6. Do I ever consider the cultural background of these students?
7. How will I handle particular situations that might occur with migrant students?

But acknowledging racism is not enough. According to Sue (2005), it is not enough to simply monitor one’s own actions, curtail biases and prejudices, and refuse to engage in discrimination. Individuals need to actively intervene when they see injustice and not sit idly by rationalizing: “I’m only one person, what can I do about it?” Albert Einstein once said, “the world is too dangerous to live in—not because of people who do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen” (as cited in Sue, 2003, p. 14). Romanowski found that common reactions to his questions included frustration, embarrassment, and inadequacy. However, he noted that when educators have the
courage to examine their own beliefs, something profound happens: “Critical reflection provides with the insight to guide our practice” (p. 29).

*A Socio-cultural Approach to Literacy Instruction*

One of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in U.S. schools is deficit thinking. Deficit thinking takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills and (b) parents neither value nor support their child’s education (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). These racialized assumptions about communities of color most often leads schools to default to the banking method of education critiqued by Paulo Freire (1970). As a result, schooling efforts usually aim to fill up supposedly passive students with forms of cultural knowledge deemed valuable by dominant society. However, not listening to the lived experiences and histories of those oppressed by institutionalized racism limits the experience of all students. Other people of color have their own histories that likewise have been shaped by racism and the intersecting forms of subordination (Espinoza & Harris, 1998). When the ideology of racism is examined and racist injuries are named, victims of racism can often find their voice (Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003). Those injured by racism and other forms of oppression discover that they are not alone and moreover are part of a legacy of resistance to racism and the layers of racialized oppression. They become empowered participants, hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to how the arguments against them are framed and learning to make the
arguments to defend themselves (Yosso, 2005). Educators most often assume that schools work and that students, parents and communities need to change to conform to this already effective and equitable system. Indeed, Garcia and Guerra’s (2004) research acknowledges that deficit thinking permeates U.S. society, and both schools and those who work in schools mirror these beliefs.

Most faculty know in their hearts what works and what is appropriate for their students. However, some choose to ignore their inner voice and continue to use old, outdated resources (Vocke, 2007). At the same time, there are those who do care and want to do the best for their student, and go to amazing lengths to bring authenticity and respect to their curriculum. Educators for social justice must provide learning materials that depict cultures authentically and respectfully (Vocke, 2007). Hutchinson and Hunt (2008) describe the process of education for social justice in this way: “employing a pedagogy strategy that fosters and gives students an opportunity to experience and gain practice…those attributes that help social justice to flourish” (p. 254). For example, to prepare for democratic living, “students need opportunities to learn how to be tolerant, handle conflict, trust one another, and build community…a second way is to address specific topics by facing students examine their curriculum critically and uncover its intersections with social justice concern” (Vocke, 2007, p. 254-55).

Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002), in examining both theoretical and practice-oriented literature that promotes social justice found four dimensions: (1) disrupting the commonplace; (2) interrogating multiple viewpoints; (3) focusing on sociopolitical
issues; and (4) taking action and promoting social justice (p. 256). Every faculty has the
power to challenge the assumptions of students by giving them the space to explore their
beliefs and become participants in an ongoing dialogue. Interrogation does not have to
mean a forceful inquisition into and a challenge of accepted beliefs and practices. Often,
the best approach is a quiet, persistent effort to make others aware of the lives of others in
the community. When literature is used in the classroom, students should examine the
marginalized positions of the characters and why they act as they do. Students can then
look for what is missing in any given literacy work that can perpetuate the status quo of
inequality. Focusing on social-political issues means that classroom materials, books,
and lessons are applied within the context of the larger social order. When these issues
are discussed and faculty invest in lessons that promote equality—whether it be in first
grade or in college—faculty are investing in the lives of all marginalized students and
giving them a boost up to sociopolitical hierarchy (Rios, 1996). Honoring diversity and
encouraging acceptance leads to the promotion of social justice and the inclusion of all
students.

Learning Communities

When properly implemented, Learning Communities enhance student learning,
and in turn, student retention (Gordon, Young, & Kalianov, 2001; Price, 2005; Tinto,
1998). Learning Communities add another set of tools, beyond the traditional tools of
advising, counseling and mentoring, that institutions can use to improve student retention
(Price, 2005). Most students experience classrooms, especially the large lecture halls that
dominate the first year of our universities, as isolated learners whose learning is detached from that of other students in the class and from the content of other classes in which they are enrolled (Tinto, 1998). For too many classrooms, the experience of learning is still one of isolation and passivity (Tinto, 1998). Learning communities bring together small groups of college students who take two or more aligned courses together—typically as a cohort (Price, 2005). Learning communities, in the most basic form, begin with a kind of co-registration or block scheduling that enables students to take courses together, rather than apart. In some cases, learning communities will link students by tying two courses together, typically a course in writing with a course in selected literature or current social problems. In other cases, it may mean sharing the entire first-semester curriculum so that students in the learning community study the same material throughout the semester (Gordon et al., 2001; Price 2005; Tinto, 1998). The courses in which students co-register are typically connected by an organizing theme which gives meaning to their linkage.

To be effective, learning communities require their faculty to collaborate on both the content and pedagogy of the linked courses. Students are asked to learn together in a coherent manner and form communities that provide social, as well as academic support. When assistance is provided, it is typically connected to the classroom, not isolated from it. In this way, students spend more time learning together both inside and outside the class and in doing so bridge the divide between academic classes and student social conduct that frequently characterizes student life. Students tend to learn and make friends at the same time and participation in shared, connected learning environments
enhances the quality of student learning or as one student put it “you not only learn more, you learn better” (Laufgraben & Shapiro, 2004). By learning together in ways that includes all voices, everyone’s understanding and knowledge is enriched. Lastly, as students learn more and see themselves as engaged both academically and socially, they persist at a substantially higher rate than do comparable students in the traditional curriculum. Machin (2002) captured the perceptions of migrant students who were part of a learning community at a community college. The researcher found that learning community activities and coursework reinforced collaborative learning, participant comfort level with peers, and social networking. This pedagogical structure offered a support system that nurtured and encouraged these students as they experienced a collision of systems.

To increase graduation rates, institutions must believe in their students and their unlimited potential, despite the challenges they face in their lives. Institutions must perceive their students’ heritage, language, and culture as strengths that add much to the institution and their community. Migrant students face unique challenges that play a major role in their success. Educators must be willing to question the status quo, understand that alternative teaching options allow the opportunity to renew their commitment to educating for social justice and understand the foundations on which their culture and lives are built (Vocke, 2007). Institutions must also take seriously the task of faculty development and recognize that faculty are not, as a matter of prior education, trained to teach students. As a result, universities must provide faculty with the
pedagogical and assessment skills they need to establish conditions in their classrooms that promote student involvement, learning, and retention. Institutions must also reward faculty for effective teaching and provide incentives for faculty to innovate in their teaching and work with students.

The Role of Social Capital in Migrant Students

Successful approaches to enhancing migrant students’ college graduation involve the cultivation of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; McDonough, 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2011). Social capital, as used in this study, involves the capacity of relationships to facilitate the provision of encouragement and knowledge to successfully decode and navigate college. “Institutional agents” of social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) can guide migrant and seasonal farmworker students through the often unfamiliar territory of college (e.g., courses to take and how to access advising, tutoring, career placement, financial aid and scholarships). Often, knowledge about what it takes to graduate from college is not made explicit to this population and their families, especially those who are first in their families to get a college degree (Auerbach, 2004; Ceja, 2004; Fink, 1995). In this final section of the literature review, the researcher will provide a succinct overview of the network theory of social capital including Stanton-Salazar’s network analytic theory of socialization (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2011) and how it applies to and influences migrant students’ experiences in college.
What is Social Capital?

In sociology, social capital became defined as a source of (1) social control, (2) family-mediated benefits, and (3) resources mediated by nonfamily networks (Portes, 1998). Whereas economic capital is in people’s bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships (Portes, 1998). Each student also comes to college with a particular *habitus*, which may be thought of as a “manifestation of cultural capital” (Berger, 2000a, p. 118). *Habitus* has been defined as “a system of lasting, transportable dispositions,” which generate action, or a “matrix of perceptions, appreciation, and actions” (Young, 1971, p. 83). *Habitus* derived from one’s family, peers and school, is a subconscious, internalized force which predisposes us to those with similar amounts of cultural capital.

Social capital, much the same as human capital and cultural capital, may be used for personal gain, which includes optimizing these forms of capital in the pursuit of higher education. In this way, social capital acquired during high school will affect students’ college enrollment decisions (Perna, 2000). In addition, these forms of capital may also affect retention once students are enrolled in college. A student’s *habitus*, though subject to some change due to the college environment, will likely still have a substantial influence on student decision making, especially during the first years. For example, students with relatively high levels of traditionally-valued social capital are more likely to see college attendance and degree attainment as the norm, and are likely to feel an “entitlement” to higher education, which students with relatively low levels of
traditional-valued social capital may have the opposite effect. This sense of entitlement is likely to continue to play a role when deciding whether or not to persist in college. Students with relatively high levels of social capital may see not only college attendance as an entitlement, but persistence and degree attainment as well (Berger, 2000a).

*Bourdieu’s Theory of Social Capital*

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) was the first to explain the theory of social capital as access to institutional resources coming from one’s connection to institutionalized relationships within a resourceful network. According to Bourdieu (1986) social capital originates when individuals situate themselves in a social network that is resource rich and based on a social class hierarchy system. Bourdieu viewed social capital as cumulative, had ability to produce profits, could be converted into other forms of capital and was capable of reproducing itself in identical or expanded forms. In his view, rarely, are individuals allowed admittance into classes outside of their own, unless they can demonstrate that they share more or less similar economic, social and cultural capital. He also states that social network resources are of higher utility when the network is closed to outsiders (Dika & Singh, 2002). Bourdieu’s resource model of social capital theory places emphasis on the structure, rather than function of social capital.

*Coleman Theory of Social Capital*

James Coleman (1988a) calls attention to the obligation (social debts), expectations, and trustworthiness, inherent within relationships that make it possible for the resources and forms of support of networks are made available to individuals, either
upon request or perceived need, or within an ongoing exchange relationship. Coleman believed social capital to be a form of capital that exists in the relationships between people (Coleman, 1988a, 1988b). An individual’s ties to other people allow him or her to gain access to a broad range of resources. Coleman (1988a) focused on three specific forms: (1) obligations and expectations, (2) information channels, and (3) social norms. For instance, an individual’s relationship with another person provides a set of obligations and expectations between them. On a simple level, this means that if you lend your friend $100 now, you can expect that your friend will be willing to lend you $100 at a future date. However, people who are isolated and have no friends cannot exchange obligations or share expectations with others. Migrant students are, by definition, more alienated from the majority who are of the dominant culture and so may have fewer possible individuals with whom to exchange obligations and expectations. However, among other migrant students, the intensity of the obligation and the expectations for reciprocity should be greater, given the shared experiences as a migrant student (Kao, 2004).

Lin’s Theory of Social Capital

Based on Nan Lin’s (1999) definition, social capital includes those resources linked to social positions that exist in the upper levels of the social hierarchy. Access to and use of resources embedded in social networks can result in more desirable socioeconomic statuses. Lin (1999) classifies the resource model of social capital theory as a relational model because of its focus on the individuals’ personal relationship with
the social network and the importance of social network’s structure being founded and supported by strong relationships that will provide access to social capital (Lin, 1999). Based on Lin’s interpretation, investing and maintaining long-term strong social relationships is key to access and use of resources. Similar to Bourdieu’s (1986) closed networks, in Lin’s view, social capital is used to consolidate and prevent loss of resources and most importantly to preserve and protect the collective’s existing resources (Lin, 1999). At the same time, Lin (1999) states that it is important to form bridges in social networks in order to obtain resources not currently possessed.

*Stanton-Salazar’s Conceptual Framework of Social Capital Theory*

Stanton-Salazar uses the scholarship of Bourdieu (1986) and Lin (1999) as a foundation to support his scholarly quest in the area of social capital theory. According to Stanton-Salazar, as a result of social inequalities that comprise our society’s social structure there is an imbalanced distribution of power that results in forms of social capital being embedded in the social networks and social relationships of affluent youth (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011), while, in contrast, low-status minority youth depend on resources that are available through their limited affiliation networks (Cochran, Larner, Riley, G'nnarsson, & Henderson, 1990). Stanton-Salazar (1997) highlights how individuals (institutional agents) situated in social networks can impact students’ ability to obtain goals such as the successful completion of high school and going to college. Stanton-Salazar (1997) developed a social capital framework to study the socialization of minority populations and indentified intrinsic mechanisms of mainstream social systems.
that are responsible for the challenges low-status and minority children face in accumulating social capital (Dika & Singh, 2002). Since low-status, minority students are unable to access forms of social capital from their immediate surroundings, social capital becomes a crucial asset that is obtained by institutional agents, who use the power of their positions to create access to forms of social capital (Kahne & Bailey, 1999; Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003).

The Traditional Model of Social Capital

The social character of upper and middle-class Euro-America has been profoundly shaped by the ideology of individualism, people’s life condition, social status, and material wealth, not as a consequence of macro-social structural processes, but as a consequence of individual natural talents, choices, and actions (Watt, 1989). While industrial capitalism liberated some, it dismembered other from communal social networks and traditional norms, imposing new and nontraditional values and practices while extending to some individuals the possibilities for considerable control over their life chances. The individual was now expected to chart his or her own path, to take risk, to be geographically mobile, to be motivated by self-interest and the potential for individual gain. Principal responsibility for both achievement and failures was now attributed to the individual, not to society (Turner, 1960). A principal belief of the individualist tradition is the centrality or individual choice and individual responsibility, which leads to success (and failure) based on the choices an individual makes (Watt,
1989). Since every person is seen as having the capacity for making the right choices, he or she also carries the burden of responsibility for making the wrong choices.

The corresponding moral view is one that views competition and the pursuit of self-interest as a natural and superior means by which people are motivated to attain their highest level of human functioning (Coleman, 1998). In an individualistic society, egoistic motivation is viewed as not only natural, but also good, ultimately because it serves the good of everyone; in other words, the best society (or the best school system) is one where everyone profits from the combined effect of all individuals pursuing their private interest (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). The individual is viewed as “standing detached from the community and from shared values, calculating whether or not to be a member, whether or not to heed the values it dictates” (Etzioni, 1988, p. 5). Collectivities are seen as “aggregates of individuals, without causal properties of their own, and as external to the person” (p. 5). The emphasis on self-trust, self-reliance, and autonomy are now institutionally articulated as the basis of esteem and self-references (Velez-Ibanez, 1980).

It is well known that educational experiences can broaden young people’s social frame of references, “expand their access to a larger number and variety of potential network members,” and “develop the necessary skills for both initiating and maintaining network relations” (Cochran et al., 1990, p. 303). The question posed by Stanton-Salazar (2001, 2004, 2011) is whether minority students have ever had this kind of “strategic education” in order to take advantage of these opportunities. Mobility-related resources
are best embodied (though not always) in middle-class social capital, that is, in relationships with high-status institutional agents, while the resources associated with healthy human development are best embodied in relations with protective agents, located primarily in family-and community-based networks (e.g., parents, grandparents, and other relatives, caring neighbors, pro-social peers). While access to protective agents transcends all social classes, personal and reliable access to committed institutional agents does not (Coleman, 1988). Consequently, key structural advantages exist for middle-class children because their schooling experiences are built under the individualist tradition philosophy (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). Therefore, a major vehicle that allows for the use of such opportunities is an educational experience that is strategic, empowering, and network-enhancing which is not always familiar to migrant students (Etzioni, 1988; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2001; Turner, 1960; Watt, 1989).

In the present framework, the pattern of circumstances that either facilitate or restrict opportunities for the accumulation and conversion of social capital is elaborated in terms of structures of inclusion and exclusion. Students within lower groups never become equipped with the necessary funds of knowledge to decode the system themselves, never learning that the school system and its agents can be socially engaged in ways that could engineer their success (Oakes, 1986). Lastly, to say that middle-class White children come to school equipped with the proper decoding skills does not mean that low-status children know nothing about decoding. Working-class minority children arrive at school with different cultural resources; they are competent, perhaps masterful
decoders, in any number of cultural domains within their communities, but usually not within mainstream institutions, including the school. Yet consistent access to institutional resources and opportunities ultimately appears dependent upon effective participation in what Delpit (1988) calls the dominant “culture of power.”

*The Benefits of Social Capital*

Lin (1999) offers three explanations as to why embedded resources in social networks will enhance the outcome of actions. For one, it facilitates the flow of information. Social ties located in certain strategic locations and/or hierarchical positions can provide an individual with useful information about opportunities and choices otherwise not available (Portes, 1998, 2000; Portes & Landolt, 1996). Likewise, these ties may alert an organization and its agents, or even a community, about the availability and interest of an otherwise unrecognized individual. Second, these social ties may exert influence on the agents (e.g., recruiters or supervisors of the organizations) who play a critical role in decisions and positions, and carry more valued resources and exercise greater power making (Roscigno & Crowley, 2001). Thus, “putting in a word” carries a certain weight in the decision-making process regarding an individual. Third, as certification of the individual’s social credentials, some of which reflect the individual’s accessibility to resources through social networks and relations increases his/her social capital. “Standing behind” the individual by these ties reassures the organization and its agents that the individual can provide added resources beyond the individual’s personal capital, some of which may be useful to the organization. Further, social relations are
expected to reinforce identity and recognition and being assured and recognized by one’s worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group that shares similar interests and resources not only provides emotional support but also public acknowledgement of one’s claim to certain resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2010). These four elements—information, influence, social credentials and reinforcement—may explain why social capital works in instrumental and expressive actions not accounted for by forms of personal capital such as economic capital or human capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2010).

Bourdieu (1986) has argued that the laws governing the exchange of economic capital are applicable to human social relations in various forms. Thus, social capital 1) is cumulative, 2) possesses the capacity to produce profits or benefits in the social world, 3) is convertible into tangible resources or other forms of capital, and 4) possesses the capacity to reproduce itself in identical or expanded forms. Stanton-Salazar uses the metaphor of a dollar bill to represent a form of capital that can be converted into a desired service or product. In the same manner, social relations also represent forms of capital that can be converted into opportunities and resources (e.g., emotional support, internships, and scholarships). With respect to education, information about schools, information about effective teachers, information about how to apply for college, and information about how to obtain financial aid for higher education are all examples of the types of information that are crucial for college success but are not always easily obtained. Parents who know other parents, especially parents who are knowledgeable about maneuvering through the academic landscape, can affect student outcomes (Kao,
Additionally, in many instances low-income and minority students’ current social capital (e.g., bilingualism, non-individualism, socioeconomic status, race, language, ethnicity, disability and sexual identity) are not validated or enacted as useful in higher educational settings (Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Tinto 1994).

**Social Capital is Problematic for Migrant Students**

As children grow older, the potential for resiliency, as well as the development of social competencies necessary for successful developmental transitions, become increasingly dependent upon the interactions and supportive relations with socialization agents across a number of socio-cultural worlds and institutional settings (e.g., school, community, and commercial centers) (Phelan et al., 1998; Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

However, for many lower-status children, institutional “borders” arise in mainstream settings which make effective participation very difficult and which carry the potential to induce in children and youth experiences of “anxiety, depression, apprehension, or fear,” feelings which ultimately can hinder healthy social development, including the development of a positive help-seeking orientation and network-building skills, both crucial for facilitating access to important social and institutional support (Phelan et al., 1993, p. 57). Many early adolescents—especially migrant students—who experienced early positive attachments from different people in the family and community find it difficult to maintain the security of these attachments as they grow older and find it challenging to develop new and resourceful attachments with socializing agents in other institutional domains (e.g., school personnel, overly distressed school peers).
Gross and McMullen (1983) identified three major thresholds individuals must cross in seeking and obtaining support: (1) the perception and assessment of the problem and their need for outside aid, (2) the decision to seek or not seek help, particularly the assessment of the costs and benefits associated with seeking help, and (3) the exercise of interpersonal skills necessary in engaging potentially supportive others (p. 12). Much of the research on help seeking has been fixed on the second threshold, on the problem of ambivalence—that people in need of help often do not ask for it. However, many individuals are willing to forgo help when they perceive that the act of seeking or obtaining assistance may be too psychologically costly. Gross and McMullen (1983) have classified these potential costs or risks into two general categories: (1) perceived threats to the self (within a group of significant others), and (2) social costs associated with perceived effects on interpersonal relationships (again, within a group of significant others). In recent years, a great deal of attention has been paid to what is perhaps the most significant personal risk, that of injury to the self-esteem. This threat arises when an individual sees a request for help as an admission of incompetence or inadequacy, which in turn would serve to damage the person’s sense of competency (Nadler, 1983).

Students from higher social-economic statuses are socialized at a very early age to participate in higher education. This capital is communicated subtly through behaviors, knowledge and beliefs they inherit from their parents and communities (Berger, 2000b; McDonough, 1997; Tierney, 1999; Walpole, 2007). While in college, these students further develop their social capital by reaching out and connecting to individual and
social networks that serve as resources to important opportunities. Through these skills, individuals learn to make decisions calculated to increase their social capital in college. As a result, holders of this capital have a higher likelihood of connecting with the right people than those who came from lower economic statuses because they had a predisposition to the knowledge required to successfully navigate the system (Fong, 2003; Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006). In other words, students who are privileged already know how to “decode” the language (e.g., how to behave, ask questions, who to go to, own the place) while those from underserved backgrounds must learn how to “decode” the language used in institutions of higher education.

On the other hand, underserved students maintain their low socioeconomic status through their own behaviors by maintaining social ties with people from the same socioeconomic groups (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2005). These networks, while well intentioned and come with other valuable source of valuable capital, do not always generate the kinds of social capital necessary to advance higher education goals or the type typically generated from the middle class or upper class (Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003; Gibson et al., 2004). Underserved students, due to the fact that their own various sources of social capital are dissimilar to those of the institution, must negotiate their way through college by overcoming social, cultural and ideological forces that are often contradictory in nature (Fong, 2003; Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003; Zhou & Kin, 2006). Students who possess social capital that does not align with the institution must negotiate their way through high school and college in a much more difficult way (Gee, 1989; Phelan et al.,
1998). This challenge is particularly experienced by students who come from migrant and seasonal farmworking backgrounds and are often first-generation, low-income and English learners. As a result, the experience of underserved students trying to accrue social capital could be so challenging it may evoke behaviors that would ultimately deny them of this much needed help (e.g., avoid asking questions, seeking help or reaching out to others) (Lucas, 1999). In order to persist, underserved students must find ways to negotiate their way through the institutional culture even if this means breaking cultural and personal values.

The Network Analytical Theory of Socialization

To be successful, one has not only to understand the way the majority of society operates but, in addition, one must gain the social skills and personal networks that open doors. (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991, p. 78)

Stanton-Salazar (1997) a network-analytical approach to social inequality in society takes as its starting point what Wellman (1983) refers to as the social distribution of possibilities, a term that refers to the unequal distribution of opportunities for entering into different social and institutional contexts and for forming relationships with agents who exert various degrees of control over institutional resources, such as bureaucratic influence, career-related information, and opportunities for specialized training or mentorship (p. 1402). These resources range from those necessary for the development of resiliency (Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1982), to those necessary for school success and social mobility (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). The process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking are known to be quite different
across social classes and other status groups, for it requires commanding, negotiating, and managing many diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social relationships and personalities, and which usually entails skillfully negotiating—not always familiar skills to migrant students and other minority youth.

Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2001, 2004, 2011) analytical framework draws from three different, but complementary bodies of research: First, the literature on social capital and how key adults at school can provide at-risk students with the necessary access to institutional support; second, the literature on “caring” as a precondition for students to feel trust and belonging within the school environment in order to establish beneficial school-based relationships; and third, the body of research that shows how school structures and personnel can either facilitate or impede minority students’ ability to withstand assimilationist pressures in school and to handle the oftentimes difficult transitions that exist between their home and school worlds (Gibson & Bejines, 2002). Stanton-Salazar (2004) stands behind the idea that consistent and predictable structural variations in the interpersonal networks of people from different social classes and status groups usually translate into differential access to highly valued institutional resources, opportunities, and privileges.

The network analytical model of socialization allows us not only to address directly structural constraints on young people’s access to institutional privileges and resources, but it also considers the role of the individual and of cultural agency (Boissevain, 1974). Ultimately, Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2001, 2004, 2011) notion of
socialization is an interactive process between the institution and the students. Through this notion, the possession of social capital does not imply the utilization of support, but rather the potential for such utilization (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2011).

Stanton-Salazar’s notion of socialization does not only directly address structural constrains but takes the concept of accountability to a deeper level. It requires institutional agents to reflect on their own practices and questions the role one plays in facilitating or gate-keeping opportunities and resources to these students.

*The Role of Institutional Agents*

Institutional agent as defined by Stanton-Salazar (2011) refers to an individual who occupies one or more hierarchical position of relatively high-status and authority. This individual manifests the role of an institutional agent when on behalf of the student, he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of, highly valued resources (p. 13). Relative to others, this individual possesses a high degree of social capital. For migrant students, resources can include information about college admission, support programs, college application fee waivers and fieldtrips. For all students, the quality of a social network is based on the interpersonal ties to people willing and capable of providing access to opportunity and resources necessary for school success. It is institutional agents that serve as keepers and gatekeepers for student success, for they have the potential to facilitate access to greater institutional resources. Overall, institutional agents provide connections to resources that help decode the educational system bound in the cultural values of the dominant culture. For disadvantaged youth
whose parents may not have attended college, institutional agents provide a second opportunity to develop appropriate motivational dispositions necessary to pursue college.

Foremost is the recognition that for adolescents to successfully meet both developmental challenges in today’s world and the academic demands of the school, they require resource-full relationships and activities socially organized within a network of socialization agents, natural or informal mentors, pro-academic peers and institutional agents distributed throughout the extended family, school, neighborhood, community and society (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Institutional agent act to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of, highly valued resources (e.g., high school course requirements for admission to four-year universities). The capacity of institutional agents to empower others is largely dependent upon the structure and resourcefulness, and network orientations of institutional agents. Stanton-Salazar also highlights the transition from institutional agent to “empowerment agent,” their commitment to empower youth with a critical consciousness, and with the means to transform themselves, their communities, and society as a whole.

Mounting evidence shows that those who identify an important non-parental adult in their lives tend to report better psychological well-being, more rewarding relationships with parents and others, academic success, high school completion, better employment experiences, and fewer problems with peers (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Bubois & Silverthorn, 2005; McDonald, Erickson, Kirkpatrick Johnson, & Elder, 2007; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Although many non-parental adults and
extended family members can make positive contributions to the socialization and development of youth, not all may have the human, cultural, and social capital to truly alter an adolescent’s social mobility (Gibson et al., 2004). Most working-class youth experience difficulty in establishing resourceful relationships with non-parental adult figures. In contrast, in middle-class families, both parents and adolescents themselves coordinate to incorporate non-parental adult figures into their social networks (Lareau, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Social ties with institutional agents are at the same time potentially life-altering and problematic. Sennett and Cobb (1972) state that the power of institutional agents lies in their ability to give or withhold knowledge and from their ability to situate youth within resources rich social networks by actively manipulating the social and institutional forces that determine who shall “make it” and who shall not (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996; Stanton-Salazar et al., 1996).

The development of institutional agents is crucial to the social development and empowerment of low-income minority youth precisely because these ties represent consistent and reliable sources from which they can learn the appropriate decoding skills and from which they can obtain other key forms of institutional support. Institutional agents take on great importance in the framework presented here precisely because such agents can choose, and do often choose, to transmit institutional support as part of an explicit and strategic agenda, and because, when they do so, the impact on low-income and minority youth is considerable, if not life-altering. In addition, the methods low-status students and youth use to access resources and institutional support is significantly
dependent upon the network characteristics, network-related capacities and skills, and networking orientations of those institutional agents devoted to supporting and empowering low-status youth (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Stanton-Salazar (1997) introduces six key forms of institutional support in his framework (pp. 12-19):

1. The provision of funds of knowledge—associated with ascension within the educational system (this form of support includes implicit and explicit socialization into institutional discourses that regulate communication, interaction, and exchange within mainstream institutional spheres). This has to do with engaging “power-full” adults in ways that will lead them to act as agents (e.g., as co-parent, advocate, informal mentor, etc.).

   a. Socially acceptable ways of using language and communicating. Knowledge of how bureaucracies operate, network development, computer literacy, job and educational opportunities. Discourses are socially accepted ways of using language and engaging in communicative behaviors. Institutional discourse is a prerequisite for participation in networks that yield institutional supports necessary for success in school and society.

2. Bridging, or the process of acting as a human bridge to gatekeepers, to social networks, and to opportunities for exploring various “mainstream” institutions (e.g., university campuses). In other words, teaching students how to problem-solve within institutional contexts such as the school.

3. Advocacy and related forms of personalized intervention.

4. Role modeling.
5. The provision of emotional and moral support, closely related to the provision of knowledge funds is the context and process by which such support is extended.

6. The provision of regular, personalized, and soundly based evaluative feedback, advice, and guidance that incorporate the thoughtful provision of institutional funds of knowledge, as well as genuine emotional and moral support.

Empowerment social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2011) is constituted in terms of forms of institutional support provided by agents who are motivated to go against the system, and to enable the empowerment of low-status individuals in need. Empowerment agents exist in the real world but they are exceptionally rare. The model of empowerment agents presented here challenges us to go beyond impulses to alter the destinies of individual youth, only so that they might make it in the system, leaving the system intact. Empowerment agents in contrast, not only understand the power of institutional support and social capital in the lives of youth and students from historically oppressed communities; they carry a vision of a more just, humanistic, and democratic society, deeply committed to an enlightened and fair distribution of societal resources, and to dismantling the structures of class, racial, and gender oppression.

Whether they actually do this on a regular basis depends, in large part, on at least five characteristics (p. 1089):

1) The degree to which they are aware of the social structural forces within society and within their institution that functions to problematize the success of low-status students (e.g., low financial resources, lack of recruitment, and retention efforts);
2) Their level of critical awareness that the success of low-status students or youth within the institution is contingent on their receiving systematic and tailored provisions of institutional support;

3) Their willingness to not act on the established rules of social structure that serve the purpose of consolidating resources within the upper levels of hierarchy (advocating only for students in advanced placement courses);

4) The contents of their identity and their ideological commitments—particularly, on whether they identify themselves as one of those agents responsible for advocating on behalf of the low-status students and for providing them with varied forms of institutional support; and

5) Their motivation and willingness to be identified by the larger personnel community that they are an advocate and an agent for low-status students.

For the past quarter century, theorist have posited that the achievement gap between rich and poor students is related not only to economic differences but also to differences in the amount of social capital they possess (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Lareau, 1987; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Students from middle and upper income households, whose parents are college educated, not only have greater access to, but also greater ability to draw from the kinds of social relationships that facilitate academic success than do children raised in less affluent surroundings. Migrant students, for example, often lack the network of relationships that facilitate the resources necessary to successfully navigate through college. However, when migrant students do overcome the odds, it is usually through interventions that embed them in a network of institutional agents connected to services, organizations, and resources oriented toward their empowerment. Interventions absent of rich social capital
and resource-generating networks regularly fail in truly assisting migrant students succeed in higher education (Dryfoos, 1998; Kahne & Bailey, 1999).
This chapter details the methodological approach used by researcher, beginning with the theoretical framework and research questions that guide this study and an overview of the research design. The chapter addressed the choice of qualitative research as the preferential approach to this study; the setting, context and population; the methods of sampling and collection of data; the role of the researcher; the limitations of the study; the participants’ rights and ethical considerations; and, lastly, the data collection and data analysis method employed by the researcher to analyze and interpret the data.

This qualitative study examines the phenomenon of the undergraduate college experiences of 10 Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students who participated in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) and completed their bachelor’s degree at California State University, Sacramento. The theoretical framework guiding this study is Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2011) Network Analytic Theory of Socialization. Consequently, this study examines strategies used by this population to build the necessary social networks in order to navigate college life and successfully complete a bachelor’s degree. Based on this new knowledge, this study makes institutional recommendations to improve the undergraduate experience and graduation rates of Latino migrant students at Sacramento State.
The theoretical framework was guided by theories of social capital (Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988a), Lin (1990), and Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2001, 2004, 2011), and more specifically, the role of the social analytical framework of socialization and the concepts of institutional and empowerment agents in the degree completion of migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. Social capital is fundamentally constituted in terms of resources, or forms of institutional support, accessible by ego (e.g., a student) through their direct or indirect social ties to other actors who assume the role of institutional agents (e.g., a school counselor) (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). The importance and utility of this idea is that people are able to accomplish meaningful goals through their access to resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Foremost is the recognition that, for students to successfully meet both developmental challenges and academic demands of the school, they require “resource-full” relationships and activities organized within a network of socialization agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1069).

Thus, the principal research questions of this study are:

1. What are the undergraduate experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State?

2. What strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students develop to navigate college life and successfully graduate when many do not?

3. What can Sacramento State do to ensure more Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students graduate from college?
Research Design

Certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches. This study employs a phenomenology qualitative research design. According to Maanen (1979) qualitative research is “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (p. 520). Basically, qualitative researchers are interested in “understanding the meaning people have constructed,” that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (p. 13). According to Creswell (2009), if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach. Since little research has been conducted on migrant and seasonal farmworker students, particularly the strategies used to overcome academic barriers, and there is still a great need to better understand this student population, this study gathers data using a qualitative approach. To get at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of the experience of overcoming challenges in college, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection in this study.

The product of a phenomenological study is a “composite description that presents the ‘essence’ of a phenomenon, called the essential, invariant structure (or essence)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). This description represents the structure of the experience being studied. In phenomenological studies “the reader should come away with the feeling that they understand better what it is like for someone to experience
something (Polkinghorn, 1989, p. 46)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). Researchers in the phenomenological mode attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations. Phenomenologists do not assume to know what things mean to the people they are studying (Douglas, 1976). In fact, “phenomenological inquiry begins with silence” (Psathas & Waksler, 1973). This “silence” is an attempt to grasp what it is being studied by bracketing an idea the informants take for granted as true. That is, researchers act as if they do not know what it means and study it to find out what is actually taken for granted. What phenomenologists emphasize, then, is the subjective aspects of people behavior and attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of their informants (Geertz, 1973) in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives. Phenomenologists believe multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is the meaning of our experiences that constitutes reality (Greene, 1978). Reality, consequently, is “socially constructed” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Thus reality comes to be understood to human beings only in the form in which it is perceived.

This study documents the undergraduate experience of migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. Using semi-structured one-on-one interviews, participants shared their college experiences, the strategies used and how they rose above challenges to successfully graduate from college with a bachelor’s degree. The interview questionnaire included semi-structured open-ended questions, and adheres to self-perceptions, values and successful strategies, as well as personal recommendations.
intended to modify current services offered by Sacramento State. At the end of the study, the reader should come away from the phenomenology experience “with the feeling that they understand better what it is like for migrant students to experience their undergraduate education at Sacramento State” (Polkinghorn as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 62).

Setting, Context, and Population

The participants in this study are Sacramento State alumni of Latino descent who completed their first year of college as participants of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) and successfully graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Sacramento State. By selecting students from CAMP, the researcher ensures that all participants come from a migrant and/or seasonal farm working background. Sacramento State is located in the capitol of California and is the seventh-largest university in the 23-campus California State University system, with a student body of 28,000. This large campus is home of a diverse group of students with the largest percentages being White (43%), Asian (20%), Hispanic (16%), and African American (7%). About one-third of campus-wide students receive some form of financial assistance. The demographics of CAMP participants are significantly different than those of the larger campus community. Ninety-nine percent of CAMP students are of Latino descent, which aligns with the California demographics for migrant workers in the state. The university has 60 undergraduate and 40 graduate programs and two doctorate programs. The faculty is
comprised of 806 female and 849 males. Of these, 1,221 are white, 74 are African American, 108 are Latino, 173 are Asian/Pacific Islander and 17 are American Indian (Office of Institutional Research, 2010)

The CAMP Program

The College Assistance Migrant Program is a federal funded program designed to assist migratory or seasonal farmworker (or the children of such workers) in enrolling and successfully completing their first year of undergraduate studies at an institution of higher education. The CAMP program at Sacramento State was informally established in 1981 and was later funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education for the first time in 1986 (HEP/CAMP National Association, 2010). The CAMP program at Sacramento State is funded to serve 80 first-time freshmen, each academic year. Based on the 2010-11 cohort, 50% of students were admitted under special admissions (often math and English deficient) and had lower high school GPAs and significantly lower SAT scores than Non-CAMP first generation first time freshmen Latino students. Of these 80 participants, 51% were female and 49% male, 90% of students relocated to attend Sacramento State, 100% were first-generation college students and all 100% of students were eligible for financial aid grants.

Eligibility to receive CAMP services requires: (1) a person, or his or her parent, must have spent a minimum of 75 days during the past 24 months as a migrant or seasonal farmworker; or (2) the person must have participated or be eligible to participate, in programs like Migrant Education Program (MEP) or Employment and
In addition, a person must also meet the following requirements:

1. Be enrolled or be admitted for enrollment as a full-time student at the participating Institute of Higher Education (IHE);
2. Not be beyond the first academic year of a program of study at the IHE, as determined under the standards of the IHE; and
3. Be determined by the grantee to need the academic and supporting services and financial assistance provided by the project in order to complete an academic program of study at the IHE. (Ramirez, 2010, p. 56)

CAMP offers pre-college transition and first-year support services to help students develop the skills necessary to stay in college and successfully graduate from college. CAMP provides recruitment and retention services designed to be an extension of the student’s family, assistance with admissions, access to financial aid and scholarships, academic and career-based skills workshops, cultural and civic engagement opportunities, and referrals to other university services. CAMP staff assist students in finding on-campus or off-campus housing, assist with the selection and registration of classes, help adjust to college life through activities and counseling, develop study and college survival skills, obtain tutors for academic assistance, and receive supplemental financial assistance for books, supplies, health insurance and transportation. CAMP’s goal is to help every student become leaders and active participants in their community.
Sampling and Data Collection

This study was conducted during the fall 2011 semester. In order to examine the undergraduate experiences of Latino migrant students at Sacramento State, the researcher carried out a purposeful selection within a random sampling of participants. Random sampling was used to gather the contact information of 25 graduates from Sacramento State who participated in CAMP during their first year of college. An introductory e-mail was sent to all 25 participants inviting them to participate in the study, with a 99% response rate.

From there, purposeful sampling was used to select the 10 participants who were ultimately interviewed for the study. According to Creswell (2007), an appropriate sample size for a phenomenological study ranges from three to 10 participants. The criteria used to purposefully select the 10-participant sample included a wide range of diversity markers such as gender, generational status, long-term and recent immigrants or U.S.-born students, English language ability, majors and/or language preferences. Purposeful sampling is appropriate when the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. Because participants were not contacted to obtain an average opinion that would correspond to the average opinion of the entire student population, purposeful sampling is most appropriate in this study. In this case, migrant students were contacted precisely because of their special experience and competence (Chein, 1981). Patton (2002) argues
that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 133).

In this study, data was collected from semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Each participant was interviewed for 40 minutes to an hour and each interview was recorded using digital audio and transcribed within a week of the interview. A total of 10 participants were interviewed and all 10 interviews were transcribed, analyzed and included in the findings. This study proposed to examine the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students who successfully graduated from Sacramento State with a bachelor’s degree. The determined criterion-based selection for this study was the following:

1. Being of Latino descent;
2. Completed their first year of college as participants of CAMP (migrant and/or seasonal farmworker backgrounds); and
3. Completed a bachelor’s degree from Sacramento State.

The Interview

An interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other (Morgan, 1997). The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate. A unique event, such as the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students cannot be replicated (Patton, 2002) explains:
We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe…we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective. (pp. 340-341)

A major part of the work during the interviews involved building a relationship, getting to know each other, and putting the participant at ease (Whyte, 1984). Early in the interview the researcher informed the participants of the purpose of the study and asked them to sign an interview consent form and complete a preliminary survey. The preliminary survey included demographic questions such as age, gender, major in college, GPA and country of birth among others (see Appendix A). The researcher also made assurances that what was said during the interview would be treated confidentially; and for this purpose, pseudonyms were used. Many subjects felt self-conscious at first, contending, in a self-effacing manner, that they had nothing important to say (Burgess, 1984; Fontana & Frey, 1994). In these cases, Bogdan and Biklen (2006), recommends treating the participant as an expert. This establishes the participant as the one who knows the subject and the researcher as the one who has come to learn. It also projects respect and value toward the participant’s ideas and opinions. Interviews were conducted at a location convenient to the participant. In most cases, participants were interviewed at their place of work or home. An MP3 Olympus digital recorder was used to record each interview.
Qualitative researchers do not believe that standardizing procedures will obtain more valid answers. In fact, qualitative researchers believe that each wording of the question will evoke a different interpretation to each participant. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), qualitative interviews offer the researcher considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the participants themselves an opportunity to shape the content of the interview. In this study, the interviews were guided by a list of questions employing a semi-structured interview. However, although the exact wording and order of the questions was determined ahead of time, there was plenty of flexibility to change this based on the flow of the interviews. Consequently, the participants played a strong role in defining the content of the interview and the direction of the study (Mischler, 1991). Many call this type of interview a guided conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The questions asked during the interview were divided by three categories: (1) college experience, (2) success strategies, and (3) institutional recommendations. In “college experience,” participants were asked to describe their overall experience and how their perceptions changed from their freshmen year to their senior year. Questions under “success strategies,” asked participants to describe what it took for them to graduate, including times when they felt very accomplished and/or discouraged as a college student. During “institutional recommendations,” participants were asked to list the various campus resources utilized through college and to suggest any changes they would make to the campus to ensure the future success of Latino migrant and farmworker students. Nonetheless, getting all the questions answered was never the goal of the
interview. Many times, the researcher let go of the plan and encouraged the participants to talk about the areas of most interest to them, following up with probes and picking up on the topics and issues the participant initiated (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Transcriptions

While some researchers take extensive field notes after an interview to record participant’s statements, others rely on recall. When interviewing is the major technique in the study and because long interviews are difficult to recapture fully, transcription is recommended (Ives, 1995; Wood, 1980). Prior to transcribing the interviews, each digital recording was downloaded on ExpressScribe—software designed to facilitate the constant rewinding and fast-forwarding necessary in transcribing an interview recording. On average, it took a third party transcriber about seven to 10 hours to transcribe each interview, with the exception of two interviews which were conducted in Spanish and had to be translated to English. According to (Sacks, Deblasio, Ganxert, Mould, & Paschen, 2009), even under ideal circumstances, a transcript is simply the best representation one can make of what is recorded, but “since it is a representation, it is unavoidably an interpretation” (p. 133). Consequently, no two people will transcribe the same recording in exactly the same way, even if the transcribers are following the same set of guidelines, nor will the same person transcribe it in the same way on two different occasions. For this reason, after receipt of the transcriptions, the researcher compared each interview recording with the transcript received and inserted any words, phrases and even long passages not captured by the third party transcriber the first time around.
Role of the Researcher

Since background, social values, and ways of making sense of the world can influence which processes, activities, events, and perspectives researchers consider important enough, it is important to introduce the role of the researcher in every study (Patton, 2002). Prior to interviewing those who have had direct experience with the phenomenon, the researcher usually explores his or her own experiences, in part to examine dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of personal prejudices, viewpoints, and assumption (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). This process is called *epoche*, “a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment…In the *epoche*, the everyday understandings, judgments, and knowing are set aside and the phenomena are revisited” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). These prejudices and assumptions are bracketed or temporarily set aside so that we can examine consciousness itself (Merriam, 2009).

The researcher conducting this study is the current director of the CAMP program at Sacramento State. At CAMP, the researcher held prior positions as Program Coordinator, Career Counselor and Outreach Counselor. The researcher is a Mexican female, thirty-four years old, and was herself a migrant student and former participant of CAMP at Sacramento State during her undergraduate experience and was an English Language Learner (ELL) student. She is the first and only member of her family to go to college and become a doctoral candidate. She holds a bachelors degree in Communication Studies and two master’s degrees in Spanish and History. To alleviate a potential conflict of interest, the researcher established a degree of separation between the
participants by interviewing CAMP/Sacramento State graduates who have already
graduated from the university and not currently enrolled students.

Limitations

This section addresses several of the limitations inherent in conducting a
phenomenology qualitative study including the selection of participants, the researcher’s
collection to the participants, as well as potential biases during the process of data
analysis. As previously mentioned, random sampling was used to gather the contact
information of 25 graduates from CAMP and Sacramento State. From there, purposeful
sampling was used to select the 10 participants who were ultimately interviewed for the
study. The purposeful sampling selection was based on specific pre-determined
knowledge of the participants’ background to ensure a diverse sample that included
differences such as gender, generational status, long-term and recent immigrants or U.S.
born, grade point average, English language ability and/or language preferences. The
limitation lies in the researcher determining based on personal experience and
knowledge, the meaning and selection of a diverse sample.

The role of the researcher may also have had an unknown limitation on the overall
outcome of the number of participants in the study. As previously mentioned, the
researcher conducting this study is the current Director of CAMP at Sacramento State
and was herself a migrant student, participant of CAMP during her first year of college
and a graduate of Sacramento State. Due to the active involvement of CAMP alumni in
the program, participants directly and indirectly knew the researcher in her role as Director. Nonetheless, no supervisory or authority relationship existed with the participants. In addition, all aspects of confidentiality, objectivity and respect were used to prevent any level of coercion. At the same time, the role of the researcher as a previous migrant student, participant of CAMP, Sacramento State graduate and current Director of the program might have also had a positive influence, as participants may have felt more comfortable during the interviews and thus shared in a more forthcoming manner than they would with another researcher. To address any potential biases from the researcher’s relationship to CAMP during the data analysis, member checking was used as a validity technique (Creswell, 2006; Patton, 2002). First, the interview transcripts were shared with the participants for affirmation and accuracy, as well as for clarifications, suggestions, deletions, and/or additions. Moreover, the researcher’s depiction of each participant’s experiences was re-examined to ensure that their information concurred with the meaning of their communication.

Another limitation of the study is the location of the sample. While the findings from this study will assist researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders to better understand the undergraduate college experience of migrant and seasonal farmworker students, as well as the implementation strategies needed to increase their persistence and graduation, the experience of 10 graduates from Sacramento State who participated in the CAMP program cannot be generalized to the Latino population at large. Generalizability to other types of institutions—e.g., other California State Universities (CSU’s),
Universities of California (UCs), private universities, two-year institutions, between residential and commuter institutions or between part-time and commuter full-time institutions may not be appropriate. It must also be taken under consideration that the research relies on self-reported data, which sometimes suffers from a lack of full accuracy due to recall problems (Richie, 1995). Nonetheless, given the mobility of this population and the challenges of physically tracking them in college, the sample used in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the undergraduate experience of migrant and seasonal farmworker students from their perspective and interpretation. After all, qualitative research is not interested in a broad or vague view of a population; but rather, in an in-depth understanding of the experience of particular individuals or groups (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997).

Participants’ Rights and Ethical Protection

This proposal was approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, Sacramento in Fall 2011 and identified to expose minimal risk to the participants. Therefore, the researcher established specific procedures in order to provide the participants with the least amount of risk possible and to maintain their comfort through the completion of the study. The following protection measures took place: (1) an initial email was sent to 25 CAMP/Sacramento State alumni who were randomly selected from a database, requesting their participation in the study. From there, purposeful sampling was used to select the 10 participants who were interviewed. (2)
The participants’ right to privacy and safety was protected by ensuring that only the researcher and the dissertation chair had access to the data. The hard copies of the consent forms, audio-recordings and further data collected were kept at the researcher’s home in binders in a locked file cabinet and are scheduled to be destroyed 6 months after completion of the study. (3) Maintaining student anonymity is of utmost importance, therefore, pseudonyms were given to all students.

The consent information was provided to participants in written form. Consent was obtained once the researcher had determined that an alumnus was eligible to participate. The consent form 1) was attached to the introductory e-mail to give participants ample time to review; 2) was collected from the participant prior to the interview; and 3) a hard copy was provided to the participant at the time of the interview for their personal record keeping. The consent form requested permission from the participant to audio record the interview (see Appendix B). In addition, before each interview, participants were verbally informed of their rights and the voluntary nature of their participation. To further protect their rights to privacy and safety, participants were informed at the beginning of the interview that a) they could skip any questions they did not feel comfortable answering; b) they could withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty or consequences; c) the researcher was interested in group trends, rather than the performance of individual participants; and d) their identity would not be associated with their responses. At the end of the study, participants received a detailed
debriefing statement about the nature of the study. Participants were also encouraged to
discuss any questions or concerns they might have about the study with the researcher.

Recounting highly personal experiences can make an interview uncomfortable for
both interviewer and interviewee. The possibility of harmful or intimate information
being discussed during the data collection process is always present and it is difficult to
anticipate and try to plan for the impact of this information during or after an interview
(Patton, 2002). Due to the family aspect endorsed by participants of the CAMP program,
disclosure of intimate information occurred. The ethical code established was to protect
the privacy of the participants and to convey this protection to all individuals involved in
the project (Creswell, 2009). To honor this ethical code, disclosure of intimate
information was removed from the transcription when requested by the participant.

Analysis of the Data

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used as the method of data
analysis. The basic strategy of this method is constant comparison, and consists of
categories, properties and hypotheses that are the conceptual links between and among
the categories and properties. The process began with reading the first interview
transcript and jotting down notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins. In
this study, the overall process of data analysis began by identifying segments in the data
set that are responsive to the research questions. Words, phrases, and concepts that recur
throughout the data were highlighted and color-coded into classification schemes or
thematic threads. The data was divided into general themes related to the literature and theoretical framework. This study used the coding family introduced by Bogdan and Biklen (2006), as a starting point to code the data. For the purpose of this study, two additional codes were created by the researcher to better attend to the research questions of this study, which included categorizing themes on building social capital and institutional agents. The coding family used in this study as a starting point, includes the following codes:

1. Setting/Context Codes - settings such as descriptions of the campus, classroom settings, faculty/staff office hours visits, etc.

2. Situational Codes - how participants see themselves in relationship to their undergraduate experience, such as their awareness of college expectations and influences for interpreting the past. This code is explored through the following open-ended questions among others: How would you describe yourself as a student?

3. Perspectives Held by Participants - shared ways of thinking that capture a common understanding. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: When you think back to your first year of college, how did your perceptions change from your freshmen year to your senior year?

4. Participants Ways of Thinking about People and Objects - understanding of each other, outsiders and the objects that make up the world. This code is
explored through the following open-ended question, among others: What are the myths and facts of being Latino migrant/seasonal farmworker college student at Sac State?

5. Process Codes - sequence of events, change over time, or passage from one type of status to another. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: When you think back to your first year of college, how did you perceptions change from your freshmen year to your senior year?

6. Activity Codes - regularly occurring kinds of behavior. This code is explored through the following open-ended questions, among others: Which resources available on campus did you actually utilize throughout your undergraduate experience?

7. Event Codes—activities that occur infrequently or just once. This code is explored through the following open-ended questions, among others: Can you tell me about a time you felt very accomplished as a college student (other than graduation)?

8. Strategy Codes - conscious tactics, methods, techniques, maneuvers, and/or ploys used to succeed. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: What did it take for you to graduate?
9. Methods Codes - material pertinent to problems, joys, dilemmas and the like. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: Can you tell me about a time you felt discouraged?

10. Conflicting Value Code - specific experiences, events and activities that reflected conflicting values between the student’s world at home and that of college life. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: What did it take for you to graduate?

11. Institutional Agent Code - individuals who facilitated access and the utilization of resources. This code is explored through the following open-ended question, among others: Did you use campus personnel (e.g., staff, faculty, and tutors, as a source of support throughout college?

The preferred way to analyze qualitative data is to do it simultaneously with data collection (Creswell, 2009). Following completion of the transcription of the first interview, the researcher read the transcripts from the interviews, took written notes and wrote a separate memo to “thy self” to capture any reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas and things to pursue in the next transcript based on what was derived from the first set of data. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to note what to ask, observe or look for in the next round of data collection.

Imaginative variation was used as a technique for phenomenological analysis and involves attempting to see the object of the study—the phenomenon—or what Latino
migrant and seasonal farmworker students undergraduate experience—from several different angles and perspectives. As Moustakas (1994) explains:

The task of Imaginative Variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination…approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced. How did the experience of the phenomenon come to be what it is? (pp. 97-98)

Descriptive narratives were used to highlight participants’ meanings. Descriptive narratives serve to hold the reader’s interest, which allows the researcher to offer evidence to clarify the basis of the researcher’s findings and assertions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Conclusion

Chapter 3 outlined the methodology employed for this study. A phenomenological qualitative method identified as the most beneficial method to gather both depth and breadth of student responses. A qualitative approach allowed the researcher to determine the extent to which Latino migrant students perceived their undergraduate experience and to better understand the strategies used by these students to successfully graduate from Sacramento State with a bachelor’s degree. The researcher also sought to gain recommendations from the participants on what institutional services should be modified and/or implemented to ensure the needs of Latino migrant students are being met. Chapters 4 and 5 present participant perceptions in greater detail, as well
as explain the themes, findings and recommendation that emerged from the qualitative data collected.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

A college education is widely considered the key to achieving economic success and social mobility in American society (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2005). As Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students integrate into society in the United States, there is a need for institutions to respond to the needs of a more diverse population (Fry, 2008). The issues of diversity are of critical importance in a world that has become more economically, socially, and culturally interdependent (Banks, 2004; Friedman, 2005). This chapter reports on the findings of this phenomenology qualitative research study designed to provide a better understanding of the undergraduate college experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. Thus, the participant’s semi-structured one-on-one interviews served to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the undergraduate experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State? (2) What strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students develop to navigate college life and successfully graduate when so many do not? (3) What can Sacramento State do to ensure more Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students graduate from college?

In this study, the theoretical framework was influenced by theories of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988a; Lin, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2004) and more specifically an examination of the potential role that socialization and institutional and
empowerment agents contribute to the degree completion of migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. Social capital is fundamentally defined in terms of resources or forms of institutional support accessible by ego (e.g., the student him/herself) through their direct or indirect social ties to other actors who assume the role of institutional agents (e.g., a school counselor) (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). The importance and utility of this idea is that people are able to accomplish meaningful goals through their access to resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Foremost is the recognition that, for students to successfully meet both developmental challenges and academic demands of the school, they require “resource-full” relationships and activities organized within a network of socialization agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1069).

Most of the literature on migrant and seasonal farmworker students has not associated this population with the term high achieving (Trueba, 2002). In fact, compared to other student populations, little has been written about migrant students in higher education, particularly the strategies used by this population to overcome significant academic and personal barriers to graduate from college. Unfortunately, a lot has been written on disadvantaged, deficit, or at-risk theories of academic failure (Trueba, 2002). Consequently, much has been said about the negative effects of Mexican-origin culture, the lack of adoption of American values, and the supposed lack of high aspirations (Green, 2003). But despite the dismal statistics and in the face of significant challenges, many students from migrant farm worker backgrounds persevere towards academic success and ultimately attain a college degree (McHatton et al., 2009).
The participants in this study shared their undergraduate experience from the perspective of an alumnus of Sacramento State—individuals who have graduated and whose undergraduate experiences are now part of a group of success stories. In their own words, they shared their undergraduate college experiences, the success strategies utilized throughout this journey and made institutional recommendations based on their own perception of what facilitated their degree completion. Under the category “college experience,” participants were asked to describe their overall experience and how their perceptions changed from their freshmen year to their senior year. Under the category “success strategies,” participants were asked to describe what it took for them to graduate and to describe times they felt very accomplished or discouraged as college students. Under the third category “institutional recommendations,” participants were asked to list the various campus resources utilized through college and to suggest any changes they would make to the campus to ensure future generations of Latino migrant students are successful. Chapter 4 analyzes and presents the collected data through a brief profile of each participant (see Table 5), and a general discussion of findings based on themes guided by Bogdan and Biklen’s (2003) coding family analytical approach (see Table 6) with a summary of major themes (see Table 7) and subthemes (see Table 8). Additionally, a quantitative breakdown of themes by participants is provided in Table 9.
### Table 5

**Participant Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>First - Generation</th>
<th>U.S. Born</th>
<th>ESL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrique</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osvaldo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andres</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>No. of years to graduate</th>
<th>College GPA</th>
<th>Special Admission Required</th>
<th>Academic Probation Required</th>
<th>Migrant OR Seasonal</th>
<th>Age of U.S. Arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrique</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osvaldo</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andres</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*Findings Guided by Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) Coding Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Setting/Context Code — general statements describing the setting and environment of the institution.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• CAMP as a “home away from home” — an environment that allows students to maintain and develop their roots and values while also being successful college students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finding a sense of belonging — in addition to CAMP, feeling a sense of belonging at Sacramento State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situation Code — descriptions of the way participants perceive themselves in relationship to their undergraduate experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning to be a college student — not feeling academically or emotionally prepared for college (e.g., did not know how to study for the purpose of learning versus completing a one-time assignment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discovering lifelong learning — a desire for ongoing personal growth and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspectives Held by Participants Code — a shared way of thinking that captured a common understanding of the undergraduate experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not feeling like “a real college student” — due to remediation coursework requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The assumption that “you should know it all after the first year” — the attention and guidance received during the first year of college significantly disintegrated after the first year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fear of going into the real world — the transition from student to professional is often overlooked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. **Participants Ways of Thinking about People and Objects Code** – an understanding of the outside perception of migrant students and the characteristics of the unique college experience of this population.

- *College as the “only” option* – college is not an option but rather the only way to break the cycle of poverty.
- *Migrant students as “hard working”* – the exposure to a labor intensive lifestyle can lead faculty and staff to perceive all migrant students as “hard working” and strong work ethic.

5. **Activity Code** – regularly occurring behaviors.

- *Services highly utilized by participants:* CAMP, EOP, the library, the computer lab and the student union.
- *Services under utilized by participants:* theater performances, psychological services and the career center.

6. **Event Code** – activities that occur infrequently or just once during the undergraduate experience.

- *Passing the WPE (now WPJ)* – considered a significant milestone and provides confirmation of language proficiency.
### 7. **Strategy Code** – conscious tactics, methods, techniques, maneuvers, and/or ploys used to succeed.

- *Reinventing "yourself"* – college as an ideal time to change for the best.

- *Developing career interests* – gaining work experience that is compatible with abilities, interests and major increases motivation to graduate.

- *Turning challenges into motivators* – a conscious choice to see challenges as opportunities and a greater reason to complete a college degree.

### 8. **Conflicting Values Code** – experiences, events and activities that reflect conflicting values between the student’s world at home with family and that of college life.

- *Breaking the chain* – being the first to go college requires going against the norm, breaking the rules and at some level going against parents’ will.

- *Negotiating between two worlds* – a struggle to negotiate between two opposite and conflicting worlds, that of a student and that of a member of the family and community.

- *Unrealistic cultural expectations* – the tradition of family obligations can get in the way of academics.

- *Survivor guilt* – guilt for having the opportunities a college education offers while their parents or other family members did not.

- *The Imposter Phenomenon* – feelings of “phoniness” and the belief on behalf of the participants of having fooled others into believing they are college worthy, when in their reality, they are not.
9. **Institutional Agent Code** – individuals that facilitated access to social capital and the utilization of valuable resources.

- *Extent of accessing social capital* – methods of negotiating their way through the institutional culture even if this meant going against cultural beliefs.

- *Building a strategic network* – building a circle of influential individuals that can meet various individual needs.

- *Identifying “caring” institutional agents* – identifying individuals who promote trust, respect, mentorship, teaching and learning, legitimacy, reliance and commitment to the participant’s future.

- *Identifying empowerment agents* – in addition to identifying institutional agents, identification of individuals who empower and promote changing the system to make it easier for future generations.
## Major Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Conflicting Values</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Building Social Capital through Institutional Agents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to be a college student</td>
<td>Breaking the chain—being first generation</td>
<td>Finding a sense of belonging at Sac State</td>
<td>Extent of accessing social capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remediation</td>
<td>Negotiating between two worlds</td>
<td>College as the “only” option</td>
<td>Building a strategic network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not feeling like “a real college student”</td>
<td>Unrealistic cultural expectations</td>
<td>Reinventing yourself</td>
<td>Identifying “caring” Institutional Agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of going into the real world</td>
<td>Survivor Guilt</td>
<td>Developing career interests</td>
<td>Identifying Empowerment Agents</td>
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<td>The Imposter Phenomenon</td>
<td>Turning challenges into motivators</td>
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Table 7
Table 8

*Themes and Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAMP as a “home away from home”</th>
<th>Finding a sense of belonging at Sac State</th>
<th>Learning to be a college student</th>
<th>Discovering lifelong learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Program structure</td>
<td>• CAMP extended agent</td>
<td>• Critical skills</td>
<td>• An ongoing learning process</td>
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<td>• Peer commonalities</td>
<td>• Latinos on campus</td>
<td>• Study habits</td>
<td>• A process of seeking meanings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Peer commonalities</td>
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<td>• Negative perception of migrant student</td>
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<td>Not feeling like “a real college student”</td>
<td>The assumption that “you should know it all after the first year”</td>
<td>Fear of going into the real world</td>
<td>College as the “only” option</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Means of membership</td>
<td>• Different expectations with each college year</td>
<td>• Terrifying</td>
<td>• Head vs. hands</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reminder of deficiency</td>
<td>• Embrassement prevents seeking help</td>
<td>• Never ending hard-work</td>
<td>• Indoor vs. outdoor</td>
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<td>• Systematic problems of alignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant students as “hard working”</td>
<td>Passing the WPE—now WPJ</td>
<td>Reinventing “yourself”</td>
<td>Developing career interests</td>
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<td>Turning challenges into motivators</td>
<td>Breaking the chain</td>
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<td>• Family</td>
<td>• Disappointing family</td>
<td>• Pretending to fit in</td>
<td>• Exhaustion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limited job opportunities</td>
<td>• Education as a sacrifice of family</td>
<td>• Feelings of disloyalty</td>
<td>• Differences between the U.S. &amp; Mexico’s educational system</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gaining English proficiency</td>
<td>• Loss</td>
<td>• Gap of college knowledge</td>
<td>• A college degree as money maker</td>
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<tr>
<th>Survivor Guilt</th>
<th>The Imposter Phenomenon</th>
<th>Extent of accessing social capital</th>
<th>Building a strategic network</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Family sacrifice</td>
<td>• Language deficiency</td>
<td>• Conflicting help-seeking</td>
<td>• CAMP referrals</td>
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<td>• Access to resources</td>
<td>• Academic deficiency</td>
<td>• Conflicting learning styles</td>
<td>• Proactive seeking</td>
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<td>• Lack of financial contribution</td>
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<td>• Network diversity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Identifying “caring” Institutional Agents</th>
<th>Identifying Empowerment Agents</th>
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- Staff
- Faculty

- Expose enormous misconceptions
- Challenges the status quo

Table 9

*Themes by Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>Enrique</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Lisa</th>
<th>Joel</th>
<th>Mercedes</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Osvaldo</th>
<th>Cecilia</th>
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<td>CAMP as “a home away from home”</td>
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<td>Discovering lifelong learning</td>
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like a *"real college student"* (remediation)

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<th>THEME</th>
<th>Enrique</th>
<th>Martin</th>
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Table 9 (continued)

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<th>THEME</th>
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Profile of Participants

In addition to sharing the common characteristics of being a student of migrant or seasonal farmworker background, other commonalities emerged from the participant sample. All 10 students grew up in predominantly rural farmworking communities, are the first in their families to go to college, learned English as a second language, and all, with the exception of one, were born in Mexico. The level of college preparation in high school varied among the 10 participants; not all participants required special admission to Sacramento State but all completed at least one semester of remediation coursework either in English, math or both, upon arrival to the university. None of the 10 students were ever on academic probation or disqualified from the university. While not all students initially relocated to Sacramento to attend college, all moved to Sacramento by their second year of college. All students were recruited by a CAMP counselor either during a presentation at their high school or while taking part in a campus fieldtrip. The following section introduces the study participants by providing a brief profile of each of them. The names provided are pseudonyms.

Profiles of Study Participants: Alumni of CAMP and Sacramento State

Joel

Joel is a 42-year-old male who completed a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science. Joel came to the U.S. from Mexico on his own at the age of 16 leaving his family behind in Mexico. As a high school student, he worked full-time to support
himself financially. While in high school, he never dreamed of attending college. His plans included learning English, getting a high school diploma and a job to continue to support himself. Joel was recruited to Sacramento State through a CAMP counselor when he visited the university through a fieldtrip organized by his home high school. Prior to his enrollment at Sacramento State, he had only lived in the U.S. for two years. Consequently, Joel spent the first two years in college completing intensive remediation courses in both English and math. He found his first year of college the most challenging due to his language deficiency. This was particularly difficult for Joel since university policy did not allow him to declare computer science as a major prior to completing remediation coursework. This requirement affected Joel in various ways: (1) he did not feel he had full membership to the institution and (2) motivated him to work hard to remediate and ultimately feel like a deserving student. The staff at CAMP was his only “family” in the U.S. and as a result he spent all his free time in the CAMP office. He got married his second year of college and started a family. It took Joel six years to graduate with his bachelor’s degree from Sacramento State. At the time, he was one of only a few Latinos majoring in computer science courses. At Sacramento State, Joel was a
participant of CAMP, Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)\textsuperscript{2}, Summer Bridge\textsuperscript{3} and Minority Engineering Program (MEP)\textsuperscript{4}.

\textit{Cecilia}

Cecilia is a 28-year-old female who majored in Social Work. Cecilia is a native of Mexico, who came to the U.S. at the age of 10 and learned English as a second language. She was an overachiever who went above and beyond what was expected of a high school student. By the time she graduated from high school, Cecilia had achieved all college entrance course requirements, 540 hours of community service and a 3.8 GPA. As a young girl, she recalls always seeing herself as a leader. If she attended a town meeting with her parents, she always saw herself as the one running the meeting and not one of the families being assisted. Her senior year, Cecilia attended a CAMP presentation at her high school and decided to apply to Sacramento State. CAMP provided the information she and her parents needed to begin the process of admission. Not surprisingly, Cecilia became an excellent student in college. She was always on campus, spent her free time seeking tutoring and establishing meaningful relationships with faculty, staff and peers on campus. She was originally a business major but soon realized she was interested in helping others in her community and changed her major to

\textsuperscript{2} EOP helps California residents from low-income households earn a baccalaureate degree at the CSU.
\textsuperscript{3} Summer Bridge is a free intensive summer academic program designed to help first-time EOP freshmen transition from high school to college.
\textsuperscript{4} MEP focuses on the recruitment, retention and academic success of African American, Chicano-Latino and American Indian students majoring in Engineering and computer science.
social work. Sadly, during her freshmen year, her younger sister passed away. It was the most difficult tragedy for her to overcome. She considered quitting school to be with her family, but realized that her younger sister would never have the opportunity to attend college while she did. This tragedy gave her the strength to continue her college journey. At Sacramento State, Cecilia participated in CAMP, EOP, Summer Bridge and McNair Scholars.

Mercedes

Mercedes is a 25-year-old female alumna. She was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. at seven years of age. She learned English as a second language and found satisfaction in being an exemplary student. While in high school, she completed all A-G requirements and graduated with a 3.0 GPA. She recalls her parents telling her as she was growing up that college was her only way out of farm work. Since her father worked in the fields and her mother cleaned houses, she figured a college degree would allow her the opportunity to work in an office setting. As the oldest and first one in her family to go to college, she was unaware of the process and costs involved in pursuing a college education. However, after attending a CAMP presentation at her high school, she decided to apply to Sacramento State. Although her parents supported the decision, they were very overprotective. Mercedes came to college with a lot pressure and responsibilities for being the oldest child and first to attend college. She took classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and went back home Friday through Monday to help her family.

5 Federal TRIO program is designed to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities.
She had a difficult time incorporating social activities for fear of the distraction affecting her grades. It was not until the later college years that she became more involved and during her senior year, she studied abroad. Mercedes spent a semester in Sweden and traveled throughout Europe. Mercedes graduated with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. She was a participant of CAMP, EOP and INROADS\textsuperscript{6}.

\textit{Laura}

Laura is a 26-year-old female graduate. She was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. as at the age of 12. Laura’s mother passed away when she was a 10 and was primarily raised by her father and sister. She learned English as a second language and is the second in her family to go to college, but the first to attend a four-year institution, as her older sister attended community college. In high school, Laura was an outstanding student and completed all the college requirements. Coming from a “segregated” high school with a majority of white students, she found Sacramento State welcoming and friendly. She describes her college experience as well-rounded and very busy. She participated in internships from the time she was a freshmen to the time she graduated. She concluded after graduating from college that much of her strong work ethic came from being raised by her father, and was this strong work ethic that allowed her to establish the discipline necessary to succeed in college. Laura majored in business administration, graduated with a 3.7 GPA and had a job offer from one of the top three accounting firms in the world by the time she graduated. She contributes her success to non-profit organization designed to develop and place underserved youth in business and industry, and prepare them for corporate and community leadership.
her willingness to listen to others’ past experiences, knowledge and wisdom. She never took advice for granted and found value in everyone she met throughout her college career. During her college experience she was a member of CAMP, EOP, INROADS and a sorority.

Lisa

Lisa is a 35-year-old female who was born in the U.S. but learned English as a second language. She is the middle child in a family of seven (five brothers and a sister) and is the first and only one in her family to attend college. She recalls being at the bank once and her mother saying to her, “It would be so nice if you could work in a bank. All the girls are pretty, it is air conditioned and you don’t have to worry about being outside in the sun.” While going to college may not have been directly part of the message her mother intended to send, a better life was and from that day forward she knew she wanted more for herself. In high school, she was called to the counselors’ office because she was about to be sent to continuation school. When she shared with him that she wanted to go to college, he laughed at her. She then realized she had to turn her life around and begin to get good grades and went to night school and community college to make up the credits necessary to graduate from high school. As a college student she described herself as an exceptional student. She always had her work done in advance and sought feedback and guidance from all of her instructors. She does not describe herself as a
bright student, but certainly hard working. She graduated from Sacramento State with a double major in Spanish and History. She was a member of CAMP, EOP, and MEChA\textsuperscript{7}.

\textit{Olivia}

Olivia is a 37-year-old female who was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. at the age of four. Her parents migrated back and forth from Mexico throughout the year to follow the harvest season. Consequently, she attended school in both countries throughout her K-12 educational journey. She recalls the complexities of having to adapt to a new culture and language each time she arrived. While in school in the U.S., she was not allowed to speak Spanish and while in school in Mexico she could not speak English. She is the oldest of five and the first in her family to get a college degree. She feels proud to know that her actions and encouragement influenced all of her younger siblings to pursue a college degree. Today, all five siblings hold at least a bachelor’s degree. In high school, she was an honor student and highly qualified to attend college. However, when she arrived at Sacramento State she was placed in remediation English and math and struggled to pass basic general education courses. Additionally, Olivia did not feel emotionally prepared for college. Coming from a small rural school of 200 students to a city campus of 28,000 was a culture shock. As a sophomore she got married and had a child. As a mother and wife, she quickly realized she had no time to waste and decided to get guidance in creating an academic plan that would help her graduate in four years.

\textsuperscript{7} MeChA is an acronym for Movimiento Chicano de Aztlan. The Sacramento State student organization encourages unity and participation in political policies, issues and processes that concern this population.
To do this, Olivia took classes at the community college, concurrently to her coursework at Sacramento State and also attended summer school. She was a member of CAMP and EOP.

**Andres**

Andres is a 24-year-old male who arrived from Mexico at the age of 15 and learned English as a second language. Andres attended a small rural high school where the majority of students were children of White ranchers who, grew up together and were not open to diversity. As a result, he had a difficult time fitting in and being accepted into the school community. In contrast, at Sacramento State he felt like he belonged. He describes his college experience as life changing and one that made him a better person. He describes himself as an average student who got Cs but never failed a class. While he was not an exceptional student, he feels he was able to balance school and social life in a healthy manner in order to enjoy a well-rounded college life. Having lived in the U.S. for four years, he did not feel academically prepared for college and spent a year remediating in English and math. His strategy for success was to never miss class, discuss with others informally what he had learned and to find something enjoyable about every class, regardless of how much he disliked the topic. According to Andres, sticking to his major from the beginning helped him graduate in four years. His two older brothers had to work immediately after high school to contribute to the family and did not have an opportunity to go to college. Thus, Andres was not willing take this opportunity for
granted. He graduated from Sacramento State with a bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies. He was a member of CAMP and EOP.

**Martin**

Martin is a 24-year-old male who arrived from Mexico at the age of 16 and learned English as a second language. Because he felt very insecure about his level of English proficiency he did not initially believe he could go to college. However, CAMP and his migrant counselor encouraged him to apply to Sacramento State. Upon arrival, Martin was afraid someone would discover how little English he really knew and would consequently be disenrolled from the university. However, soon enough, he felt like he belonged to the campus and college became his new hobby. Martin found pleasure in walking across campus, getting coffee in the Union, going to class and studying in the library. It was not a chore at all; it brought joy to his life. If he ever thought school was hard, especially around finals time, he would think of his parents who were getting up at 4 am to work in the fields to do physical labor when all he had to do was sit in an air conditioned library to study or write a paper. That would immediately put things into perspective for him. His success strategy was establishing a strong support network of staff, faculty and peers with similar background with whom he could relate. Today, his younger siblings, a brother and sister see college as a reality not just a dream. They talk about wanting to become engineers and where they want to attend college. When Martin was their age, he did not even dream about going to college. Martin graduated with a
bachelor’s degree in business administration. He was a member of CAMP, EOP, InRoads and a fraternity.

Osvaldo

Osvaldo is a 28-year-old male graduate who arrived from Mexico at the age of 10 and learned English as a second language. He is the youngest of eight siblings and the first and only one in his family to go to college. Osvaldo came from a small rural town and a school of 300 students. Prior to coming to Sacramento State he had only traveled to Sacramento once, for an appointment at the Mexican Consulate to get his passport. He referred to Sacramento as “the big city.” As a high school student he participated in AVID\(^8\) where he was placed on the college preparatory track and completed all the necessary courses for college admission. Nonetheless, college for him was just a thought. His father once took him to work in the fields and told him at the end of the day, “You can either work with your hands or with your head; you choose.” The answer was simple and he never returned to work in fields. He was recruited to come to Sacramento State by a CAMP counselor who visited his high school and helped him get the admission process started. Although he took all the required college courses, Osvaldo scored low on the English and math placement exams. This affected his self-esteem and made him question if the admissions office made a mistake by admitting him. Throughout his first year, he felt like an imposter and worried about being discovered. Upon arrival, he realized that

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\(^8\) The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program targets average students and prepares them to succeed in rigorous curricula, enter mainstream activities in school, and increase their opportunities to enroll in four-year colleges.
he had an opportunity to reinvent himself in college and so he did. Although he was not active in high school, he surrounded himself with people who encouraged him and became highly involved on campus. He participated in CAMP, EOP, a fraternity, student government and McNair Scholars. Osvaldo graduated in five and a half years with a bachelor’s degree in Sociology. He has 20 nephews and nieces who he hopes will follow in his footsteps.

Enrique

Enrique is a 33-year-old alumnus who was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. as a three year old and learned English as a second language. He is the first of four siblings to graduate from college. He describes his undergraduate experience as an ongoing learning process. He did not feel prepared for college, either academically nor emotionally. After completing a year of remediation, he found himself disinterested in a lot of his classes and did not know which questions to ask in order to do well. Consequently, he was a C average student. He believed this was partly due to the lack of stability in his life at the time. His parents were going through a divorce, he initially commuted to college and once he moved out of his parent’s home he relocated a total of seven times during his freshmen year. There was a point when he considered dropping out, but the alternative was moving back home and working in agriculture. Consequently, quitting was not an option for him. Once he became stable, he began to focus on his career. It took him six years to graduate and describes his last two years as the most meaningful. His success strategy during the last two years was to focus on the
light at the end of the tunnel—life after college. By then, he participated in CAMP, EOP and student government, was employed and had a steady relationship. Enrique graduated with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering.

Discussion of Themes

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used as the method of data analysis. In this study, the process of data analysis began by identifying segments in the data set that were responsive to the research questions. The data was divided into general codes and later more specific themes related to the literature and theoretical framework are implied. This study used the coding family introduced by Bogdan and Biklen, (2003), as a starting point. Due to some overlap, several codes originally introduced in Chapter 3 were collapsed into other overarching codes. For the purpose of this study, two additional codes were created by the researcher to better attest to the research questions. These codes include a code to categorize conflicting values and one to categorize the utilization of institutional agents. A total of nine codes, followed by themes and subthemes, are presented in this section of Chapter 4.

1. Setting/Context Code

This code allowed the researcher to categorize data that placed the study into a larger context. General participant statements describing the setting and environment fit under this code. This includes descriptions of the campus, experiences in the classroom and encounters with faculty/staff among other statements. Overall, participants
experienced CAMP as “a home away from home and found at Sacramento State, a sense of belonging.”

**CAMP “A Home Away from Home.”** One of the most important retention tools is creating a “home away from home” environment for migrant and seasonal farmworker students through community based activities and engagement in campus life. CAMP recognizes key linkages and support roles that are necessary effectively assist in the transition of becoming a successful college student. CAMP enables migrant students to maintain their roots and values, while also learning the necessary skills to be successful college students. It practices what has been identified as a strategy of additive acculturation or, similarly, a strategy of acculturation without assimilation (Gibson, 1988, 1998). More importantly, CAMP creates an academic and social community for students and a sense of belonging in college that appears, both from the research literature and from this study, to be an essential factor in fostering student engagement and participation (Osterman, 2000; Tinto, 1993). In this study, participants described the CAMP program as “a home away from home,” and a place they could be themselves. The following excerpts from participants represent two different subthemes. The first establishes “program structure,” and the second “peer commonalities” as factors accountable in creating this environment:

CAMP was my second family. I spent all of my free time in the CAMP office. I was there from the time they opened to the time they closed. I could relate to everyone, from the counselors, to the tutors and I spent a lot of time talking to the Office Manager, Rosita. I talked to her about family, how to pay my PG&E bill, just anything. – Joel
When I was out on campus I felt stiffness in my shoulders and as soon as I walked into CAMP I was relaxed because I would hear Vicente Fernandez in the background and I would hear people speaking Spanish and talking about traveling to Mexico with their families for the holidays. CAMP validated who I was; I was with people with similar experiences, we met to study together and then played soccer after school. It was a true family environment. – Osvaldo

Finding a Sense of Belonging. Scholars have identified “the privilege of whiteness” and “possessive investment of whiteness” in various social settings, education being one of them (Kivel, 1996; Lipsitz, 1998; McIntosh, 2001). Due to the influential differences that exist between themselves and members of the dominant society, creating a sense of belonging in the college community is especially important for students from migrant backgrounds. Institutions of higher learning that help students create a climate where they can retain their cultural identity, while they develop a sense of belonging, will improve the students’ chances of persisting in such institutions (Hurtado et al., 1997).

The participants in this study attribute their success to the overall sense of belonging they felt at Sacramento State all throughout college. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that all the participants in this study were part of CAMP, a program whose primary focus is to create a “home away from home” environment for its students and help them identify support networks on campus where this feeling of inclusion is fostered throughout their college experience. Consequently, there is no doubt that this particular factor influenced the participants overall experience at Sacramento State.

It is also important to consider that all 10 students successfully graduated, therefore, their experience are naturally more positive than if this study interviewed
migrant students who dropped out of college. Nonetheless, collectively participants describe positive experiences of belonging at Sacramento State as compared to negative ones during high school. The following excerpts from participants represent three different subthemes as viewed during their college and high school experiences. The first establishes the “CAMP network,” as the factor accountable in facilitating an extended family outside of CAMP. The second represents the subtheme of “Latinos on campus,” as a common perception held by participants (likely from their involvement in CAMP and introduction to similar campus networks early on) of Sacramento State being highly represented by Latino faculty in comparison to their high schools. The third subtheme once again re-establishes the importance of identifying “peer commonalities,” as a way to establish community and belonging. The second set of excerpts from participants represents the subtheme of “negative perception of migrant students in high school:”

At Sacramento State.

Most of the people I was around were Latino so I did not feel stereotyped. Everyone I was referred to take classes from, talk to at financial aid, admissions, EOP, were helpful to CAMP students. CAMP had a network of people they referred students to that connected us to resources on campus. It made things much easier. – Enrique

I was surprised to see Latino professors when I first arrived to Sac State. In my hometown, everyone running the school or teaching was white. I was amazed by how diverse the campus was. – Joel

I just truly felt like I belonged here. The help and support from multiple programs such as CAMP and EOP helped a lot. I also surrounded myself with a group of peers of my same background, mostly CAMP students, who had the same values and for whom dropping out of college was not an option. We could interact in each other’s lives, meet each other’s family members and carpool home sometimes because we had similar backgrounds. – Martin
In high school.

I was told by a high school teacher that the reason I was being accepted to college was because of the quota required by affirmative action and not because I was smart or eligible—even though I was an honor student. High school teachers did not worry about migrant students too much because soon we would be married or we went back to Mexico. But at Sac State it was different. Professors really encouraged me to consider opportunities I never dreamed about. – Olivia

One summer I was back in my hometown and ran into one of my teachers from my high school. She asked me what I was doing now and I told her I was attending Sacramento State and majoring in Computer Science. She asked, “Sacramento State University?” And I said, “yes, Sac State.” Then she said, “You do not know what you are talking about.” At that moment I realized she thought I was making it up. I guess in her eyes, I would always be a migrant student and migrant students do not typically go to college. At Sac State I never felt labeled, I felt valued as a student but I did when I went back home. – Joel

2. Situational Code

This code assisted the researcher in categorizing statements that described the way participants see themselves in relation to their undergraduate experience, such as their view of college expectations and their overall perceptions. Participants had a challenging time learning to be college students yet discovered lifelong learning in the process. The following excerpts from participants represent two different subthemes. The first two establish the lack of “critical skills,” and the third, “lack of study habits” experienced by participants upon arrival to college.

Learning to be a college student.

I did not feel prepared for college at all. In addition to the language barrier, I did not know how to study. I was used to memorizing for high school or copying straight from the textbook. Here I had to think, explain things in my own words, connect ideas and connect them to the real life. I did not learn that at all in high school. – Martin
The first essay I received back from my English remediation class was bad. I was proud of my work and honestly it was the first long essay I had ever written in the U.S. In high school, we answer questions from something we read in the book and basically everybody just copied each other. Here in college, it was critical thinking, analyzing the ideas, different points of views; I had never even heard this vocabulary before. – Andres

I had to learn to study. In high school, I studied with the television on or sat in the kitchen table while my family was in the living room talking. Now, I needed to retain. I had to learn to study for the purpose of learning not just to finish an assignment. – Cecilia

Discovering lifelong learning. The accounts from the study participants described college as in introduction to lifelong learning. They strongly felt that college had not only given them a degree, but it also encouraged their desire for ongoing personal growth and development. The participants in this study were first-generation college students and transitioning to college life was a new and unfamiliar experience. In addition, in most cases, most came from small rural high schools of 200 – 500 students. The university was itself a city in comparison to some of their hometowns. Collectively, their accounts described how their minds opened up and their world became larger once they stepped on campus. The following excerpts from participants represent two different subthemes. The first two establish college as an “ongoing learning process,” and the third as “a process of seeking meaning:”

My perception about college changed significantly. I realized how little I knew and how small my world was as a high school student. When I arrived to Sac State, I realized how much more there was to know and that learning is an ongoing process that never ends. – Andres

College instructed me to learn how to learn. Today, trainings and professional development seminars come easy to me because of the courses I took in college.
I’m trained to be a student, so I’m trained to learn new things all the time which can only be good for your career. – Joel

It helped me realize how big the world is and how much there is to learn. In a way, it made me feel eager to want to learn more. Today, I question everything I hear on TV and read in the paper. It is also no longer about making money; it is about being fulfilled and doing something meaningful with my life. I would like to go back to college, not so much to get another degree but just to continue learning. – Martin

3. Perspectives Held by Participants Code

This code was used to categorize accounts told by participants that indicated a shared and common undergraduate experience. This section highlights various perspectives including not feeling like a real college student due to remediation requirements, undergoing the intimidation of seeking help after the first year and experiencing the fear of going into the real world as graduation approached.

*Not feeling like a real college student.* According to the California State University Chancellor’s Office, 46.5% of all first-time freshmen need remediation in at least one subject, with African Americans and Mexican Americans being two of the highest subgroups in need of remediation (63.2%). Research shows that students of color, from less affluent families, and for whom English is a second language, are greatly overrepresented in remedial courses (Atwel, Larvin, Domina & Levey, 2006). At Sacramento State, 98% of migrant and seasonal farmworker students participating in the CAMP program require at least one semester of remediation coursework in either English or math. In this study, all participants required remediation. Their accounts describe how this experience made them feel inadequate as college students and not “like real
college students.” This was a very discouraging experience when considering the various academic, social and cultural barriers migrant students must overcome to be the first in their families to go to college. The following excerpts from participants represent three different subthemes. The first establishes the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) now called the Writing Proficiency for Juniors (WPJ) as a “means of membership,” to the institution; the second as a “reminder of deficiency,” and the third as a “systematic problem of alignment.”

An engineering program was recruiting students to attend a professional conference. To be considered you had to be taking major courses. I signed up and was told I couldn’t participate because I was still taking remedial English even thought I had completed all of my math courses. It was like I had a stamp on my forehead that said, I’m ESL and I’m taking remediation courses. I guess by passing remediation, you gained membership to the institution, before that, you were not really a college student. – Joel

Being in remediation courses my freshmen year was very discouraging. “When most students were worried about passing physics and calculus I was hoping to pass my remediation courses … when I would hear these conversations I would realize how behind I was in comparison to other students and felt like I was not a true college student. It reminded me of the fact that I was not born here; English was not my first language. I felt like I was taking ESL classes in college. – Osvaldo

I was an honor student in high school who took geometry, algebra I & II, and trigonometry, I also took all of the science courses like chemistry and physics and yet I struggled. When I came to college I could not pass the placement test and needed a year of remediation courses. It was very discouraging. I now realize there was no alignment between what I learned in high school with what I had to know for college, the standards were clearly different. I thought to myself what the heck? – Olivia

The assumption that you should know it all after the first year. In CAMP, the attention and guidance students receive is significantly reduced after the first year of
college due to programmatic funding restrictions. During this first year, the institution provides orientations, freshman seminars, learning communities, priority registration and first-year support programs. Participants in this study describe an overall assumption that all students spend the first year of college learning the ropes and should therefore be successful in subsequent years. Rebutting this presumption, participants shared that in some ways they needed the most guidance after the first year, once the freshmen momentum wears off. Participants shared that they felt uncomfortable to seek help and instead tried to find answers by researching through peers and reading the catalog. This finding is important as it calls for state and federal policy as well as faculty, staff and the institution as a whole to look at their practices and subconscious behaviors that may be sending this message to continuing students. The following excerpts from participants introduce two subthemes. The first establishes that “different expectations with each year of college,” exists beyond the first year, and the last two portray the feelings of “embarrassment to seek help” experienced by participants due to the existing assumption that students should know it all after the first year.

The assumption is that once you complete your first-year you should have figured it out and you shouldn’t need any help, but each year in college is so different and requires different expectations from you. — Laura

The truth is you don’t even know what questions will come up each year, you are learning as you go . . . yet there is not as much help anymore. I knew I could go to CAMP but it was now full of [an ongoing enrollment of] freshmen. I felt I should move on and make room for them to get the help they needed, so I became more resourceful on my own. — Martin
I felt a little embarrassed to ask for help so I relied on my roommates who were older. I didn’t go ask but I would read the [course] catalog all the time and follow directions. – Mercedes

*Fear of going into the real world.* Transitional strategies such as bridge courses, orientation sessions before and during the freshman year, and first-year learning communities are put into place in institutions of higher learning to ensure students make a smooth transition during their first year of college (Pascarella et al, 2003; p. 429). Nonetheless, minimum strategies are often utilized to assist students to make the transition from college to the real world. The participants in this study shared a common fear of being asked, “so what are you going to do after college?” because most did not have a definite plan. Some participants began to realize that the real world did not match their expectations and abilities and suddenly graduation became terrifying to them. As shared by participants below, this finding is particularly important as it highlights the need to provide additional support to help students deal with the self-doubt and anxiety that sometimes comes with the anticipation of graduating from college. The following excerpts from participants introduce two subthemes. The first two describe the experience of going into the real world as “terrifying,” and the third establishes the real world as “*never ending hard work:*”

Most students are terrified to go into the real world. Once senior year comes many avoid it by getting another degree, or another minor, or just getting a Master’s Degree even if they have no experience in the field whatsoever just to avoid moving on. – *Mercedes*
The most dreaded question to get is, “so what are you doing after college?” People don’t realize how stressful that question can be but it is the first thing people ask when you say you are graduating. – Enrique

It was depressing to realize that the hard work does not end after college. In fact, you work even harder after college. For accounting, there are exams you have to pass to keep your job or move up the ladder. Then there is the MBA which people expect you to get. – Laura

4. Participants Ways of Thinking about People and Objects Code

This code was used to categorize statements that reflected an understanding of the overall perception of migrant students by outsiders as well as the characteristics that make up college life unique to Latino migrant students. The study participants saw college as the only option to break the cycle of poverty and believed they were perceived by the university community as hard working due to their working class background.

*College as the only option.* The educational attainment of farmworkers is low in comparison to the general population. A National Agricultural Workers Survey of 6,472 crop farmworkers revealed that, on average, the highest grade completed by crop workers was seventh grade (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Additionally, migrant workers often earn wages below the minimum wage. According to a 2005 report from the U.S. Department of Labor, the median income for farmworker households was between $15,000 and $17,000. Therefore, the opportunities an education offers in terms of better paying jobs is the most significant reason migrant and seasonal farmworker students attend college. For this population, attending college is not an option of exploring courses for self-discovery, but rather, the only way to break the cycle of poverty in their families. Collectively, participants described how even under the most difficult circumstances,
they always knew that dropping out of college was not an option for them, as their very survival depended on graduating. The following excerpts from participants represent two different subthemes. The first two establish the reason a college degree provides a choice between working with your “head versus your hands,” and the third, with a degree you gain the privilege of working “indoors versus outdoors.”

My father always said, I want you to go to college, I do not want you to have to work in the fields like I do. One time he took me to work in the fields and he said, “either you work with your hands or with your head, choose.” The answer was easy. After working in the fields, college, no matter how hard it could get, was nowhere near as hard as working in the fields. This is why I never complained, never. – Osvaldo

My parents were always telling me that college was my only way out of farm work. I had no other choice but to finish my college degree. When I went back home on the weekends, I helped my mother clean houses so I knew. I wanted a job that was not so labor intensive. – Mercedes

I remember taking my Mom to the bank one day and she said to me, “it would be nice if you could work in a bank. All the girls are pretty, it is air conditioned and you don’t have to worry about being outside in the sun all day.” Basically, I knew I needed an education to have a job that did not require me to work as hard as my parents. – Lisa

*Migrant students as hard working.* Many migrant students come from a two-parent household, have extended family members, and witness their parents work extremely difficult jobs that are labor intensive. They are often reminded of their parents’ experience of coming to this country, leaving family and loved ones behind. Additionally, students are often forced with seeing their parents struggle with language, which limited their job options and seriously hindered them from demonstrating and exercising their true capabilities, so parents work hard to establish a better life for their
children. This level of exposure to a challenging life provides migrant students with a foundation that stresses the importance of establishing a strong work ethic in college. While true of many, it is not the experience of all migrant students and therefore does not always translate in the same manner. Overall, participant’s responses about how they were perceived on campus were positive and included comments such as “I think the university sees us as students who are here to take advantage of an opportunity and make the best of it,” and “they know we are here get a degree and have no time to waste, so everyone is very helpful.” Nonetheless, the most common held perception from participants was the assumption on behalf of campus faculty and that migrant students are “hard working.” The following excerpts from participants represent three different subthemes. The first establishes the perceived “positive perception of migrant students” on campus. The second and third discloses the general assumption that, while migrant students may be perceived as hard working, they are also traditionally “deficient in English,” and “high maintenance.”

I think there is a lot of support for migrant students, maybe because the CAMP program is 30 years old. The faculty on campus is always so willing to help because they know we are hard working. Those who are unfamiliar with migrant students automatically assume we are deficient in our academics and in remediation classes but we are willing to work hard no matter how long it takes. That’s why when there is a student who doesn’t try it is so shocking to people. If the student is not hard working it does not fit the stereotype of a first generation migrant student. – Lisa

When people on campus hear migrant they immediately think deficient in English and Math but not in a bad way . . . more like, they are deficient but will work hard. They will do whatever it takes to remediate and graduate because they are hard working. – Martin
I think faculty sees migrant students as high maintenance. Hard working but very high maintenance because we are the first ones in our family to go to college and everything is foreign to us. – Enrique

5. Activity Code

This code was used to categorize regularly occurring kinds of behavior. The participants in this study were asked to identify the resources available on campus that they utilized throughout their undergraduate experience. In general, students utilized the CAMP program (including the counselors, staff, computer lab and tutoring center); the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP); the library; the computer labs; and the Student Union. Only two students utilized the multicultural center and the health center on a regular basis. One student used the therapy lab in the Speech and Pathology department to take language therapy to improve his Spanish accent when speaking English. While not a generally known service on campus, it is one that should be better promoted among English learner students. When participants were asked about the available services they wished they had taken advantage of during their undergraduate experience they mentioned theatre performances, psychological services and the Career Center. All participants admitted to needing psychological services at some point in their undergraduate experience, but felt uncomfortable even contemplating scheduling an appointment. Participants indicated that they were not interested in theatre arts at the time because they assumed it was an expensive luxury. They also regretted not maximizing services available at the Career Center in particular the career assessments, resume workshops and mock interview workshops. Participants felt they could have
been much more prepared for their professional careers if they had utilized the services in
the Career Center.

6. Event Code

This code was used to categorize activities that occur infrequently or just once in
the undergraduate experience of participants, but had a significant impact in the overall
experience such as passing the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE).

*Passing the WPE as a significant “milestone.”* The Trustees of the California
State University requires all students entering the CSU system demonstrate their English
proficiency writing skills as a requirement for graduation. This skill is measured through
a Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) administered by each individual campus. If a student
fails the exam, they are given the opportunity to take a remedial course or retake the
exam. To take upper division coursework and ultimately graduate, students must pass the
WPE. For migrant students who are first in their families to go to college and
predominantly English learners, passing this exam is considered a significant milestone.
Participants felt insecure about their language abilities and dominance of the English
language all through their college experience. The fear of failing the WPE was a
confirmation of their everlasting uncertainty about their college qualifications. As stated
below, for all participants in this study, passing the WPE was an unforgettable
accomplishment. The following excerpts from participants represent three different
subthemes. The first establishes that passing the WPE confirmed, “*hard work pays off,*”
the second introduces the passing of the exam as the “end of self-doubt,” and the third as an institutional “stamp of approval.”

The day I took the WPE (Writing Proficiency Exam) and passed it; I literally felt like I was in the clouds. With all my deficiencies, it meant that all my ESL and remediation work had paid off. – Joel

The time I passed the WPE was the best day of my life. I knew we had the option of taking a class if we did not pass, but taking the class would make me doubt my proficiency even more. I knew I had just overcome a significant barrier in my life and that from here on things would get easier for me. – Cecilia

When I passed my WPE it was my stamp of approval, I was no longer an English Learner I was proficient in English. It empowered me to take on even the hardest classes. – Olivia

7. Strategies Code

This was used to categorize conscious tactics, methods, techniques, maneuvers, and/or ploys used by participants to succeed in college such as reinventing yourself as a college student, developing career interests early on and using challenges as a motivator to move forward with college completion rather than deterrence.

Reinventing yourself. College symbolically and physically removes every student from their past. For some, this departure from high school life provides a personal opportunity for a fresh start by reinventing themselves. The participants in this study found college as an ideal time to change for the better. Since few people knew them, they no longer had to be “the shy one,” “the one who sat [in] the back of the class and never asked questions,” or “the trouble maker.” As indicated below, college provided the participants in this study a second chance to start over, break old habits and become a better version of themselves. The following excerpts from participants represent three
different subthemes. The first two reinforce the importance of “*trying new things,*” as a pre-requisite in reinventing oneself. The third highlights that access to “*new resources provide new opportunities,*” in college and facilitates the process of reinvention.

Coming from a small town, my vision was very narrow. When I arrived to Sac State I realized that nobody knew me in high school and I could reinvent myself. In high school, all I did was play soccer; I never got involved in student government or clubs. In college, I pushed myself to do things I normally would not do. I joined programs, organizations, I traveled, I joined the student government. – Osvaldo

In high school, I only studied and did homework at school. At home, I never had a place to study, we lived in a two bedroom apartment and we were six, plus my parents. I slept in the living room and had to wait for everyone to go to bed to do homework. In college, I lived in the library. – Lisa

I high school, I did not care about missing class and I never talked to my buddies about school. At Sac State, my strategy was to never miss class and to discuss with my buddies informally what I had learned. – Andres

*Developing career interests.* Retention research suggests that student commitment to educational and career goals is perhaps the strongest factor associated with persistence to degree completion (Wyckoff, 1999). Given the increasing trend of new students to report that their number-one goal for attending college is “preparing for an occupation” (Astin, Parrot, Korn, & Sax, 1997, p. 156), it becomes understandable that being able to see themselves in their field of study or connecting their major to a particular job can be a strategy that helps migrant students succeed in college. Furthermore, if students begin to gain work experience that is compatible with their abilities, interests and values, then their overall level of satisfaction with college increases. As indicated below, the participants in this study attribute their success to
developing career interests early on. Many of them participated in internships as early as their freshmen year of college. Doing internships gave participants a sense of purpose, a preview of what life after college might be like and a network of professionals outside the university who were also invested in their success. The following excerpts from participants represent two different subthemes. The first three establish the utilization of internships to learn about a career field, establish relationships in that particular field and to get established in the profession. Basically, participants used “internships to build career opportunities” early on in their education. The last excerpt introduces the “job offer,” as a subtheme that establishes employment after completion of an internship as a potential outcome.

It was through internships, and work-study that my career found me. I think if students get exposed to their career they would have more of an idea of what they want to major in, because it is hard to commit your life to something you don’t know. It is like a relationship, you date before you commit. Students have to date their career before their major. – Osvaldo

I had an opportunity to complete an internship directly related to my field of study. By doing this, I was able to see myself after graduation. It helped me stay focused and motivated to actually graduate. I remember going to an etiquette dinner and learning a lot about networking and how to eat properly in public settings. That was also helpful. – Joel

I participated in internships starting in my freshmen year. I know many students who waited until their junior or senior year. I think that is a huge mistake. I can track my current career and somehow connected back to my first internship. You must spend the four years of college building relationships and establishing yourself in the profession you plan to follow. – Andres

I saw so many students waste their time working at the mall or at Jamba Juice instead of gaining experience and contacts in their field. Then they wondered why they cannot find a job after graduation. One of the best days of my life was when I received my job offer at the end of my junior year to work for one of the
top accounting firms where I had interned for three years through InRoads. This is what everybody should get at the end of their college years, a job offer like this. – Laura

*Turning challenges into motivators – the positive influence of migrant life.* Like many students, the participants in this study experienced many challenges throughout their undergraduate experience. Regardless of the hardships they faced, all made a conscious choice to see challenges as opportunities and a greater reason to stay in college and “keep the fight going.” Participants in this study demonstrated a high level of optimism, self-confidence, openness and adventurous spirit even under the worst circumstances. So, what made these students continue, rather than allowing the challenges break their spirits or jeopardize their determination to succeed? Garza et al. (2004) attribute this endurance and determination to resiliency. Resiliency is defined as the ability to confront and resolve problems and the capacity to utilize personal or social resources to enhance limited possibilities (Cochran, 1992; Rutter, 1987). The participants in this study presented high levels of resiliency throughout their undergraduate experience. They were tough, determined and proud to survive under the worst circumstances. The following excerpts represent four distinct motivators used by participants to overcome challenges. The first introduces “family,” as the motivator and reasons participants kept going during hard times. The second introduces “limited job opportunities,” as the motivator to prevent, under any circumstances, dropping out of college. Basically, the concept of working in labor-intensive jobs made the process of obtaining a bachelor’s degree a much easier one to overcome than the alternative. The
third introduces the subtheme of “English proficiency,” used as a motivator to continue a higher education to ultimately develop fluency and confidence in the English language.

The fourth characterizes “loss,” as a motivator to continue college. The subtheme of “loss,” is used to refer to any level of finality including the end of meaningful relationships or the permanent loss of a loved one due to death.

I did not know how to balance my school work with my personal life. I ended up getting married and having a child by my second year of college. This made things much more complicated. Because of this I could not be a great student, I had B’s and C’s. But this gave me the fuel I needed to push forward; I still graduated in four years. I needed a job to support my family – Olivia

In college, I was going through a lot of personal problems. My parents were divorcing, I was drinking, going out more, I moved 7 times my freshmen year. There was a point I thought about quitting school but realized my backup plan was moving back to my hometown and work in agriculture. Quitting was in a way not an option—at least not a better option. I kept going and decided to make the last two years of college the best ever. – Enrique

In my English 20 class, a multicultural course, the professor would make comments that were very discouraging and at the same time motivating. He would say to the whole class, that is a typical error of ESL students, or it’s because you are ESL.” He would remind us every minute of the class that we were ESL. Then, to students who were not ESL and made mistakes he would say, “and you are not even ESL, what is your excuse?” I did not take it personal and instead used it as a motivator. I learned a lot from the instructor. – Martin

During my senior year, my baby sister passed away. It was the most difficult time through my entire life. At the moment, I considered quitting college to be with my family full time. I felt like I was betraying my family by staying in Sacramento. But then I realized that my sister would never have the opportunity to go to college that I had. That gave me the strength to continue. The CAMP staff helped me get through. They would stop their work to listen to me, because they knew I needed to talk to someone. They attended my sister’s funeral. At that moment I realized I could be that person people go to when they need help and decided to become a social worker. – Cecilia
8. Conflicting Values Code

This code was created by the researcher to better attend to the research questions of this study and the theoretical framework. This code assisted in categorizing experiences, events and activities that reflected conflicting values between the student’s world at home and that of college life, such as learning to negotiate between two conflicting and at times contradicting worlds while managing the feeling of guilt and pretention that comes from being the first in their families to go to college.

The established social character of upper and middle-class White-America has been profoundly shaped by the ideology of individualism, people’s life condition, social status, and material wealth, not as a consequence of macro-social structural processes, but as a consequence of individual natural talents, choices, and actions (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2007, 2011). Consequently, key structural advantages exist for students raised in this environment because their schooling experiences are built under the individualist tradition philosophy (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). On the contrary, migrant students are, in many cases, raised with communal values in which the welfare of the family supersedes the individual (Green, 2003). As a result, Latino migrant students must learn to decode the system in order to take advantage of the opportunities available to advance in life and in particular to graduate from college. As expressed by the participants in this study, in many instances, decoding the system did not always align with familial values and led to a conflict of values:

I think education is grounded in American culture which tells you to be individualistic, to pull yourself up by your boot straps while at home is all about
family first, not the individual; you are nobody unless your family is doing well so you have to be there to help them. When you go home to see your family, you must check your education at the door. You do not go to see family feeling all big and mighty. Where, if I was a white person, it would be expected of me to talk about my knowledge and how it is helping me move up in life. Even as a student, when I came home after finals, nobody ever asked me how did your finals go? – Lisa

Breaking the chain. For the participants in this study, being the first in their families to go to college required them to go against the norm, break the rules and in some levels go against their parent’s will. When a student is attending college as the first in their family, their whole family is also attending college for the first time. Family does not have any reference points of the chain of events that are about to take place, by having made this one life-altering decision—sending their son/daughter to college. For example, in the U.S., going to college is associated with becoming independent, while in most Latino migrant families independence is acquired through marriage. Also, in the Latino culture, being quiet and non-opinionated is a form of respect towards others, especially the elderly. College teaches critical thinking and provides students with an opinion about the world around them. Lastly, in the Latino migrant culture, the role one plays in the community also dictates certain expectations in behavior. For example, a mother may be expected to raise their child rather than go to college. As described below, the participants in this study made difficult decisions that went against their values to be successful in college. The following excerpts from participants introduce two different subthemes: “disappointing family,” and “education as a sacrifice of family.” The first two provide an overview of the various ways participants felt they were
disappointing their families by making decisions to persist in college; while the last two introduce the choice of college as requiring the sacrifice of family or vice-versa, for doing both is not perceived as realistically feasible.

When I decided to move out, my father disowned me. He said, ‘if you leave, do not come back.’ He tried to make me change my mind by offering to buy me a car instead. I said no. So the agreement was, I will move out but come home every weekend. So, I went back home every weekend with the exception of three weekends my whole four years of college. – Lisa

In my culture, being a perfect wife is being someone who does not complain or nag. In college, I was finding my own voice and as a result, had a lot to say. So when I went back home and had an opinion for everything, according to family I was being disrespectful and not lady like. Supposedly, college was ruining me. – Cecilia

When I was going to get married my second year, I called my father and told him I was getting married. He said, “Well, now that you are getting married you will need to choose between school and family.” Out of respect I did not say anything, but I knew I had no intention to leave school. – Joel

When I became a teacher my mother-in-law said to me ‘look Olivia, your son needs you, you can’t continue to go to school…you already have your teaching credential why do you need more?’ I replied to her in a very respectful way, ‘the fact that I continue my education is not simply to fulfill my personal goals it is also for my son because I know that in the future a master’s degree in going to give me a better paying job and he will benefit from it.’ Family were so afraid that my child’s well being [was at risk and] depended on me going to get my master’s degree. – Olivia

*Negotiating between two worlds.* Students’ competence in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a steppingstone to further education, productive work experiences, and a meaningful life (Phelan et al., 1993). The participants in this study, as introduced in Student’s Multiple World Study (Phelan et al., 1993), described their
struggle to negotiate between two opposite worlds, that of a student and that of a member of their families and communities. The experience was particularly difficult because it involved feelings of disloyalty, self-doubt and despair. The following excerpts from participants introduces three different subthemes: “pretending to fit in,” “feelings of disloyalty,” and “a gap of college knowledge.” The first provides an example of the complexity participants experienced to continuously adapt to two very distinct worlds. The second introduces the feelings of disloyalty participants felt each time they had to be behave differently since not everything in their family culture facilitated college success. The last represents the gap of college knowledge regarding academic demands and expectations that sometimes exist at home.

At times I felt like I was living two lives. I had to be a certain way at school and [another] at home. In English class I had to pretend to understand Shakespeare and Hamlet when in reality, how many literature books have I ever read? None. In communication class we were expected to debate. Well, I had never taken a class to prepare me for this. Now, this was an introductory course but I needed an introductory course for the introductory course. If we were debating a controversial topic like immigration I had to be political[ly] correct and speak in a certain way that I don’t speak like at home. At home with my parents and sisters I felt normal but as soon as I was back at school it was really hard for me to be who I was and felt often like I was pretending. – Olivia

I carried a sense of disloyalty with me all through college. I knew I was doing the right thing but by doing the right thing I was also disappointing my parents on a daily basis, because I could not be the daughter they wanted to be. Our culture is challenging in the sense that our families want us to have a better life but they don’t realize that to do that you will need to behave differently from the norm. I felt like I had two lives: I lived my student life from Monday through Friday and on the weekends I had my family life—and I had to behave completely differently in each world. – Cecilia

Parents do not understand the expectations of college. I sometimes went back home because my parents expected me to be there, even though I needed to work
on a paper or study for an exam. My Dad didn’t believe that I was at the library until midnight so I had to lie about being in the library too. He had to take a lot of criticism from his family for letting his daughter move to Sacramento. I had to lie to do the right thing and felt like I was living a double life at times. – Laura

*Cultural expectations.* Parents of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker backgrounds want what is best for their children and certainly want them to graduate from college. Nonetheless, often parents do not know how to be supportive of their college going children. The tradition of family obligations sometimes gets in the way as parents do not understand that placing too many demands on their children takes them away, from studying and other potential life altering opportunities like internships. In addition, due to their lack of familiarity with the U.S. higher education system, parents do not understand the difference among careers in college. College life requires student initiation, independence, and self-monitoring that can be challenging and stressful for students who feel pressure by family obligations. In this study, the participants faced the dilemma of having academic demands, yet feeling obligated by cultural assumptions and unrealistic expectations. The following excerpts from participants introduce three subthemes, all associated to the lack of college knowledge in families and the toll it can take in the lives of participants. The first introduces the subtheme of “exhaustion” as a result of attempting to balance the demands of playing multiple roles. As seen in this excerpt, meeting multiple expectations was physically, emotionally and psychologically draining for participants. The second introduces the subtheme “differences between the U.S. and Mexico’s educational system,” as another gap in the understanding of families pertaining majors and professions. The last introduces the subtheme of “a college degree
as a money maker,” and provides an example of the misconception that a college degree
should generate considerable financial wealth.

Even when I had finals, I always went back home. Being so close to my family
made it an expectation. My mother would ask me on Thursday, ‘what time are
going to be here?’ not ‘are you coming this weekend?’ At home, I had no space
to study, there was always something going on during the weekends, then I was
helping my mother clean houses as well, so I would return to Sacramento
physically exhausted without any energy to do homework. I did not sleep much,
which I think contributed to my depression during my first year. I was torn
between being a student and being home for my parents. I did not have time for
anything else—other than family and school. I feel like I missed out on a lot
of my college experience. My parents did not really give me the freedom I needed
to be a student. – Mercedes

When I was an engineering major my parents knew I was going to build bridges
and make money. When I told them I was changing to sociology they said
“what’s that?” I told them it was the study of society and I could do anything.
They said, “anything like what?” It was so difficult to get them to understand a
major outside of what we see in the soap operas, “teachers, doctors, lawyers,
engineers, business owners and cops.” – Osvaldo

Being poor creates the illusion that one will make a lot of money after graduating
from college. My parents would say, ‘if you are going to go through the hassle of
going to college, then make sure you make a lot of money.’ Money was not as
important to me as giving back. When I became a social worker my parents were
disappointed to know how much I was making. Today, they still say, “huh, and
you went to college?” – Cecilia

Survivor guilt. It is also quite common for first-generation students to feel guilty
about having the opportunity to attend college when their parents or other family
members did not. “Survivor guilt” refers to the negative feelings that can arise from
having succeeded and escaped adverse conditions when close others (e.g., parents,
siblings) have not (Wray-Lake, 2010). These feelings can lead to adverse academic and
psychological consequences for some students. The participants in this study
experienced survivor guilt all throughout college. The following excerpts from participants introduce three different subthemes all associated to the feelings of guilt that came with pursuing a college degree. The first two explain the subtheme of “family sacrifice.” For study participants, knowing that family members had sacrificed themselves to ensure that they had an opportunity to go to college led to feelings of guilt for experiencing opportunities for personal growth their families back home did not. The second introduces the subtheme of “access to resources.” As participants began to enjoy experiences that appeared luxuries to them, in comparison to their living conditions back home, such as having their own room and being in an air conditioned building all day, feelings of guilt erupted. The third introduces the guilt experienced by participants from their “lack of financial contribution,” to their family during college as they were focusing on school and consequently unable to earn a substantial salary to contribute to the family.

My two older brothers were expected to work right out of high school to help the family. I was the third one and this expectation was not there. I was allowed to go to college and do something I enjoyed. I guess my brothers sacrificed for me and I was the lucky one. – Andres

Even as a male, I was expected to go home every weekend. I personally felt it was my responsibility and the least I could do after everything I was gaining. I remember telling my mom one time that I needed to stay for finals and she said, “Oh, but I made you enchiladas.” I couldn’t take the guilt. I immediately got in my car and drove home. – Andres

I felt guilty for having my own room, I felt guilty for changing and becoming so different in my thinking than my family. – Cecilia

I so felt like I should be helping my parents. When I moved to Sacramento we had only been in the U.S. for three years so my parents were just settling in. But then
logic would kick in and I would remind myself that I was doing something for myself. – Martin

The imposter phenomenon. A student habitus, though subject to some change due to the college environment, will likely still have a substantial influence on student decision making, especially during the first years. For example, students with relatively high levels of traditionally-valued social capital are more likely to see college attendance and degree attainment as the norm, and are likely to feel an “entitlement” to higher education, which students with relatively low levels of traditional-valued social capital may have. Students with relatively high levels of social capital may see not only college attendance as an entitlement, but persistence and degree attainment as well (Berger, 2000a). In contrast, Latino migrant students, having overcome major adversities to become the first in their families to go to college, can feel like a phony that has fooled others into believing they are college worthy, when in reality, they are not. The feeling of “faking it” is most common among first generation college students and is referred to by scholars as “the imposter phenomenon” (Clance & Imes as cited by Ewing, Richardson, James-Meyers, & Russell, 1996). Suffering from the imposter phenomenon is more serious than the typical vague feeling of not fitting in that many students experience in the beginning of their college education. It can include very destructive habits of mind, such as believing one got into the university by luck or mistake. The following excerpts from participants introduce two different subthemes all associated with this debilitating phenomenon. The first excerpt introduces the subtheme of “language deficiency,” and the second and third excerpt the subtheme of “academic
deficiency," as grounds for participants to question their right of entry to the institution as well their right to graduate with a bachelor’s degree.

My confidence level was very low as a freshman. I arrived to the U.S. at the age of 15 and was still learning English. I felt very insecure with my English. I was worried someone would discover how little English I knew and would kick me out of the university. – Martin

In high school, I took honor courses in math and English. Yet, when I arrived to Sac State and took the EPT/ELM and I scored incredibly low on both. It really affected my self-esteem. I felt like I did not belong here and like I was here by mistake. I felt like an impostor. I had something but I couldn’t own it. I worried that at any moment I would be discovered, they were going to realize that I should not be here and that I was admitted by error. So my first year was very scary. – Osvaldo

Even after I graduated from college I had nightmares that my degree was fake that someone reviewed my transcript and realized I had really not finished and my degree was not real. It took years before I stopped worrying about it. – Joel

9. Institutional Agent Code

This code was used to sort out data that referred to participants’ contact with individuals who facilitated access to social capital and the utilization of valuable resources throughout their undergraduate experience. The excerpts reinforce the participants’ willingness to access social capital to build a strategic network by indentifying caring institutional and empowerment agents.

Students from higher social-economic statuses are socialized at a very early age to participate in higher education. This capital is communicated subtly through behaviors, knowledge and beliefs, which they inherit from their parents and communities (McDonough, 1997; Tierney, 1999; Walpole, 2007). While in college, these students further develop their social capital by reaching out and connecting to individual and
social networks that serve as resources to important opportunities. Consequently, holders of this capital have a higher likelihood of connecting with the right people than those who came from lower economic statuses because they have a predisposition to the knowledge required to successfully navigate the system (Fong, 2003; Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006). The participants in this study attributed their success to the many individuals who inspired, mentored and guided them throughout college. They would not be where they are, if they had not met people who saw potential in them and facilitated access to valuable social capital. Participants in this study were able to go outside their comfort zone to access social capital, build a strategic network of caring institutional agents, and further identify empowerment agents.

Extent of accessing social capital. Underserved students, due to the fact that their own various sources of social capital are dissimilar to those of the institution—but valuable in other ways—must negotiate their way through college by overcoming social, cultural and ideological forces that are often contradictory in nature (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Students who possess social capital that does not align with the institution must negotiate their way through college in a much more difficult way (Gee, 1989; Phelan et al., 1998). This challenge is particularly experienced by students who come from migrant and seasonal farmworking backgrounds and who are often first-generation, low-income and English learners. As a result, the experience of underserved students trying to accrue social capital could be so challenging it may evoke behaviors that would ultimately deny them of this much needed help (e.g., avoiding asking questions, seeking help or reaching
out to others) (Lucas, 1999). In order to persist, the participants in this study found ways to negotiate through the institutional culture even if this meant going outside their comfort zone to access the necessary social capital to succeed in college. The first excerpt introduces the subtheme of “conflicting help-seeking,” and the second “conflicting learning styles.” Under both circumstances, participants went against prior beliefs and practices to be academically successful.

This was also difficult for me because in our cultural we should not bother people or ask for help. If you do, you become a burden. Then you come to college and we are told to do the complete opposite, that we should ask for help, go see faculty during their office hours, etc. In high school one of my qualities according to a teacher who wrote a letter of recommendation was that I was quite and well behaved. That was the definition of a good student then. – Lisa

We have been taught not to ask for help. In college, I had to learn to socialize with people. For example, I like working by myself and here, I had to do work projects which require that I meet with people after class. This was not easy. – Olivia

Building a strategic network. Stanton-Salazar’s (1997, 2010) network-analytical approach to social inequality in society takes as its starting point what Wellman (1983) refers to as the social distribution of possibilities, a term that refers to the unequal distribution of opportunities for entering into different social and institutional contexts and for forming relationships with agents who exert various degrees of control over institutional resources, such as bureaucratic influences, career-related information, and opportunities for specialized training or mentorship (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 21). The process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking are known to be quite different across social classes for it requires commanding, negotiating, and managing
many diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social relationships and personalities, and which usually entails skillfully negotiating—not always familiar skills to migrant students and other minority youth. The participants in this study established strategic networks of institutional agents that would give them access to the resources necessary to succeed in college. The following excerpts from participants introduced three subthemes all associated with building a strategic network. The first introduces the subtheme of “CAMP referrals” to explain the manner in which the CAMP program assisted in connecting the participants to other resourceful individuals on campus. The next three introduced the subtheme of “proactive seeking,” to emphasize the initiative on the part of the participants to also reach out to resourceful individuals on their own. The last excerpts introduce the subtheme of “diverse networks,” built by participants to secure their access to multiple sources of social capital throughout their college journey.

CAMP referred me to faculty in my major. The faculty they worked with respected me and treated me right. They truly wanted to see me make it. From there, I established my own little network of mentors in my major and other people who believed in me. These people guided me all the way through graduate school. – Ofelia

Every time there was an opportunity to hear a speaker, or someone give advice about college or career planning I was there. If it could help me in some way with my personal life I would make an effort to go listen to that person. CAMP would bring speakers to class and that was very motivating. – Joel

I never did anything on my own; I always asked one, two or three people and they would all give me different perspectives that would help me. I always went to see faculty during office hours, I asked peers if I did not know how to do an assignment, I never gave up. The friends that started with me and did not graduate were those who felt they could do it all on their own. I had multiple people to go to. – Laura
My strategy for success was to ask a lot of questions and to go to multiple individuals for different answers. I also relied significantly on being part of multiple programs. I joined any program or organization that could help me graduate. – Osvaldo

I had different mentors for different things. I had mentors of all nationalities and both genders, not just Latinas. Sometimes we think that only people from our own background will understand and support us. But that is not true. Plus, you will get such a different perspective that can really alter your life. – Cecilia

Identifying caring institutional agents. Institutional agent as defined by Stanton-Salazar (2011) refers to an individual who occupies one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high-status and authority. This individual manifests the role of an institutional agent when, on behalf of the student, he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of, highly valued resources (p. 112). Institutional agents serve as facilitators and gatekeepers for student success, for they have the potential to facilitate access to greater institutional resources. Overall, institutional agents provide connections to resources that help decode the educational system bound in the cultural values of the dominant culture. Stanton-Salazar (2010) also describes “confianza en confianza” (bonds of trust) as a site of trust, respect, mentorship, teaching and learning, legitimacy, reliance and commitments necessary for transformative agency (p. 133). For Latino migrant students, relationships of genuine trust are difficult to establish until two things occur: (1) the students must feel assured that close and open interactions with institutional agents are securely grounded in the agent’s genuine commitment to their welfare, and (2) feelings of marginalization in society in higher education must be validated, publically recognized, and openly discussed (Montero-Sieburth & Villarruel,
As stated below, the participants in this study sought institutional agents that presented the qualities embedded in “confianza en confianza.” The following excerpts separate the two types of caring institutional agents identified by participants by the following two subthemes: “staff,” and “faculty.”

I think I had a lot of mentors, because I was very active in MEChA. I reached out to faculty, staff and administrators, in particular Latinas, who I felt believed in me and encourage me. The quality that attracted me to these individuals was that they cared about me. They understood me, they wanted to see me succeed and they always offered their time to me, even when they were very busy. – Lisa

As [a] freshman, I was intimated to go talk to my professors especially those who were Caucasians and I didn’t feel understood me—which was the majority of them. As a result, I did not do too well in their classes. But if they understood me and cared, I would automatically do well in their classes. Professors that were understanding and caring I visit during office hours. For example, I failed biology the first time I took it and then I took it with a professor who was very understanding and caring and I passed. Not because the class was easier but because I felt more inclined to talk to the professor and ask for help when I needed it. – Olivia

Identifying empowerment agents. For disadvantaged youth whose parents may not have attended college, institutional agents provide a second opportunity to develop appropriate motivational dispositions necessary to pursue college. In addition to institutional agents, Stanton-Salazar (2010) introduces empowerment agents as part of his socialization model. Empowerment agents, in addition to the contributions of the institutional agent, also alter the destinies of Latino migrant students. Empowerment agents promote their vision of a more just, humanistic, and democratic society and empower individuals to succeed and work towards changing the system for future generations. The participants in this study found more than institutional agents on
campus; they found empowerment agents in the individuals they met throughout their undergraduate education. The following excerpts introduce two subthemes associated with the mind-altering transformation study participants experienced throughout their interaction with empowerment agents. The first two excerpts introduce the use of empowerment to “expose erroneous misconceptions,” as a subtheme. In the last excerpt, “changing the status quo,” is introduced as the subtheme to explain the desire shared by participants to change the status quo and make conditions better for future generations.

I remember hearing in one of my classes that Latino parents did not value education—or that the research showed that. And I recall my father always telling me to go to college. It would make me mad. I remember telling the instructor, could you teach someone to speak Italian, and he said no, I don’t speak Italian. “Well, you can’t expect my father to teach me about college. He earns 16,000 dollars a year to feed a family of six, his preoccupations is more feeding us than sending me to college, but it doesn’t mean he does not value education.” This is why I’m in education, because there is so much ignorance we need to do something about it. This is what I learned from my mentors…to do something about it. – Osvaldo

In one of my classes, the professor asked students to say what came to mind when they heard the word “undocumented immigrant.” What I heard was mostly negative, “illegals, taking American jobs, not paying taxes, etc.” I remember going up to the professor after class and telling him I was very angry to hear that and he said to me, “What are you going to do about it?” “Are you going to stay angry or do something?” – Martin

In high school, I was viewed as just another Mexican student who was learning English and who would eventually end up as a gardener. If lucky, I would end up going to a technical school like ITT Tech—not that there is anything wrong with going to those schools, but it is a stereotype. And most students do end up there, not because they did not have the potential to go to college but because nobody guided them through the process early on. The white students are going to go to college because their parents are making sure they are on the right path; we know nothing about what it takes to go to college. Someone in high school would need to adopt us and guide us through the right path. Here at Sac State, I felt respected. I felt people saw us as hard working students because they know college is not
easy for us. Our parents are not giving us money so we are working really hard to be here. After I graduated, I was touched by all my mentors and what they had done for me, I wanted to give back and make it easier for those coming after me.
– Andres

Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 4 analyzed the data collected from a study with the purpose of better understanding the undergraduate college experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. The 10 participants purposefully selected for this study were individually interviewed using as an instrument a semi-structured questionnaire. The participants in this study shared their undergraduate experience from the perspective of an alumnus of Sacramento State—someone whose undergraduate experience lies in the past and are now part of a group of success stories. The brief biographies of each participant provided an opportunity to contrast similarities and differences among participants. Although all participants shared common characteristics of being a student of migrant or seasonal farmworker background, coming from small rural towns, being first-generation college goers and learning English as a second language, their level of high school preparation and actual performance in college varied from overachievers to average students. The data collected and analyzed served to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the undergraduate experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State? (2) What strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students develop to navigate college life and successfully graduate when many do not? and (3) What can Sacramento
State do to ensure more Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students graduate from college? The findings revealed important information about participant’s breakthroughs, challenges, dilemmas, fears, regrets, and joys during their undergraduate experience at Sacramento State.

The participants in this study experienced Sacramento State as a welcoming campus. Overall, participants felt respected and part of a larger community during their first year of college and all the way through graduation. After their first year, participants seemed to have smoothly transitioned into other campus groups and organizations that incorporated student’s like them, Latino and first-generation. The majority of participants felt migrant students were perceived negatively in high school and thought Sacramento State was diverse and open-minded in comparison. The sense of community experienced by participants in this study certainly contributed to their high levels of motivation, perseverance and resilience. With that said, it is important to consider that all of the participants in this study began their undergraduate experience as CAMP students. CAMP’s mission is to create “a home away from home,” for its students and also focuses on connecting students to extended networks on and off campus to facilitate their transition and integration to the larger university community. Additionally, the simple fact that all the participants in this study successfully graduated from Sacramento State infers that their undergraduate experience would have been generally positive since the outcome was also positive. The overall experience may have been entirely different if
participants in this study were continuing students advancing toward graduation or Sacramento State dropouts.

As previously mentioned, the level of college preparation attained in high school varied significantly among all participants in this study. While some participants completed all college level coursework and/or honors courses with high GPAs, others required special admission to get into Sacramento State. Nonetheless, all participants in this study felt highly unprepared for college at all levels—academically and emotionally. In addition to the language barrier, most participants had to work very hard to establish foundational skills to meet the high demands of college coursework. Consequently, all the participants in this study were placed in remediation courses in both English and math upon arrival. Completing remediation was discouraging and demoralizing to participants and made them doubt their competency and worthiness. To many of them, completing remediation was required to gain full membership to the university and become “real college students.” Consequently, passing the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE), now called the Writing Proficiency for Juniors (WPJ), the final assessment utilized by the CSU to determine student’s writing competency was a significant milestone. Having doubted their capabilities due to remediation, passing the WPE reaffirmed their qualifications as college students. Despite the academic barriers, the participants in this study found college as a mind-opening experience, one where they discovered lifelong learning. Participants utilized college not only as a means to complete a degree, but also to pursue continual personal growth and development.
Participants in this study found the first year of college as full of resources and highly supportive, but felt a disintegration of support after the first year of college. Participants also shared that in general, the university makes a mistake by assuming that students should know how to be successful subsequent years after completing their first year of college. Contrary to widely held misconceptions, study participants shared that in many ways, they needed much more guidance after the first year. While they were never denied services, participants described this assumption as a general perception that made them feel uncomfortable seeking services, and as result, became much more resourceful on their own. To find answers, participants utilized peers and the university course catalog regularly. Being first-generation college goers, participants in this study also experienced feelings of inadequacy, better described in academia as “the imposter phenomenon” (Clance & Imes as cited by Ewing et al., 1996). By having overcome much adversity, the participants in this study felt “phony” and at times questioned if they had fooled others into believing they were college material. While all the participants survived this condition, it was debilitating to their student existence.

In addition to questioning their worthiness as college students in the institution, conflicting values highly contributed to the challenges participants experienced throughout their undergraduate experience. As described by Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2004, 2011), institutions of higher learning are established by the ideology of individualism, which promotes individual choices and actions. On the contrary, Latino migrant students are, in many cases, raised in communal and macro-social structures
promoting the welfare of the family over the individual. Consequently, the participants in this study often experienced conflicting values in choosing to make decisions that contributed to their advancement in college. To be successful college students, participants had to go against the norm, break traditional and cultural rules at home and in some extremes go against their parents will. Simultaneously, participants’ experienced “survivor guilt” (Wray, 2010) for having the opportunity to attend college when their parents or other siblings did not. Some felt guilty for being inside an air conditioned building all day, for having access to a range of resources on campus, and for experiencing personal growth and development.

To overcome adversity, the participants in this study established strategies to remain motivated, focused and engaged in their studies. One of the strategies commonly used by participants was to reinvent themselves in college. The participants in this study found college as an ideal time to change for the better. Since few people knew them, they no longer had to be “the shy one,” “the one who sat at the back of the class and never asked questions,” or “the trouble maker.” The participants in this study gave themselves a second chance by going outside of their comfort zone and doing things they never dreamed of in high school, such as getting involved in student government, participating in class, and finding joy in studying at the library. In addition, participants in this study developed career interests early on, through participation in internships that were directly related to their field of interest. This level of professional involvement gave participants a sense of purpose, a preview of what life after college might be and a
network of professionals outside the university who were also invested in their success. Lastly, students exhibited a resiliency—likely learned from migrant life and its hardships, by turning challenges during college into motivators. Study participants demonstrated a high level of optimism, self-confidence, openness and an adventurous spirit even under the worst circumstances. For example, close family members died, they got married or divorced or had children through their college experience. The greater the challenge, participants seemed to grow even more determined to continue their college journey.

Mounting evidence shows that those who identify an important nonparental adult in their lives tend to report better psychological well-being, more rewarding relationships with parents and others, academic success, high school completion, better employment experiences and fewer problems with peers (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Bubois & Silverthorn, 2005; McDonald et al., 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2002). Although many non-parental adults can make positive contributions to the socialization and development of youth, not all may have the human, cultural, and social capital to truly alter an adolescent’s social mobility (Gibson et al., 2004). The participants in this study surrounded themselves with a strategic network of institutional agents to serve their numerous needs. They utilized staff, faculty and peer mentors to get answers to their questions, learn techniques and make strategic decisions about college. Even if this meant going against their culture, which taught them not to bother people, ask for help or become a burden, they utilized multiple agents to gain different perspectives, and by doing so increased their opportunities. In particular, participants in this study sought out
in institutional agents who cared and reflected the qualities embedded in “confianza en confianza.” These qualities include, establishing candid relationships where the institutional agent had a genuine interest in seeing the students succeed. Furthermore, participants were influenced by empowerment agents who in addition to directly transmitting, or negotiating the transmission of resources for them, influenced their lives to strive towards changing the system for future generations and making the world a better place.

There is considerable quantitative research that predicts the retention and persistence rates of students using grade point averages, standardize tests, and/or class standing (Anderson-Snowden, 2004; Attinasi, 1989; Bolton et al., 2004; Carson-Warner, 2003; Chartas, 2001; Dalpes, 2001; Dansby, 1999; Edmonds, 2003; Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Gloria et al., 2005; Hebert, 1997; Jalomo, 1995; Le, 2002; Lockey-Carlson, 2005; McClure & Child, 1998; Miles, 2000; Myers & Moore, 1997; Nora, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tatsugawa, 2002; Tinto, 1993; Wright, 1997). However, based on a review of the academic literature, there were a limited number of research studies found on Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students in higher education, and in particular, of participants of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). The research studies found tended to address the migrant student experiences in college and the support systems available to them to help them increase their chances at college access from the perspective of high school students, first-year and second-year college students. There was limited research, if any, on the college experience of Latino migrant
and seasonal farmworker students from the perspective of alumni—those who have already graduated and can now reflect back to their undergraduate journey. Based on the data collected and analyzed in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 makes institutional recommendations on how to improve the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant students at Sacramento State. The information attained from the data collected in this study produces a new body of knowledge and suggests innovative ways to implement changes that could increase degree attainment rates of Latino migrant students. The CSU Graduation Initiative commits institutions to systematically discover and dislodge the roadblocks to students’ success—the next and final chapter provides recommendations on precisely how to accomplish this goal.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

The declining U.S. economic competitiveness in comparison to both established and developing nations is a growing concern. While the U.S. is near the top in college participation rates, it is close to the bottom in completion rates (Johnson & Sengupta, 2009). The U.S. economy will have 22 million new jobs for college-educated workers by 2018. However, if we continue at the current pace, the country will be 2 million workers short of filling its capacity (Coghlan, 2011). Just as other countries are doing better than the U.S. in postsecondary completion rates, states within the U.S., are constantly jockeying for position (Shulock, Offenstein, & Moore, 2008). While California remains slightly above the national average for the percent of the population with a bachelor’s degree, during the last 15 years the gap between California and the national average continues to widen (Spence & Kiel, 2009). In order to reverse this cycle, as a bellwether state, it is especially important that California indentifies ways to increase college success leading to degree completion. To remain a first-class leader in the global economy, the U.S. must address barriers impeding postsecondary completion.

This study examined the undergraduate experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State from the perspective of alumni who have completed a bachelor’s degree, and was particularly interested in the participants’
overall undergraduate experiences and the strategies they used to build the necessary social capital to navigate college life and graduate with a bachelor’s degree. Findings in this study suggest participants’ undergraduate experiences in CAMP pave the way for institutional recommendations that may increase the graduation rates of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students. These recommendations apply to administrators and faculty at Sacramento State and similar four-year institutions across the state, the California and the U.S. Department of Education, Offices of Migrant Education. Results from data analysis suggests innovative ways to implement changes that could increase degree attainment rates of this population.

In this study, Stanton-Salazar’s (2004) theoretical framework, guided by theories of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 1999) and more specifically the roles of socialization and the influence of institutional agents on the degree completion process of migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State was utilized. Social capital is fundamentally constituted in terms of resources, or forms of institutional support, accessible by the student through their direct or indirect social ties to others who assume the role of institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). The importance of this idea is that individuals are able to accomplish meaningful goals through their access to these resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Foremost is the recognition that, for students to successfully meet both developmental challenges and academic demands of the school, they require resource-full relationships and activities organized within a network of socialization agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p. 1069).
Considerable quantitative research has been conducted that predicts the retention and persistence rates of students using grade point averages, standardized tests, and/or class standing (Anderson-Snowden, 2004; Attinasi, 1989; Bolton, 2004; Carson-Warner, 2003; Chartas, 2001; Dalpes, 2001; Dansby, 1999; Edmonds, 2003; Fashola & Slavin, 1998; Gloria et al., 2005; Hebert, 1997; Jalomo, 1995; Le, 2002; Lockey-Carlson, 2005; McClure & Child, 1998; Miles, 2000; Myers & Moore, 1997; Nora, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tatsugawa, 2002; Tinto, 1993; Wright, 1997). Based on a review of the literature, there were a limited number of research studies found regarding Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students in higher education, and in particular, of participants of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). The research studies examined migrant students, experiences in college and the support systems available to them to increase their chances at success from the perspective of high school students, first-year and second-year college students. However, there was no research, found by the researcher, on the college experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, from the perspective of graduates, using a qualitative approach.

Given that limited research has been conducted on migrant and seasonal farmworker students, particularly the strategies used by this population to graduate from college, from their perspective, there is still a great need to better understand this student population. This study, contributes toward filling this gap in the literature. To understand the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of successful college degree completion, including the experience of overcoming challenges individual
interviews were conducted using a phenomenological qualitative research approach and 
grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used as the method of data analysis. This 
study used the coding family introduced by Bogdan and Biklen (2006) as a starting point 
to code the data and from there the researcher created two additional themes. The 10 
participants purposefully selected for this study shared their undergraduate experience 
from the perspective of an alumnus of Sacramento State—and whose past undergraduate 
experiences are now part of a narrative of success stories. The findings revealed 
important information about how participants negotiated challenges, dilemmas, fears, 
regrets, breakthroughs and joys during their undergraduate experience at Sacramento 
State.

Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the findings bound by the evidence 
collected to address the research questions of this study: (1) What are the experiences of 
Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State? (2) What 
strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students develop to navigate 
college life and successfully graduate when so many do not? and (3) what can 
Sacramento State do to ensure more Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students 
graduate from college? In this chapter, the themes presented in Chapter 4 are discussed 
by referencing the importance of each, and evaluates the findings relative to the existing 
literature presented in Chapter 2. The chapter also provides recommendations for action 
using the primary learning objectives of the Sacramento State Doctorate in Educational 
Leadership and Policy program as a framework to structure the recommendations. These
learning objectives consist of: (1) developing an understanding of transformational leadership and its impacts, (2) the application of research to policy and practice and (3) the use of data to drive decision making. The chapter ends with recommendations for further study, a reflection from the researcher and a concluding statement.

**Interpretation of Findings**

This section brings clarity to the existing body of literature by addressing the college undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students and similar populations through interpreting the study findings presented in Chapter 4. Study findings consist of participants’ perceptions of their overall undergraduate experiences at Sacramento State, the strategies they used to successfully graduate with a bachelor’s degree and their institutional recommendations. The goal of this section is to raise consciousness about institutional practices and build mechanisms to address issues of college completion for this unique population. As stated in previous chapters, commonly held perceptions of gaining social capital throughout the undergraduate experienced are based on Stanton-Salazar’s (2004) theory of socialization and the impact of institutional and empowerment agents in the undergraduate experience. The interpretations of the findings are guided by the first two research questions of the study: (1) What is the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State? and (2) What strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal
farmworker students develop to navigate college life and successfully graduate when so many do not? The final research question is addressed in the next section of the chapter.

1. What is the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State?

According to the literature, migrant students have limited access to academic capital because they are less likely than their majority counterparts to attend schools that provide high level college preparatory courses, adequately qualified teachers, and counselors available to guide them through the college process (McDonough, 2005; Oakes et al., 2002; Oakes et al., 2006). In fact, according to Gibson (2003) only one-third of migrant students are placed directly into college preparatory English and math courses. Circumstances such as language, family responsibilities, not having a space at home or not having a time designated for homework or parental assistance can affect the foundation established early on in school (CMEP, 2008). As typically experienced by many college students, the participants in this study felt unprepared to enter college. In addition to the language barrier, participants did not know how to study to effectively meet the academic expectations of college. Participants were used to getting along by memorizing content, while college required critical thinking, connecting ideas and looking at concepts from different perspectives. This feeling, of unpreparedness, was generally shared by all of the participants regardless of their level of preparation and academic history. This knowledge provides an opportunity to restructure existing freshmen seminar-type courses to consider the different ways Latino migrant students negotiate their way through college.
In the literature, student levels of academic preparation in high school, grade point average and college entrance examination scores are all positively correlated with success in college (Adelman, 1999; Astin & Oseguera, 2005; Berkner et al., 2002). However, this study shows that, despite their wide ranging academic backgrounds, participants all succeeded in achieving the undergraduate degree. For example, despite the literature stating that most migrant students did not have access to college prep or honors courses, several participants took honors coursework in high school while others were recent newcomers to the U.S. learning English for the first time and required special admission to Sacramento State (see Table 5). This finding reinforces the importance of considering disadvantaged backgrounds in the college admissions process to ensure this group of students is not automatically denied admission.

This study demonstrates that due to their backgrounds, Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students may not have the rigorous academic accomplishments that institutions are looking for and require from their applicants. In the case of the participants in this study, the correlation of high school academic preparation, grade point average and test scores were not adequate indicators of success in college completion. At a time when the retention dilemma is being addressed by increasing selectivity and accepting more academically prepared students, it is critical to consider the many factors that contribute to college completion for this unique population. In fact, for the study participants, academic background upon entry was not a critical factor for success. Numerous other factors influenced the successful graduation rates of the Latino migrant
students’ participating in this study such as reinventing themselves, negotiating between two worlds and developing a sensible judgment when managing, what at times may have seemed as unrealistic cultural expectations at home.

According to the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CMEP, 2007), 90% of migrant students speak Spanish as their first language, and 70% of migrant students are learning English as a Second Language compared 23% of non-migrant Latino students. In this study, all of the participants required a year of remediation coursework in English. Unfortunately, being placed in remedial courses contributed to participants feeling inadequate and not like real college students. According to the literature, arriving at college without the required linguistic and mathematic abilities to do college-level work adds to students overall feelings of inadequacy. Alumni interviewed recollected the experience of being placed in remedial coursework as discouraging with some using words such as “phony” or “fake” to describe their self-image at the time. Believing one entered the university by luck or mistake, referred by scholars as the Imposter Phenomenon,” (Clance & Imes as cited by Ewing et al., 1996) can lead to very destructive habits of mind, such as purposely missing class and procrastinating studying for an exam. Consequently, passing the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE), now called the Writing Proficiency for Juniors (WPJ), a CSU requirement to take upper division courses and graduate, was a significant milestone for all study participants allaying some of their fears of being imposters. One participant explained that “passing the WPE was a stamp of approval, [that] I was no longer an English Learner [and that] I was proficient
in English.” Considering the significance of this milestone for the participants it is essential to acknowledge this fear prior to the exam, provide preparation seminars designed for language learners and a reward system to celebrate this milestone. Also worthy of consideration is establishing a support system to provide assistance to students who fail this important exam. After all, if passing symbolizes a stamp of approval to students, failing must serve as a confirmation of their lack of college readiness. Potential feelings of despair must also be addressed to prevent students from possibly giving up and dropping out of college before taking or after failing the WPE.

Migrant students are, in many cases, raised with communal values in which the welfare of the family supersedes the individual (Green, 2003). Consequently, Latino migrant students in this study had to learn to “decode” or navigate the college system in order to take advantage of the opportunities to advance in life, and in particular, to graduate from college. Study participants stated that navigating the system did not always align with their communal values and led to a problematic and conflicting existence. Becoming the first in the families to go to college requires participants to go against traditional cultural expectations and in some extremes to go against their parents’ will. When a student attends college as the first in their family, their whole family also attends college for the first time. For the participants in this study, family played a central role in their success. The significant influence of family in the lives of Latino migrant students reinforces the importance of family involvement during the college years. During the admission process, the institution provides various opportunities for parents to
participate in this major life-changing event (e.g., Open House, Orientation). However, once the student begins classes, the parents are never again invited to the campus, until perhaps graduation. Overall, events that incorporate parents should present an opportunity for students to share their new experiences with their family and for parents to leave with a better understanding of what their children are going through and how to better support them. This type of activity values the importance of family in a culture, where family values take precedence, while promoting involvement throughout the college years.

Students’ competence in moving between different cultural contexts has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a stepping stone to further their education, create productive work experiences, and live a meaningful life (Phelan et al., 1993). The participants in this study, as introduced in Phelan et al. (1993) Student’s Multiple World Study, described the struggle of negotiating between two conflicting worlds, that of a student and that of a member of their families and communities. The experience was particularly difficult because it involved feelings of disloyalty, self-doubt and despair. For instance, in the U.S., attending college is often associated with becoming independent, while in most Latino migrant families, independence is acquired through marriage. For the participants in this study, being quiet and not opinionated was a form of respect towards others, especially the elderly. In stark contrast, college teaches critical thinking skills and encourages students to develop a voice of their own. One participant stated, “after a few
years of college, I began to have an opinion for everything, [but] according to my family I was being disrespectful and not lady like.” These participants faced the dilemma of having high academic demands, yet feeling obligated by cultural assumptions and unrealistic family expectations which presented additional impediments to their progress in college.

As parents placed demands on them, participants felt increasingly squeezed to find enough time to allocate to studying and taking advantage of other potential career altering opportunities such as internships, while spending family time. As a result, participants described feeling “guilty” for having had the opportunity to attend college when their parents or other family members did not. “Survivor guilt” refers to the negative feelings that arise from having succeeded and escaped adverse conditions when close others like parents or siblings have not (Wray, 2010). As stated by one study participant, “I felt guilty for having my own room and for changing and becoming so different in my thinking than my family.” These findings reinforce Stanton-Salazar’s concept of “institutional borders,” which makes effective participation very difficult because it is dependent upon participating in the dominant “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988). Students found that engaging in the dominant self-centered culture of academia conflicted with the communal values held by them and their families. Consequently, in order to survive college life, study participants learned to negotiate between these two opposing worlds (Phelan et al., 1993). One study participant elucidates, “at times I felt like I was living two lives...I had to be a certain way at school and a certain way at
Understanding the powerful role conflicting experiences play in the lives of Latino migrant students, it is crucial for an educational institution to acknowledge these challenges and provide organizational opportunities for Latino migrant students to share, discuss and develop a sensible judgment or approach when balancing these experiences.

The literature recognizes the first year of college as a crucial point for all students (Tinto, 1993). The student’s competence in transitioning from high school to college has tremendous implications in their chances of using the educational system as a steppingstone to further their educational pursuits (Phelan et al., 1993). Transitions frequently require the full application of students’ efforts and skills, especially when the campus context is governed by different values and norms from those of the student’s family (Stanton-Salazar, 2004). Despite cultural challenges, study participants generally described their undergraduate experience at Sacramento State as highly positive. During their first year of college and beyond, participants found a “home away from home,” in the College Assistance Migrant Program. CAMP enabled participants to maintain their roots while developing their personal and academic identity and the necessary skills to be successful college students. Participants enrolled in CAMP to obtain academic and personal support from staff and students from their same background, found that they also established lifelong friendships and support groups with other CAMP students. This finding supports the literature suggesting that for minority students, interactions can be conceptualized in terms of the fit of the student with the overall student community as...
well as with her or his student subculture (Loo & Rolison, 1996). This finding also argues against the presumed negative effects of balkanization—defined as students of color self-segregating from the university’s predominantly white student body and into their respective racial “enclaves” (Altbach & Lomotey, 1991; Astin, 1993b; Duster, 1991, 1993, 1995). Moreover, this finding supports Villalpando’s (1996, 2003) conclusion of the benefit of same-race peer group affiliation for students of color. Villalpando (2003) found that when Latinos affiliate with other Latinos during college, their values are reinforced and their likelihood of pursuing careers in service of their community increase. The findings of this study expand our understanding on the importance of providing “a home away from home” and a sense of belonging for Latino migrant students not only during the first-year of college, but also throughout the consecutive years.

Participants’ beliefs of how Latino migrant students are perceived by others on campus included comments such as “I think the university sees us as students who are here to take advantage of an opportunity and make the best of it,” and “they know we are here to get a degree and have no time to waste, so everyone is very helpful.” The most common perception held by participants was the assumption that migrant students are perceived as being “hard working.” While this finding reinforces the sense of belonging experienced by study participants, it also represents a general assumption that exposure to hard labor-work, as experienced by some migrant farmworkers, automatically translates into all migrant students possessing a strong work ethic. Based on study findings, this
was not the experience of all participants and the experience itself did not always translate in the same manner for all students. For example, some study participants described themselves as having experienced intensive work in agriculture while others had been protected by their parents and never been exposed to this type of work in their lives. According to Sue (2005) and Phelan et al., (1993), stereotypes and personal bias remain the dominant paradigm of educators and their beliefs about students of color, their families, and their communities. In fact, much of what has been written about migrant students has been based on disadvantaged, deficit, or at-risk theories of academic failure (Trevino, 2004). While the success of the study participants contradicts the cultural perspectives presented in the literature that define Latino migrant students as not interested in education or incapable of succeeding in an academic setting, it is erroneous to assume that all migrant students have a strong work ethic simply because they witnessed their parents work under difficult conditions or they themselves worked in farm labor. This finding affirms Sue’s (2005) affirmation that faculty and staff development programs must go beyond the diversity awareness model and assist in examining conscious and subconscious cultural assumptions. For this dialogue to occur, ongoing professional development opportunities must be created by the institution to address assumptions and beliefs about this unique population and promote multicultural competency and pedagogy.

The literature establishes that involvement in college activities, both academic and social, influence the levels of persistence among college students (Mortenson, 2007;
Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2000). Research also supports the notion that, in order for Latino students to participate in mainstream activities, some activities must be specific to Latino student interest (Hurtado et al., 1997). According to Tierney et al. (2000) it is impossible to shed one’s cultural heritage (p. 96) as proposed in Tinto’s (1994) retention model. Tierney et al.’s (2000) concept of cultural integrity establishes that, when college students are able to affirm their own cultural identities, their chances for graduation increase. The participants in this study attributed their success to an overall “sense of belonging,” they felt at Sacramento State throughout their college experience. In addition, outside of CAMP, participants also found a sense of belonging through their involvement in other campus programs, organizations and activities. For example, participants in this study were also involved in CAMP, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement Program (MESA), McNair Scholars9, INROADS10 as well as Latino sororities, fraternities and organizations—all designed to promote the success of underserved populations. Nonetheless, caution is warranted when interpreting high student involvement without considering the many other factors that may have influenced the positive experience of these participants.

First, all 10 study participants succeeding in completing their bachelor’s degree and as a result their experience will naturally be more positive than students who

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9 Federal TRIO program designed to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities.

10 Non-profit organization designed to develop and place underserved youth in business and industry, and prepare them for corporate and community leadership.
departed college without a degree. Secondly, all 10 study participants enrolled in the CAMP program during their freshmen year in college—which evidently had a significant influence in their overall undergraduate experience during and beyond the first year. In addition, as evident in the profiles provided in Chapter 4, a large number of study participants engaged in other campus retention programs and activities. And third, none of the study participants ever experienced academic probation or disqualification. Perhaps, if they had experienced academic probation or disqualification their experience may have varied considerably.

2. What strategies do Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students develop to navigate college life and successfully graduate when so many do not?

The literature on migrant student conditions indicates that during childhood, many migrant students lack the awareness of their individual ability to exercise some control over the circumstances impacting their school life (Romanowski, 2003, Salinas & Franquiz, 2004; Vocke, 2007). This might explain why the participants in this study saw college as an opportunity to “reinvent themselves” in a productive way. While this strategy did not appear in the literature review, as a new finding, it prompted study participants to seek help, ask questions, sit in front of the class and get socially and professionally involved—all factors revealed in this study as effective strategies for college persistence. Professional involvement through work-study and internship experiences gave participants a sense of purpose, a preview of what life after college might be and a network of professionals outside the university who were also invested in their success. This strategy supports the existing literature establishing degree
completion for the purpose of preparing for an occupation as the main reason students pursue a college degree (Astin et al., 1997). Additionally, the participants used the challenging experiences of migrant life as a strategy for “turning challenges into motivators,” rather than letting challenges interfere with their education. For example, they thought of how much easier it was to sit in the library to prepare for finals than they thought of how much easier it was to sit in the air conditioned library to prepare for finals, than picking fruit in 100 degree weather. In fact, study participants demonstrated a high level of optimism, self-confidence, openness and adventurous spirit under the most trying circumstances. The characteristics displayed by these participants support the overwhelming literature on resiliency (Garza et al., 2004; Rutter, 1987). Resiliency, defined as the ability to confront and resolve problems and the capacity to utilize personal or social resources to enhance limited possibilities (Cochran, 1992; Rutter, 1987), was clearly a quality of all study participants. For this group, college was not seen as an option, but rather the only way to break the cycle of poverty in their families. Collectively, participants described how even under the most difficult circumstances, they always knew that dropping out of college was not an option for them. Based on this knowledge and the range of factors that motivate and engage Latino migrant students to persist in college, it becomes crucial to incorporate these strategies and provide ample opportunities for students to explore ways to consciously maximize these unique and effective approaches.
Students from higher social-economic statuses are socialized at a very early age to participate in higher education. This academic capital or knowledge is communicated subtly through behaviors, knowledge and beliefs learned from their parents and communities (McDonough, 1997; Tierney, 1999; Walpole, 2007). While in college, these students further develop their social capital by reaching out and connecting to individuals and networks that serve as resources to important educational, career and life opportunities. Consequently, holders of this social capital have a higher likelihood of connecting with people who have the knowledge required to successfully navigate the system than those who come from lower economic statuses (Fong, 2003; Ianni, 1989; Lareau, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006). When needed, study participants were able to access social capital, build a strategic network of caring institutional agents, and identify empowerment agents on campus. The process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking are known to be quite different across social classes and other status groups because it requires commanding, negotiating, and managing many diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social relationships and personalities—not always familiar skills to migrant students. To persist, the study participants found ways to negotiate their way through the institutional culture even if it meant going outside their comfort zone to access the necessary social capital to needed to succeed in college. In accessing social capital, the study participants demonstrated behaviors parallel to those of students from higher social-economic statuses raised in the dominant culture. These findings support Stanton-Salazar’s social capital framework which establishes that while underserved
students’ various sources of social capital may be dissimilar to those of the institution, this type of strategic education can be taught and learned by these students. These findings build understanding on the importance of integrating strategic education skills into advising sessions and curriculum and provide ample opportunities for the practice and mastery of these essential skills.

According to Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2003), the best way to enable students from minority backgrounds to access forms of social capital is through institutional agents who can activate their positions and power to create a climate for college success. For minority students, institutional agents provide a second opportunity to develop appropriate motivational dispositions necessary to pursue college. The participants in this study attributed their success to the many individuals who inspired, mentored and guided them throughout college. They would not be where they are today, if they had not met people who saw potential in them and facilitated access to valuable social capital. It was through institutional agents and empowerment agents that participants learned to maximize their existing resources to make decisions that were calculated to increase their social capital in college. In addition, participants also described “caring” as an indispensable quality they sought out that attracted them to certain institutional agents. This finding supports Stanton-Salazar’s (2010) concept of “confianza en confianza” (bonds of trust) as a site of trust, respect, mentorship, teaching, learning, legitimacy, reliance, and commitments necessary for transformative agency (p. 133). But the participants in this study found more than institutional agents on campus; they also found
empowerment agents in some of the individuals they met throughout their undergraduate education. As explained in more detail in Chapters 2 and 4, institutional agents provide connections to institutional resources that help students navigate the educational system; while an empowerment agent, in addition to providing resources and empowering students to succeed, they work towards changing the system to make it easier for future generations to succeed at higher education. The empowerment agents’ study participants encountered through their college experience reinforced their existing cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) as a powerful source of strength and skill. This knowledge highlights the importance of institutional support programs to work at identifying potential caring agents that will reinforce the existing cultural wealth of Latino migrant students and facilitate organized networking opportunities for students to connect and initiate prospective relationships.

A New Theoretical Lens

According to the literature, there are numerous factors that influence retention among Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, including financial need, academic background and socioeconomic status (Nunez, 2009b; Zalaquett et al., 2007). Nonetheless, compared to other student populations, little has been written about migrant students in higher education, particularly the strategies used by them to overcome significant academic and personal barriers, to complete their college journey. Furthermore, none of the existing literature has introduced a new theoretical framework
to conceptualize the college persistence and completion of this unique population. A new theoretical framework is particularly necessary when considering that efforts used by institutions of higher education to recruit, retain and graduate students have not been modified as demographics have changed. In addition, deficit thinking continues to dominate in academia (Sue, 2005). Many educators still believe that low-income minority students are not interested in education or are incapable of succeeding in an academic setting and assume these are the reasons why they depart college without a degree. This assumption is narrowed and exclusionary when considering that the student population has significantly changed, yet the conception of how education is delivered has relatively remained the same.

Without a new conceptual framework, the institution is not required to change. Instead, the retention dilemma is easily addressed by increasing selectivity and accepting more academically prepared students. Although many institutions have outreach programs to recruit and target at-risk populations, the trend toward higher admissions standards has a negative impact on access to public four-year institutions for low-income and minority applicants, who tend to be less well-prepared academically than their peers (Zalaquett, 2005b). Evidently, this approach does not address the root of the problem and does little to close the achievement gap. Grounded theory, the method used in this study, provided the opportunity to develop a new theoretical framework based on the study findings uniquely designed for the academic retention of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students. The new theoretical framework introduced in this study was
influenced by three existing frameworks: 1) Tinto’s (1993) Theory of Student Departure; 2) Tierney et al.’s (2000) Theory of Cultural Integrity; and 3) Stanton-Salazar’s (1997) Network Analytical Framework of Socialization (see Figure 1). This new theoretical framework was created using the following systematic steps: 1) Extracting existing findings already established by the three frameworks while integrating new findings revealed by this study to fill in any gaps; and 2) Establishing the interconnections of all existing framework with the new findings.
Figure 1. The Influence of Existing Theoretical Frameworks

Tinto’s (1993) Theory of Student Departure

Tinto's (1993) theory is the most widely cited theory for explaining the student departure process (Braxton et al., 2000, p. 107). Tinto (1993) posits that individual pre-postsecondary education attributes (family background, individual skills and ability, and
secondary school quality) form individual goals and commitments for postsecondary education. Once the individual enters postsecondary education, those individual goals and commitments interact constantly with institutional attributes (i.e., characteristics of the formal and informal academic and social environments). The extent to which the individual is able to academically and socially integrate into the formal and informal academic and social environments of the institution determines whether the individual persists through postsecondary education or drops out of postsecondary education. In general, integration and affiliation are the two key concepts that form the conceptual basis of Tinto's (1993) model. Although Tinto presents one form of integration into postsecondary education that may work for some students, his model has been widely criticized for discarding students’ cultural backgrounds as irrelevant to their successful collegiate experience and supposing that holding on to cultural background is detrimental to a successful collegiate transition and integration.

According to Tinto (1993), student’s pre-postsecondary education attributes form individual goals and commitments for postsecondary. The assumption is that success is less likely when pre-postsecondary education attributes do not include a high quality academic preparation in high school. However, despite their level of pre-postsecondary education, the participants in this study all successfully graduated with a bachelor’s degree. Their individual goals and commitment were not determined by their pre-postsecondary education attributes. In fact, regardless of pre-postsecondary education attributes all study participants felt unprepared for college, had to learn to become
successful college students and required remediation coursework. Therefore, the concept of pre-postsecondary education attributes introduced by Tinto (1993) does not apply to the individuals in this particular study. Numerous other factors influenced the successful graduation rates of the Latino migrant study participants including building strategic networks, developing career interests early on and learning to negotiate between two worlds. Nonetheless, integration and affiliation was a significant factor in the success of the study participants, which not only participated in CAMP, but were also highly involved on campus programs and organizations all throughout college. However, participants involved themselves in campus programs and organizations when their culture was affirmed and they felt a sense of belonging. Participants in this study did not make a clean break from the communities and cultures in which they were raised in order to achieve academic success, but rather, used challenges as motivators to persevere and graduate.

Tierney et al.’s (2000) Theory of Cultural Integrity

Rather than viewing the academic world as a place into which students need to fit and assimilate or face intellectual and cultural suicide, Tierney et al. (2000) views the academic world as ripe for reinterpretation and restructuring (p. 13), for it is impossible to shed one’s cultural heritage (p. 96). Tierney et al.’s concept of cultural integrity establishes that, when college students are able to affirm their own cultural identities, their chances for graduation increase. By this, Tierney et al. do not suggest that the mere celebration of minority cultures on college campuses is sufficient to enable individual
students of color to overcome any socioeconomic obstacles they may face. Rather, if postsecondary institutions make meaningful efforts to affirm these students’ cultural identities, they stand to gain increased possibilities for ensuring success in college—in particular if the structure of the education these students receive also involves a commitment to high academic attainment, social goals and active learning. Tierney defines cultural integrity in the context of schooling as those school-based programs and teaching strategies that engage students' racial/ethnic backgrounds in a positive manner toward the development of more relevant pedagogies and learning activities (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Cultural integrity transfers the problem of educational inequity from the student to the institution and identifies the acknowledgement and celebration of a student’s cultural background as an essential element for academic success.

Although participants found a “home away from home” in CAMP and a sense of belonging in the institution, at times conflicting cultural values complicated their existence as students and interfered with their academic goals. While participants in this study were not required to commit cultural suicide to successfully graduate from college, they did have to learn to become successful college students, which required a change in perspective and a readjustment of past academic, social and cultural values. In fact, the concept of “reinventing yourself,” upon arrival to the institution was a success strategy used by participants in this study. Since few people knew them, they no longer had to be “the shy one,” “the one who sat [in] the back of the class and never asked questions,” or “the trouble maker.” As a result, participants struggled through feelings of disloyalty,
self-doubt and despair. At the same time, participants learned to negotiate between those two very distinctive worlds—college life and family life. Consequently, Tierney et al.’s (2000) concept of cultural integrity does not entirely apply to this study either. While not making a clean break from their culture as Tinto’s (1994) model suggests, participants did have to choose their battles and prioritize the cultural values that mattered the most to them and modified those that did not facilitate success in higher education. This strategy provided them with a second chance to start over, break old habits and become a better version of themselves.

*Stanton-Salazar’s (1997) Network Analytical Framework of Socialization*

Due to existing structures, there is an imbalanced distribution of power that results in forms of social capital being embedded in the social networks and social relationships of affluent youth (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011), while, in contrast, low-status minority youth depend on resources that are available through their limited affiliation networks (Cochran, 1990). Stanton-Salazar (1997) highlights how individuals (institutional agents) situated in social networks can impact students’ ability to obtain goals such as the successful completion of high school and going to college. Since low-status, minority students are unable to access forms of social capital from their immediate surroundings; social capital becomes a crucial asset that is obtained by institutional agents, who use the power of their positions to create access to forms of social capital (Kahne & Bailey, 1999; Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). The process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking are known to be quite different
across social classes for it requires commanding, negotiating, and managing many diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social relationships and personalities, and which usually entails skillfully negotiating—not always familiar skills to migrant students and other minority youth. The question posed by Stanton-Salazar (2001, 2004, 2011) is whether minority students have ever had this kind of “strategic education” in order to take advantage of these opportunities. Stanton-Salazar’s notion of socialization does not only directly address structural constraints, but takes the concept of accountability to a deeper level. It requires institutional agents to reflect upon their own practices and question the role one plays in facilitating, or gate-keeping opportunities and resources to these students.

The participants in this study attributed their success to the many individuals who inspired, mentored and guided them throughout college. They would not be where they are today, if they had not met people who saw potential in them and facilitated access to valuable social capital. Participants in this study were willing to go outside their comfort zone to access social capital, built a strategic network of caring institutional agents, and furthermore, identified empowerment agents. They also surrounded themselves with a strategic network of institutional agents that served various needs. They utilized staff, faculty and peer mentors to get answers to their questions, and learned techniques to make strategic decisions about college and their career. Even if this meant going against their culture, which taught them not to bother people, ask for help or become a burden, they utilized multiple agents to gain different perspectives and by doing so increasing
their opportunities. In particular, participants in this study sought out institutional agents who cared and presented the qualities embedded in “confianza en confianza,” (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). These qualities included candid relationships where the institutional agent had a genuine interest in seeing the students succeed. Furthermore, participants were influenced by empowerment agents who in addition to directly transmitting, or negotiating the transmission of resources for them, influenced their lives to strive toward changing the system for future generations. The concepts introduced by Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2001, 2011) were entirely relevant to the participant’s experiences in this study and played an instrumental role in their success. The new theoretical framework introduced in this study adopts Stanton-Salazar’s framework, yet differs in its emphasis on developing a model designed to deliver “strategic education,” to ensure this population learns the process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking early on in their college experience.

The New Theoretical Lens: The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students

Based on the study findings, this new framework proposes a conceptual foundation built around a set of progressions this population must overcome to successfully graduate. It concentrates on illuminating the resources and environments the institution can facilitate through academic and support-based programs and course curriculum strategies to make access to social capital and institutional support for this population more feasible. This conceptual foundation is organized in two phases: 1)
transition and 2) integration. *Transition* includes those progressions that assist this population of students in becoming successful and should be introduced during their first year of college. *Integration* introduces progressions that assist this group of students in becoming successful and should be introduced and reinforced all through their college journey, from second-year to graduation (see Table 10). Both phases, *transition and integration*, can be delivered through the development of a course curriculum using the progressions identified from the study findings as a foundation for the instruction. This course would be offered each year of college and adapted to the needs most relevant to each cohort. In addition, a support program would provide supplemental services such as support groups, one-on-one counseling and organized activities/events relevant to their unique needs. Table 11 provides suggestions to approaching each progression: by either using 1) course curriculum, 2) a support program or 3) both. While one form is being recommended for practical reasons, all progressions should be reinforced by both the course curriculum and the support program.
Table 10

The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Latino Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSITION (YEAR 1)</th>
<th>INTEGRATION (YEAR 2+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a “home away from home” environment for all students</td>
<td>The assumption that “you should know it all after the first year”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of inadequacy from remediation placement</td>
<td>College as the “only option” to break the cycle of poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning the tools to be a successful college student</td>
<td>Passing the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE—now WPJ) as a major “milestone”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinventing “yourself while staying true to yourself”</td>
<td>Developing career interests begins “right now”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Education—the extent of accessing social capital</td>
<td>Turning challenges into motivators—the positive influence of migrant life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the chain—being a first-generation college “family”</td>
<td>Discovering lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating between two worlds—college life and family</td>
<td>Building a strategic network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic cultural expectations—developing sensible judgment</td>
<td>Identifying “caring” institutional agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of “survivor guilt” on students</td>
<td>Identifying Empowerment Agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of the “Imposter Phenomenon” on students</td>
<td>The fear of going into the real world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

Recommended Forms of Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESSIONS: PHASE 1</th>
<th>COURSE CURRICULUM</th>
<th>SUPPORT PROGRAM</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A “home away from home” environment for all students</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of inadequacy from remediation placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning the tools to being a successful college student</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinventing “oneself while staying true to oneself”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching strategic education: the extent of accessing social capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the chain: being a first-generation college “family”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating between two worlds: college life and family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic cultural expectations: developing sensible judgment</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact of “survivor guilt” on students</td>
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<tr>
<td>The impact of the “Imposter Phenomenon” on students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESSIONS: PHASE 2</th>
<th>COURSE CURRICULUM</th>
<th>SUPPORT PROGRAM</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The assumption that “you should know it all after the first year”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College as the “only option” to break the cycle of poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE)—now WPJ as a major “milestone”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing career interests begins “right now”</td>
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</table>
Table 11 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESSIONS: PHASE 2</th>
<th>COURSE CURRICULUM</th>
<th>SUPPORT PROGRAM</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turning challenges into motivators— the positive influence of migrant life</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovering lifelong learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a strategic network</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying “caring” Institutional Agents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Empowerment Agents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fear of going into the real world</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are the recommended progressions based on the study findings:

**PHASE 1: Transition (first-year of college)**

*A “Home Away from Home” environment for all students.* One of the most important retention tools is creating a “home away from home” environment, or a sense of belonging for migrant and seasonal farmworker students, through community based activities and engagement in campus life. Most importantly, an environment where a student’s cultural identity is reaffirmed while they also learn the necessary skills to become successful college students.

*Feelings of inadequacy from remediation placement.* At Sacramento State, 98% of migrant and seasonal farmworker students participating in the CAMP program require at least one semester of remediation coursework in either English or math. According to the findings, the experience of taking remediation courses made them feel inadequate and not “like a real college student.” Feelings of inadequacy must be acknowledged to ensure
students understand the function of remediation in the CSU, its implications, and the reality and fact that half of CSU students, English Learners or not, are also in need of remediation upon arrival to college.

*Tools to being a successful college student.* An introductory course (e.g., freshmen seminar, life skills course) designed to address each progression found in this study to directly impact this unique population while building skills necessary for college success (e.g., such as time-management, note-taking).

*Reinventing oneself while staying true to oneself.* College symbolically and physically removes every student from their past. For some, this departure from high school life provides a personal opportunity for a fresh start by reinventing themselves. The participants in this study found college as an ideal time to change for the better. Without requiring a “clean break,” facilitating this opportunity can provide a second chance to start over, change old habits and become a better version of themselves.

*Teaching strategic education: the extent of accessing social capital.* Students who possess social capital that does not align with the institution must negotiate their way through college in a much more difficult way (Phelan et al., 1998; Gee, 1989). The strategies necessary to negotiate through the institutional culture and access the necessary social capital to succeed in college must be consistently taught and opportunities for exercising these skills must be provided.

*Breaking the chain: being the first-generation college “family.”* Most Latino college graduates attribute their success to the support and influence of their families,
particularly their parents (Araujo, 2006). Family occupies a central position in the education of the Latino students (Zalaquett, 2006) and institutions must make an effort to incorporate parents into the college life of their children. Activities that incorporate parents should be scheduled throughout a student’s college journey to present ample opportunities for students to share their new experiences with their parents, and for parents to leave with a better understanding of what their children are going through and how they can better support them. This type of activity values the importance of family in a culture where family values are precedence while promoting involvement throughout the college years.

Negotiating between two worlds: college student and family. Students’ competence in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a stepping stone to further education, create productive work experiences, and live a meaningful life (Phelan et al., 1993). The participants in this study, as introduced in The Student’s Multiple World Study, Phelan et al. (1993) described the struggle to negotiate between two opposite worlds, that of a student and that of a member of their families and communities. These experiences must be discussed, acknowledged and supported, for students to be successful.

Cultural expectations: developing sensible judgment. The tradition of family obligations sometimes gets in the way, as parents do not always understand that placing too many demands on their children takes them away from studying and other potential
life altering opportunities such as internships and extra-curricular activities. College life requires student initiation, independence, and self-monitoring and can be challenging and stressful for students raised in a communal versus an individualistic environment. In this study, the participants faced the dilemma of having academic demands, yet feeling obligated by cultural assumptions and unrealistic expectations. These experiences must be discussed, acknowledged and supported for students to be successful.

*The impact of survivor guilt on students.* The participants in this study felt guilty about having the opportunity to attend college when their parents or other family members did not. “Survivor guilt” refers to the negative feelings that can arise from having succeeded and escaped adverse conditions when close others (e.g., parents, siblings) have not (Wray, 2010). Some felt guilty for being inside an air conditioned building all day, for having access to a range of resources on campus and experiencing opportunities for personal growth that their families back home did not. These experiences must be discussed, acknowledged and supported for students to be successful, for if ignored, they have the potential to lead to adverse academic and psychological consequences.

*The impact of the imposter phenomenon on students.* Students with relatively high levels of traditionally valued social capital are more likely to see college attendance and degree attainment as the norm, and are likely to feel an “entitlement” to higher education. On the contrary, Latino migrant students, having overcome major adversities to become the first in their families to go to college can experience feelings of phoniness
or as if they have fooled others into believing they are college, worthy when in their reality they are not. The feeling of "faking it" is most common among first generation college students and is referred to by scholars as the imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes as cited by Ewing et al., 1996). Suffering from the imposter phenomenon is more serious than the typical vague feeling of not fitting in that many students experience during the beginning of their college education. These experiences must be discussed, acknowledged and supported for students to be successful, for if ignored, it can lead to very destructive habits of mind, such as believing one got into the university by luck or mistake.

*PHASE 2: Integration (second-year and beyond)*

*The assumption that you should know it all after the first year.* The attention and guidance students receive in CAMP is significantly reduced after their first year of college. The findings in this study describe an overall assumption that students spend the first year of college learning the ropes and should therefore be successful in subsequent years. On the contrary, the participants shared that in some ways they needed the most guidance after the first year, once the freshmen momentum wears off. Participants shared that they felt uncomfortable seeking help and instead tried to find answers by researching through peers and reading the course catalog. Providing support services proactively beyond the first year of college will address this assumption.

*College as the “only option” to break the cycle of poverty.* The opportunities an education offers in terms of better paying jobs is the most significant reason migrant and
seasonal farmworker students attend college. For this population, college is not merely an option, but rather, the only way to break the cycle of poverty in their families. Facilitating opportunities to revisit the reasons why students are attending college can provide the ongoing motivations needed throughout the college journey.

*Passing the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) as a major “milestone.”* Now called the Writing Proficiency for Juniors (WPJ)—to take upper division coursework and ultimately to graduate, students must pass the WPE. For migrant students who are first in their families to go to college and predominantly English learners, passing this exam is considered a significant milestone. Participants felt insecure about their language capabilities and dominance of the English language all through college. Therefore, fear of failing the WPE was a confirmation of their everlasting uncertainty about their college qualifications. For all participants in this study, passing the WPE was an unforgettable accomplishment. Consequently, this fear must be discussed, acknowledged and supported. In addition, preparation seminars as well as a reward system should be in place to acknowledge the completion of this milestone. Perhaps, students who fail the WPE must also be provided with some type of support to address potential feelings of despair and giving up on their college aspirations.

*Developing career interests begins now.* According to the findings, being able to see themselves in their field of study or connecting their major to a particular job was a strategy that helped Latino migrant students succeed in college. Furthermore, when students were able to gain work experience that was compatible with their abilities,
interests and values, then their overall level of satisfaction with college increased. As indicated below, the participants in this study attributed their success to developing career interests early on. Providing opportunities for internships, as early as the sophomore year, will provide students with a sense of purpose, a preview of what life after college might be like and a network of professionals outside the university who are also invested in their success.

*Turning challenges into motivators: The positive influence of migrant life.* Like many students, the participants in this study experienced many challenges throughout their undergraduate experience. Nonetheless, regardless of the hardships, all made a conscious choice to see challenges as opportunities and a greater reason to stay in college and “keep the fight going.” Participants in this study demonstrated a high level of optimism, self-confidence, openness and adventurous spirit even under the worst circumstances. Latino migrant students must have opportunities to share these experiences and utilize resiliency as a way to empower each other to access and utilize those assets already abundant in them.

*Discovering lifelong learning.* The accounts from the study participants described college as an introduction to lifelong learning. The participants in this study felt college had not only given them a degree, but also encouraged their desire for ongoing personal growth and development. Professional development seminars and conferences can assist in developing lifelong learning.
Building a strategic network. The process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking are known to be quite different across social classes for it requires commanding, negotiating, and managing many diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social relationships and personalities, and which usually entails skillfully negotiating—not always familiar skills to migrant students and other minority youth. The participants in this study established strategic networks of institutional agents that gave them access to the resources necessary to succeed in college. Building on the skills introduced in the first-year of college and facilitating opportunities for students to meet potential agents will assist in building a strategic network.

Identifying caring institutional agents. It is institutional agents that serve as keepers and gatekeepers for student success, for they have the potential to facilitate access to greater institutional resources. Stanton-Salazar (2010) also describes “confianza en confianza” (bonds of trust) as a site of trust, respect, mentorship, teaching and learning, legitimacy, reliance and commitments necessary for a transformative agency (p. 133). To form caring relationships, agents need to understand students’ lives outside of school (Lipsitz, 1995; Noddings, 1984) and agents must have an “antenna out to capture the ‘unsaid’ in students’ loves, for caring is never formulaic (Altenbaugh, Engel, & Martin, 1995; Noddings, 1992). Identifying caring institutional agents can be facilitated by creating assignments that require students to interact with potential agents (e.g., conducting an interview). In addition, the support program can screen for potential caring agents and provide organized networking opportunities for students.
Identifying empowerment agents. Empowerment social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2011) is constituted in terms of forms of institutional support provided by agents who are motivated to go against the system, and to enable the empowerment of low-status individuals in need. Empowerment agents exist in the real world but they are exceptionally rare. Empowerment agents in contrast with institutional agents, not only understand the power of institutional support and social capital in the lives of youth; they carry a vision of a more just, humanistic, and democratic society, deeply committed to an enlightened and fair distribution of societal resources, and to dismantling the structures of class, racial, and gender oppression (p. 1096). Identifying empowerment agents can be facilitated by creating assignments that require students to interact with potential agents (e.g., conducting an informational interview). In addition, the support program can screen for potential empowerment agents and organize networking opportunities for students.

The fear of going into the real world. Minimum strategies are utilized to assist students to make the transition from college to “the real world.” The participants in this study shared a common fear of being asked “so what are you going to do after college?” because most did not have a definite plan. Some participants began to realize that the real world did not match their expectations and abilities and suddenly graduation became terrifying to them. Many of the progressions already covered such as “developing career interests,” and “building a strategic network,” will diminish the fear of going into the real world, experienced by many Latino migrant students of going into the real world.
Nonetheless, this fear must be discussed, acknowledged and supported. In addition, career seminars and professional alumni can assist in providing an overview of the expectations in the real world.

As strategies to address the college success of students are created, the students’ total environment must be considered, in particular, their unique background, conditions and experiences. Additionally, in looking at college success, it is important to understand how negative encounters can lead students to withdraw, while positive encounters cause students to invest in their college experience. By choosing successful graduates as participants, this study was able to gain valuable knowledge of the negative encounters and positive experiences of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students. This new knowledge facilitated the creation of a new conceptual framework: The Culturally Adaptive Navigation Model for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker College Students.

The introduction of a new conceptual framework was necessary because, while various existing theories consider the characteristics of low-income, first-generation, underserved minority students, not a single one was created with the unique characteristics of Latino migrant students in mind. This theoretical framework identifies significant progressions Latino migrant students must overcome to be successful, proposes an adaptive model of implementation and by doing so, transfers the responsibility of academic success from the student to the institution. The ultimate goal of this theoretical framework is to invite administrators, faculty, policy makers and other stakeholders to step away from deficit thinking, take responsibility for creating an academic environment structured to support
already successful students and embrace a new conceptual way of thinking that adapts to the student and creates an environment of success for this growing, capable and often invisible population.

Recommendations for Action

Leaders in institutions of higher education are being called upon to increase graduation rates, provide exemplary services and academic programs, and meet the expansive needs of the local community. These tasks are particularly difficult when revenue lines to higher education are insufficient and unstable. While institutions of higher education do not have an obligation to work miracles, they do have an obligation to try new approaches when the old ones are not working (Esch, 2009). In this study, participants were asked for their recommendations on how to ensure more Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students graduate from Sacramento State. The interview data collected from this research, along with the researcher’s knowledge acquired through the literature review and prior program experience, are used to make recommendations at the program and institutional level. This section uses the learning objectives of the Sacramento State Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Program as a framework to organize the recommendations (see Figure 2). The learning objectives consist of the doctoral program consist of: (1) Developing an understanding of transformational leadership and its impacts, (2) The application of research to policy and practice and (3) The use of data to drive decision making. For implementation purposes,
each recommendation made in this section requires the application of all three learning objectives. However, recognizing the need for pragmatism, the recommendations are listed under the learning objective most likely necessary to initiate its implementation. In addition, many of the recommendations in this section serve to reinforce existing recommendations made by the Sacramento State Graduation Initiative Strategic Plan Report (CSU, 2011b). Being cognizant of the fiscal climate in the state and in particular in the CSU system, Table 12 serves to estimate the potential costs (low/average/high) involved with each recommendation.

**Figure 2. The Inter-Connection of the Big Three**
Table 12

*Implied Costs of Implementation of each Recommendation for Action*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Low Cost</th>
<th>Moderate Cost</th>
<th>High Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider the expansion of the CAMP first-year experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a systematic plan to recruit back CAMP students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain strong involvement in the alignment of K-12 with higher education</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reframe the concept of remediation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early outreach to target middle school students</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a CAMP alumni mentoring program</td>
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**Transformational Leadership**

According to Friedman (2004), transactional leadership is stability oriented whereas transformational leadership is innovative-oriented. Kouzes and Posner (1996) further identify five types of behaviors that are part of transformational leadership: challenging the process (searching for opportunities and experimenting); inspiring a shared vision (motivating people toward a vision); enabling others to act (fostering collaboration and self development); modeling the way (setting an example); and encouraging (celebrating achievements). Any new initiative requires buy-in, strategic practices, and building leadership capacity. Transformational leadership has the potential
to change the very culture of the institution by helping it adapt to environmental changes (Eyal & Kark, 2004). Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) view transformational leadership as higher order change, in that followers are encouraged to take on more responsibility while contributing to organizational change and innovation. In times of fewer financial incentives, transformational leadership can inspire other members of the organization by increasing their awareness and understanding of commonly desired goals. In transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation is used to encourage others to challenge the status quo and take risks—all pre-requisites for the implementation of change. Creating the conditions to support the degree completion of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State requires transformational, and not transactional leadership. It requires the work of leaders with strong conviction in the moral righteousness of addressing the problem while involving diverse beliefs, needs, interests and values of all stakeholders.

**Recommendation #1: Consider the expansion of the CAMP first-year experience**

More money should be invested in supporting programs that provide assistance beyond the first year. The same support we get in the first year of college should be available throughout all four or six years of college. Recruiting and giving students a nice welcome is not enough. We need guidance and support until the day we graduate.” – Andres

Students’ competency in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a stepping stone to further education, obtain productive work experience, and live a meaningful life (Phelan et al., 1993). The statements told by the study participants
describe an overall perception by the university that students spend the first year of college learning the ropes and should therefore be prepared to be successful in subsequent years. On the contrary, the participants in this study shared that in some ways they needed the most guidance after the first year, once the momentum of the first year wore off. In other words, students experience important transitions throughout college and not only during their first year of college. At Sacramento State, the first year retention rate of CAMP students is 90% (CSUS Office of Institutional Research, 2010) and the positive impact of expanding these first-year services can have on the graduation rates of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students could be significant. Currently, the program is only funded to provide first year services. Expanding first year services to subsequent years requires creating a common goal, implementing innovative ideas to serve more students, and fostering partnerships throughout the institution. Once the logistics are established, it will be important to consider a model specifically designed to address the different transitions that follow the first year experience, including issues beyond academics. According to the Closing the Achievement Gap Report (CSU, 2011a) prepared by the Sacramento State Campus Educational Equity Committee (CEEC), students experience the following stages throughout their college years (p. 19):

1. Pre-Enrollment: *Fear of the unknown.* Students become skeptical of attending the university when they lack adequate information in regards to academics, housing, and financial aid. When students feel they don’t have these items established early on the easiest way to overcome this is to stick to what they
are familiar with. For example: stay back home or attend a community college were they feel more secure.

2. First Year: Exposure to independent lifestyles/Homesickness & Remediation: Student who move away from home have this new independent lifestyle. They are able to make their own rules and can easily get distracted with the social scene. On the contrary, some students miss their homes and their security from their families. They are un-motivated and just want to be back home. In addition students who come in deficient in English and Math under E.O. 665 have to complete remediation within one year. Some students are unable to do so and are dismissed from the university.

3. Second Year: Transitional services: Students who participated in a first year program/s may feel as if they don’t have the same support their second year as they did as a freshman. They feel as if they have to let go and stand on their own. Sometimes students are unaware of the many resources they really have, but are not bridged towards them.

4. Third Year: Expectations from family & peers: Students at this stage can be undecided on what major or career path to take. They are scared to change their minds because they have family and peers pressuring them and asking “when are you going to graduate?” so they can go into the world of work.

5. Fourth Year & Fifth Year: Lack of Career Planning: Students who are getting close to graduating are not always aware of the career services offered. Such
as internship opportunities, field studies and are getting ready to graduate with no experience on their resumes.

6. Sixth Year: Lack of Proper Advising: Some six year students have taken many courses in areas that do not fall under general education requirements or their major. They need proper advising in order to graduate. They need guidance to get to the finish line.

7. Post Graduation: Adult Responsibilities: Many at this level are not only trying to balance full time work to make ends meet, but also have family and personal life. It becomes difficult managing grad school if you have these life roles and responsibilities that need to be performed.

In the literature, Tinto (1993) presents one form of integration into postsecondary education that may work for some students. Nonetheless, his model has been widely criticized for discarding students’ cultural backgrounds as irrelevant to their successful collegiate experience and supposing that holding on to cultural background is detrimental to a successful collegiate transition and integration. On the other hand, Tierney et al.’s (2000) concept of cultural integrity establishes that when college students are able to affirm their own cultural identities, their chances for graduation increase. Based on the findings regarding strategies used by participants to succeed, the expansion of first-year services will need to include support that encourages students’ positive reinvention of themselves, while strengthening existing cultural wealth and reinforcing cultural identity (Yosso, 2005). The expansion must also include the use of support groups, mentors,
counselors and professionals that can help students turn challenges into motivators, negotiate between the multiple worlds they are part of (Phelan et al., 1993), manage cultural expectations and conflicting values (Stanton-Salazar, 2004), and if applicable overcome conditions such as survivor guilt (Wray, 2010) and the Imposter Phenomenon (Berger, 2000a) experienced by the study participants. Most students who depart college without a degree state personal reasons as the cause for leaving (Engle & Tinto, 2008). The conditions experienced by study participants, while considered by them as very personal, significantly influenced their undergraduate experience and persistence in college. When students are unable to identify themselves with the institution, affirm their own cultural identity, and cope with the strains associated with trying to navigate an institution built on dissimilar ideologies, college completion becomes unattainable.

According to Stanton-Salazar (2004) students who possess social capital that does not align with the institution must negotiate their manner through college in a much more difficult way. As stated in more detail in Chapter 2, strategic education consists of commanding, negotiating, and managing many diverse (and sometimes conflicting) social relationships and personalities. The expansion of the CAMP first-year program to subsequent years must teach the strategic education not always acquired by migrant students at home, such as teaching students to reach out to others for help, working in groups rather than independently, rewarding involvement in a range of campus activities, facilitating informal interactions and exposing students to opportunities for them to establish strategic relationships. The study participants also shared a common fear of
going into the real world after graduation. Some participants began to realize that the real world did not match their expectations and abilities and suddenly graduation became terrifying. As stated by some participants, “some students get another degree just to avoid going into the real world,” and the most dreading question a senior can get is, “so what are you going to do after college?” This level of strategic education is critical to assist students in declaring a major and developing career interests early through involvement in career related work-study and internship opportunities to prevent or mitigate this level of fear. Most importantly, the expansion plan must be created to each individual student using a holistic approach to address his or her own type of obstacles on the pathway towards degree completion.

**Recommendation #2: Create a systematic plan to recruit back CAMP students**

I was one of six students who came to Sac State from my hometown…only two of us graduated. I have no idea what happened to the other four. – Osvaldo

As the number of people entering college and universities began to rise in the 1950s, the number of dropouts increased as well (Engle & Tinto, 2008). The literature indicates that students leave college for a variety of reasons including social or personal conflicts, financial problems and mismatched academic expectations (Engle & Tinto, 2008). At most institutions of higher education, some students voluntarily withdraw while others are dismissed due to academic failure. Furthermore, some students temporarily leave college, some transfer to another institution and others drop out permanently. According to a new study by the American Institute for Research (Gil & Bardack, 2010), college dropouts cost the economy at least $4.5 billion in lost earnings
and federal and state income tax revenue every year. The same report found that among
the more than 1.1 million students who started college in 2002, almost 500,000 did not
graduate within six years. Those students "lost a total of approximately $3.8 billion in
income in 2010 alone," which "would have generated $566 million in federal income tax
revenue, while states would have collected more than $164 million in state income taxes”
(p. 4). But in addition to the financial benefits of education (e.g., increased labor
productivity, decreased unemployment higher purchase power), investing in human
capital does more than just create a healthy economy; it creates a better society.
Educated parents become better parents, informed voters, more appreciative of art and
culture and make better food choices—therefore good health is an important component
of human capital (Wheeler, 2002). From a cost-benefit analysis perspective, investing in
increasing graduation rates is a wise economic decision for the state and the nation.
Therefore another avenue to address this economic and moral issue is to create a
systematic plan to recruit back students who departed without a college degree, in
particular those near completion.

Whereas recommendation #1 requires the collaboration among campus partners,
the reorganization of existing program services and the addition of resources to meet the
increase in student traffic generated from servicing students throughout all four to six
years of college, implementing recommendation #2 would only require an adjustment to
existing services and minimal costs. Currently, students who depart without a college
degree vanish from the institution. An automatic response includes a phone call and
letter inviting the student to return to campus for an academic advising session and/or exit interview immediately after the student fails to enroll in a subsequent semester. Not following up on students who depart without a degree is not only an ineffective approach, but it portrays a lack of concern on behalf of the institution and CAMP for the student’s future. Research shows that students who are not progressing are less likely to seek intervention on their own, also referred to non-adaptive help seeking (Alexitch & Newman, 2006). Therefore, proactive follow up by CAMP and the institution can make the difference for these students of returning to college or not. In this follow-up, academic advising sessions, a counselor can present a structured “plan to return” by means of re-enrollment or using the community college as a viable option. Since the community college may be the only means to return, it is also important to help students acknowledge and understand the stigmas (sometimes their own) associated with the community college and overcome them. Research shows that many students deem community college to be a “dumb school only for students who could not get into a CSU or UC” (Witt, Wattenbarger, Gollattschek, & Suppiger, 1994, p. 2). Today, more than ever, community colleges must be portrayed as a wise path for students who have been disqualified from a four-year institution to regain access to the baccalaureate. In addition to providing the students a “path to return,” following-up on these students can provide the institution valuable data on the causes for departure. When considering the generational and structural changes faced by institutions of higher learning in the recent years, Tinto’s (1994) model of departure does not suffice as a recent explanation of the
departure process. Proactively reaching out to students who have left the campus without a college degree is a step toward increasing the college graduation rate.

Educational Policy and Practice

The California Master Plan of Higher Education was drafted for a demographic population that has drastically changed. In the 1960s, the K-12 school system prepared students well for college and the workforce. Then, only a fifth of college-age Californians went to college (Esch, 2009). Today, California’s population is very diverse. Moreover, the K-12 public school system and institutions of higher education have not been able to adapt to the new and increasing needs. Therefore, as the value of the high school diploma continues to decline and industry jobs require college degrees, an increasingly diverse pool of students will enroll in college requiring major reform to adapt to the new sociopolitical conditions of the state. Policy plays a leading role in the finance and function of higher education. The revenue sources for the CSU are generated from federal, state, local, campus, lottery funds and tuition/fees—the state General Fund being the largest funding source. In California, the revenue system is highly dependent upon personal income taxes, corporate taxes, and sales and use taxes. The income tax is not a dependable source of revenue because it relies on a narrow slice of taxpayers. This means that in good years, the state has plenty of money, however, in down years when most wealthy people report major losses, the funds to the state are significantly reduced. Moreover, compared to the rest of the nation, California relies less on a relatively stable
revenue source such as property taxes due to the limitations from Proposition 13\textsuperscript{11} (Brown, 2011). The state constitution, state education code, Master Plan for Higher Education, state system policies, local school board policies, campus-level policies all guide decision making in the CSU. It is also important to consider the multiple stakeholders involved in policy making: the public and private sectors and elected officials at the highest level of government—some who may have an interest in maintaining the status quo. Therefore, implementation of change must come with a degree of knowledge of the federal and state level policies that govern decision-making in the education arena.

**Recommendation #3:** *Maintain high involvement in the Alignment of K-12 with higher education*

I was an honor student in high school who took geometry, algebra I & II, and trigonometry, I also took all of the science courses like chemistry and physics and yet I struggled. When I came to college, I could not pass the placement test and needed a year of remediation courses. It was very discouraging. I now realize there was no alignment between what I learned in high school with what I had to know for college, the standards were clearly different. I thought to myself “what the heck?” – Olivia

The United States has two separate education systems that, for generations have operated in relative isolation from one another. The K-12 and postsecondary systems have different cultures, governance, finance, and accountability mechanisms. Academic standards, expectations, and ways of measuring student progress vary widely between the two sectors. Due partly to this lack of alignment, many students—in particular low-

\textsuperscript{11} Passed in 1978, limits property tax increases on any given property to no more than 2% per year as long as the property is not sold.
income, minority, and other underserved students—fall between the cracks at different stages along the educational pipeline (Pathway to College Network, 2005). The economic and social costs of this lack of alignment between K-12 and postsecondary institutions is staggering. Fully half of the nation’s college-bound high school graduates do not meet placement standards for college-level work: 60% of students enrolling in two-year colleges require remedial coursework, as do 40% of students entering four-year colleges (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). One of the major issues found in the literature concerns the multiple and confusing assessments, disconnected curriculum, lack of longitudinal K-16 data, few K-16 accountability mechanisms, student, parent, and K-12 educator understandings—and misunderstandings—about college such as curricular requirements, placements tests and cost of tuition (Offenstein, Moore, & Shulock, 2010).

As so clearly articulated above by Olivia, the study participants were most directly affected by the lack of alignment in K-12 with higher education.

Alignment of the educational systems requires the re-conception of current structures and practices, as well as the development of new systemic approaches to better link the two educational sectors. For many years now, California has worked to align standards with assessments in K-12. While this recommendation is not a new idea and its implementation is complex, it reinforces the importance to stay at the forefront of the conversation between the K-12 and institutions of higher education. In 2004, the CSU System, in collaboration with the State Board of Education (SBE) and the California Department of Education (CDE), implemented the testing of 11th graders through the
Early Assessment Program to provide a signal of college readiness prior to the student’s senior year. The Early Assessment Program is often cited as a model for how a state can take steps toward aligning K-12 with university expectations (Carter, 2010). In addition, in 2009, 48 states, California included, signed a memorandum of agreement committing to a state-led process called the Common Core State Standards Initiative to produce a set of K-12 standards in the foundational subjects of English language arts and mathematics designed to prepare high school graduates for college. More recently, in 2010, the Common Core State Standards were released with new tests, curricula, teacher training, and textbooks that will all be part of switching to new Common Core standards in math and English language arts by 2015 (Carter, 2010). Increasing the graduation rate of college students requires an alignment of expectations between the K-12 system and institutions of higher education. In addition to recommending the maintenance of high involvement in the alignment of K-12 with higher education, this section also recognizes the active role taken by the CSU in staying at the forefront of this issue as EAP and Common Core is fully implemented as a common practice across the state.

Recommendation #4: Reframe the concept of remediation

Being in remediation courses my freshmen year was very discouraging. When most students were worried about passing physics and calculus I was hoping to pass my remediation courses…when I would hear these conversations I would realize how behind I was in comparison to other students and felt like I was not a true college student. It reminded me of the fact that I was not born here; English was not my first language. I felt like I was taking ESL classes in college. – Osvaldo
From the late 1800s to the present day, remedial/developmental education has been described as an “embarrassment” (Brier, 1984, p. 3) to colleges and universities that offer such courses. The *Yale Report of 1828*, a document intended to reaffirm the role of postsecondary institutions to provide a classical and not a practical education, intimated that not all individuals would have the intellectual acumen to engage in this kind of training. Today, the debate between who pays for remediation and in what type of institutions should offer remedial education along with policies such as Executive Order 665, (requiring students to remediate within 1 year or risk disqualification), portrays remediation students as a burden to the institution. The negative beliefs about remediation can have a profound effect on the confidence level of students taking these classes. Furthermore, at the national level, the contentious political issue of remediation has encouraged several states including New York, to remove developmental or remedial courses from their public four-year universities and to redirect students in need of remediation into community colleges (Bettinger, & Long, 2004; Kozeracki, 2002; Soliday, 2002). Much of the fear of remedial students can be traced to the value in academia of “being smart” (Carter, 2010). In the culture of academia, simply being admitted to or employed by a selective institution is a mark of individual smartness. In a similar way, students who are placed in remediation courses are considered dumb or not smart enough (Carter, 2010). Several studies have considered the effects of the stigma associated with remedial placement as detrimental to college completion. In this study,
all participants required remediation. The above quote by Osvaldo describes the way this experience made participants feel inadequate and not “like a real college student.”

In addition to a need to address the institution’s suppressed and overt negative attitudes about remediation, the word itself can create a social stigma. Derrida (1876) rejected the idea that language is used to represent an objective reality by focusing on the indeterminacy of language. Rather than viewing language as a representational system, Derrida argued that language and word meanings are constantly in flux and difficult to control. In regards to the words used to refer to courses offered to students who need to build the skills necessary for college preparatory coursework, including “remediation,” “developmental education” and “basic skills,” the words do not have a fixed definition; instead, their meanings are unsettled and open for interpretation. And since word meanings can be negotiated rather than fixed, they can be manipulated in ways that maintain advantages of power and status. In institutions of higher learning, belief systems should be grounded to recognize the potential for growth rather than a student-deficit framework. Unfortunately, students recognize this is not the case.

In a college or university environment, deconstruction entails close scrutiny of the dominant assumptions of organizational members and critical efforts to delegitimize hierarchies that privilege certain ideas over others (Bess & Dee, 2008). These efforts entail “harsh questioning of universities and colleges about their reward structures, the purposes and practices in which they are engaged, and the claims of those now in positions of power and responsibility to their right of office” (p. 133). In the case of
remediation, institutions should question why college level courses are considered more prestigious than remediation courses: Why are part-time faculty more likely to teach remediation courses than full-time faculty? And why are students embarrassed to admit that they need remediation or are taking a remediation course? In other words, perception creates reality. Porter and Samovar (1991) state, “what we talk about; how we talk about it; what we see, attend to, or ignore; how we think’ and what we think about are influenced by our culture…[and] help to shape, define, and perpetuate our culture” (p. 21). Hutcheon (1988) also notes, there are no “natural” hierarchies. Hierarchies are socially constructed, and power relations are deeply implicated in the ongoing reproduction of status differences that “serve to put other ideas and people on the margin or excluded them entirely” (Boland, 1995, p. 527). Given the current national focus on college completion rates and the high number of students in need of remediation, institutions of higher education must consider the hidden beliefs of their institution and how these may be affecting student’s self-esteem, persistence and degree completion.

Data-driven Decision Making

Since its inception, higher education has enjoyed the benefits of public investment and was heralded as an engine of enlightenment, social mobility, cultural understanding and economic development. Yet, in recent years, the public has experienced a breach of this trust and has grown increasingly dissatisfied with the direction of higher education due to graduation rates and student indebtedness (Leveille, 2006). As educators,
government officials, and other stakeholders embrace the agenda of increasing the number of college graduates, they have come to understand the need for better data on student outcomes to guide the improvement efforts of institutions, systems, and states (Burnett, 1964). In the past, institutions of higher education developed data systems to meet reporting requirements and to support budget allocation, rather than to inform decisions about institutional improvement around student success. The ability to answer questions about what works to increase graduation depends on strong data systems that collect the relevant information and make it available to various stakeholders in the education enterprise in accessible and understandable ways (Hansen, 2006). The context in which higher education function is changing dramatically and in consideration of the current and potential role of accountability, the higher education community should take into account these dramatic changes. According to the Initiative on Public Accountability for Student Learning in Higher Education (Leveille, 2006), universities face several critical challenges when it comes to accountability: (1) Maintaining high quality within, and access to, postsecondary education, despite declines in funding; (2) Meeting growing enrollment demands from an increasingly diverse population; (3) Responding to private sector needs for sophisticated and skilled workers; and (4) Addressing public skepticism about quality and costs (Leveille, 2006). Data driven decision making (DDDM) refers to a systematic way of collecting and analyzing data to guide a range of decisions to help improve the success of students and schools (Burke & Greene, 2007). Through a process of analysis and summarization, colleges can convert
information into actionable knowledge by using judgment to prioritize information and weighting the relative merit of possible solutions (Halverson, Grigg, Pritchett, & Thomas, 2007). This knowledge can be used to support different types of decisions and maximize resources that might include early outreach to target middle school students and establishing an alumni mentoring program—as recommended in this final section.

**Recommendation #5: Early outreach to target middle school Latino migrant students**

CAMP should have a more active role with students in elementary and middle school. Students need to learn about college early enough to feel motivated about doing well in high school. If students have hope in the future being better than the present, they are more willing to work hard [in school]. – Olivia

Research implies that Latino migrant students are often poorly informed or misinformed about postsecondary application processes and opportunities. The lack of information usually includes not being aware of the required coursework for college, the application process, the cost of tuition, and the availability of financial aid among others (Romanowski, 2003; Salinas & Franquiz, 2004). To increase the number of Latino migrant students in college there must be preparation and support for students starting no later than junior high school. The seed must be planted early enough to motivate students to make an academic effort to be academically ready for college, especially since the math track to college starts with eighth-grade algebra. Early outreach programs allow middle school students and their parents to understand and experience a glimpse of college life. This recommendation can be implemented through one-day fieldtrips, one-week and two-week residential programs. While fieldtrips are largely already implemented throughout college campuses, the goal of this recommendation is to propose
that all junior high school students attend at least one college fieldtrip at some point
during junior high. This is important for several reasons. Typically, college fieldtrip
opportunities in K-12 are reserved for a selected group of overachieving students already
on the college track. But what if all students had this opportunity? Is it possible that
visiting a college campus could help students visualize themselves as future college
students early enough to serve as a motivator to pursue college and take the necessary
early steps to be academically eligible?

Each year, CAMP hosts over 500 students at Sacramento State during one-day
fieldtrips. The fieldtrip program includes workshops on college admission requirements,
housing and financial aid, a student panel and a campus tour. In addition, the CAMP
brings approximately 150 students to Sacramento State to participate in one-week and
two-week residential programs. The residential programs focus on strengthening math
and English skills with the following topics embedded throughout the curriculum: (1)
college preparedness; (2) self advocacy and leadership; (3) cultural and history; (4)
theatre and the arts; (5) recreation and sports; and (6) STEM (science, technology,
engineering and mathematics). Overall, the curriculum is intended to help students
transition from middle school to high school, and eventually to college. Career
exploration panels and speakers encourage students to begin thinking about a potential
career. In addition to systemic knowledge, students are guided in building an academic
plan, which includes coursework required for college, establishing strong study and time
management skills and becoming familiar with existing resources.
Students also learn the differences between community colleges, CSU/UC/private universities and technical schools. To provide an authentic campus-life experience, students are housed in the dorms, and eat their meals in the dining commons and campus eateries. While further data is needed to assess the effectiveness of these programs, the existing research on similar two-week residential programs indicates that program participants apply to four-year institutions at a higher rate than non-participants with similar academic and school background characteristics (Nunez, 2009a). At Sacramento State, the cost of the one-day program is approximately $30 per student, the one-week program $1,200 per student and the two-week program $2,300 per student. In this case, the enhanced use of data can provide a cost benefit analysis to determine the return on investment to ensure the outcome is advancing the goal of increasing college completion.

**Recommendation #6: Establish a CAMP alumni mentor program**

Instead of asking alumni to donate money, they should ask alumni to volunteer as speakers, mentors, etc., I’m happy to invest my time in giving back directly to the students but I’m not too sure where my money goes when I send a check. For all I know, a new infrastructure is getting built with it. So about 10 years ago I decided to, instead of giving money, I would give my time. What students remember is the relationships they built while in college, the way people made them feel. — Joel

Over the last decade, institutions of higher education have paired alumni from various personal and professional backgrounds with current undergraduate students. These programs were implemented to assist in the recruitment, retention, graduation, and overall success of underserved populations. Research shows that, for adolescents to successfully meet both developmental challenges in today’s world and the academic
demands of the school, they require resource-full relationships and activities socially organized within a network of socialization agents—or what Stanton-Salazar (2011) refers to as “institutional agents.” Due to being raised in a communal society versus an individualistic society and in an environment of limited resources, Latino migrant students are not always familiar with the process of network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking. Nonetheless, when Latino migrant students do overcome the odds, it is usually through interventions that embed them in a network of institutional agents connected to services, organizations, and resources oriented toward their empowerment. Additional research shows that those who identify an important non-parental adult in their lives tend to report better psychological well-being, more rewarding relationships, academic success, high school completion, better employment experiences, and fewer problems with peers (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Bubois & Silverthorn, 2005; McDonald et al., 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2002). Therefore, establishing a CAMP alumni mentoring program and providing each student with an alumnus mentor can make significant strides in increasing college completion.

Currently, alumni in the CAMP program are used periodically as speakers and informal mentors for those students who proactively seek a connection to an alumnus. The goal of this recommendation is to propose the creation of a formal mentor enhancement program that connects CAMP students to an alumnus in their major, or related field of study, that will guide them on an array of topics such as insights regarding navigating undergraduate life at Sacramento State, internships and job opportunities,
interviewing and networking skills. The mentor would serve multiple roles, including teacher, advisor, role model, guide and overall resource. Mentors would be encouraged to meet face-to-face with their students at least once per semester and communicate throughout the year, and hopefully through graduation and beyond. An orientation session for mentors would be designed to clarify expectations and provide training materials. In addition, mentors would receive regular e-mail updates from CAMP on program and campus updates. To identify areas to improve outcomes, gauge satisfaction with the experience, all mentors and students would be asked to complete an evaluation during each academic semester. CAMP would also work closely with the Sacramento State Office of Institutional Research to evaluate graduation rates of participants versus non-participants of the program. Alumni mentors and their students would also be recognized at an end of the year event to positively reinforce the impact of mentoring and build capacity for program expansion by provide the mentors an opportunity to network among themselves.

Implications for Further Study

In order to meet the demands of the global market place, institutions of higher education must continue to focus on the college retention and degree attainment of Latino migrant students. It is critical for the institution to fully understand the unique needs of Latino migrant students discussed in Chapter 2 and the strategies available to better serve this unique population. Furthermore, it is important for the institution to facilitate ample
opportunities for students to develop network construction, negotiation, and help-seeking skills that are not always familiar to migrant students and other minority youth. This study showed the powerful difference that institutional agents can make in serving as facilitators and gatekeepers for student success for they have the potential to facilitate access to greater institutional resources. Primarily, this study looked at the factors that impacted the undergraduate college experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State, to identify potential modifications that could increase the graduation rate of this population. Despite the powerful insights gained by this study, students’ undergraduate experiences are impacted by many internal and external factors impossible to fully uncover within one study. To continue the effort of increasing college completion rates, additional research topics requiring further examination are listed below, in order of importance, based on the findings of this study.

**Implication #1: The undergraduate experience of Latino migrant students on academic probation or disqualification.**

Further study of the undergraduate experience of Latino students on academic probation is a step closer to increasing graduation rates, as they are at risk of being disenrolled. The number of undergraduate college students on academic probation or disqualification poses a danger to the graduation rates of institutions of higher education, as approximately 25% of all college students will be placed on academic probation during their time in college (Tovar & Simon, 2006). Students on academic probation are those who earn less than a 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) and risk being disenrolled from the university if they do not increase their GPA to a 2.0 or higher within the
following semester (Lucas, 1991; Tovar & Simon, 2006). Moreover, it is not likely for disenrolled students will return to higher education (Lehmann, 2007) due to their characteristics (e.g., being first-generation, low income, academically proficient) Latino migrant students are at higher risk of being placed on academic probation than their counterparts (Hawley & Harris, 2005; Heisserer & Parrette, 2002; Lehmann, 2007; Oseguera, 2005). In this study, none of the participants were ever placed on academic probation. Consequently, that perspective was not represented. As a result, additional research in this area is needed to better help Latino migrant students transition from probation to good academic standing, and most importantly, preventing them and other from being placed on academic probation.

**Implication #2:** The undergraduate experience of Latino migrant males in higher education who have graduated compared with those who dropped out.

While degree attainment among Latinos is an issue generating national attention, the widening gender gap in college completion is an often neglected area of study. In general, proportionally fewer college-age males are actually enrolling in college than in years past (Cerna et al., 2007; NCES, 2005). Currently, just 26% of African Americans, 24% of Native Americans and Pacific Islanders, and 18% of Hispanic Americans have at least an associate degrees. In addition, in each racial and ethnic group young women are outperforming young men with respect to the attainment of high school diplomas, with even more pronounced disparities at the postsecondary level (Ranson, 2010). In short, Latino males are, all but “vanishing” from the higher education pipeline, yet minimal research attention has focused specifically on this phenomenon as an emerging
educational crisis (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). The Latino migrant males in CAMP at Sacramento State are not an exception. Each year, 70% of CAMP admits are female and only about 30% are males. In addition, of the students on academic probation, 80% are males and 20% are females (CSUS, 2010). In this study, half of the participants were male and half female. The males required special admission to Sacramento State while the females did not. In addition, female participants graduated with their bachelor’s degree on average in 4.5 years, while males took 5.4 years to attain the same degree (see Table 1). The experience of Latino migrant males must be further studied to better understand the circumstances leading to this alarming and fast growing trend occurring throughout the entire educational pipeline. In particular, documenting the experiences of those who made a conscious choice to leave higher education would be a critical issue to study for this population.

Implication #3: The undergraduate experience and academic success of CAMP off-campus residential students compared with commuter students

Despite findings that approximately 15% of undergraduates live on campus throughout their college years, most of the research about the college completion rates is based on studies of traditional, on-campus residential, 18- to 24-year-old students (Horn & Nevill, 2006). Commuter students are defined as those students who do not reside in institution-owned housing. This definition encompasses a broad range of students, but does not draw distinctions among students who live off-campus with friends versus family, or those students who walk to school versus drive or take public transportation, and so forth. Commuter students, as they are defined on individual campuses, pose
challenges because much of what we know about the factors that support student success is difficult to apply to the commuter population. The "many competing commitments, including family, work, and other responsibilities" (Jacoby & Garland, 2004, p. 63) that commuting students face, limits their involvement on campus. More specifically, proximity to campus may mediate the extent students are able to engage in integrative educational practices (Kuh, Gonyuea, & Palmer, 2001). In CAMP at Sacramento State, 10% of students are commuters and 90% relocate from their rural towns to Sacramento to reside off-campus. Due to significant cost savings in housing costs, CAMP students do not reside in the dorms and opt to live within walking distances of the campus—still within proximity to experience full access to the campus and its extra-curricular activities. The experience of those who walk to campus versus those who drive 30 or more miles to return home with their families must be significantly different and merits further research. The participants in this study all lived off-campus and all successfully graduated from college. This finding contradicts Tinto’s retention model promoting on-campus housing as a primary instrument to successfully transition and integrate first-year college students.

**Implication #4: Gender differences in the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students**

As previously stated in Implication #3, over the past two decades, the rates at which females have enrolled in undergraduate education and attained college degrees has increased faster than those of males (Freeman, 2004). Research on gender and academic achievement in K-12 reveals significant differences in the overall learning experience of
girls and boys (Sax, 2005). Differences include girls being more motivated in school and performing better on tests of reading and writing and boys scoring higher on standardized test, particularly those that feature questions of math and science (Burkam, Lee, & Smerdon, 1997). While this research only points to academic differences in K-12, it is evident that the differences of the overall undergraduate experience of males and females persist throughout college. The current gender inequalities in higher education require further examination of the quality of male undergraduate experiences relative to those of women. Further research on the gender differences of the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students will help to better understand the different trends in their academic preparation, study habits, social involvement, perceptions, coping mechanisms and success strategies. This information will assist institutions in creating the conditions to foster success for all students.

*Implication #5: The impact of financial aid on the persistence of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students.*

The literature indicates that students raised in high socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to persist and attain a college degree than are students with a lower economic status (Astin, 1993). Past research has also shown that financial factors, such as tuition, housing, and financial aid, have an effect on persistence (Bettinger, 2004; Paulsen & St. John, 2002). While many academic and social barriers were considered challenges for the participants in this study, financial difficulties were not referred to as an obstacle towards college completion. While this finding does not imply that participants did not struggle financially, it does point to other challenges being a greater
burden for them the financial aspect. In this case, it is important to keep in mind that all participants were deemed low-income and were therefore eligible for financial aid. Due to the high level of unmet need, most were awarded state and federal aid. Further research on the impact of financial aid on the persistence of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students will help to better understand this particular finding. Nonetheless, this finding supports Tierney’s (1999) research that points to financial aid, while important, as not being sufficient to equalize college opportunities and resolve the dilemma of college student access and retention. The findings in this study regarding financial aid support that—beyond financial assistance—Latino migrant students need access to the appropriate support systems that will teach them the ropes that will help them successfully navigate student life, do well academically and graduate.

**Implication #6: The influence of CAMP student involvement in Greek organizations**

Latino migrant students at Sacramento State join Greek organizations to stay socially connected with peers and the institution. As revealed in the participant profiles in Chapter 2, several of the study participants were involved in sororities and fraternities, in addition to being part of CAMP. Nonetheless, limited information is known about the influence Greek organizations have on the academic and social experience of Latino migrant students, in particular participants of CAMP. As a first-year program, CAMP advises students to use their first year of college to learn about the various clubs and organizations on campus and postpone joining any club until their sophomore year when they have had time to acclimate to and negotiate the often overwhelming transition of
going from high school to college, and after they have completed remediation coursework. Still, beyond the sophomore year, when students inquire about participation in a Greek organization, both positive and negative outcomes experienced by others are explained by CAMP counselors. Research shows mixed results of fraternities and sororities of Greek affiliation on the development of career-related skills such as interpersonal skills, community orientation and commitment to civic engagement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). At the same time, research also suggests that Greek affiliation may inhibit growth in moral reasoning and, increase the likelihood of both academic dishonesty as well as binge drinking during college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Evidently, further research in this area will provide more evidence on the impact Greek organizations have in the network development and college completion rates of Latino migrant students.

**Implication #7: The undergraduate experience of undocumented Latino migrant students**

Although literature exists on first and second-generation immigrants, there is a lack of research on the “undocumented” Latino migrant student population, those without permanent legal residency status. Thousands of undocumented Latino migrant students graduate from California high schools every year but are unable to pursue a postsecondary education due to their ineligibility to qualify for federal financial aid (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Many of these students have lived in the U.S. most of their lives and were brought to the U.S. as children by their parents (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Dozier (1993) found three central emotional concerns for undocumented students in general:
fear of deportation, inability to establish close relationships and depression. Due to its federally funded status, CAMP at Sacramento State, as well as all CAMP programs across the country, are unable to accept undocumented students. Applicants of CAMP must be permanent residents or U.S. citizens to be considered for admission. Therefore, none of the participants in this study were undocumented. Nonetheless, there are undocumented Latino migrant students pursuing and graduating from college, just not within CAMP. With the passage of California Senate Bills 130 & 131\textsuperscript{12}, this population will continue to grow in institutions of higher education; therefore, further research is required to better understand their undergraduate experience and particular needs.

Reflections from the Author

Since background, social values, and ways of making sense of the world can influence which processes, activities, events, and perspectives researchers consider central, it is important to introduce the role of the researcher in every study (Patton, 2002). The researcher conducting this study is the current director of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Sacramento State. The researcher is a Mexican female, thirty-four years of age, who was herself a migrant student and participant of CAMP, at Sacramento State during her undergraduate experience. Within the same program, the researcher held prior positions as Program Coordinator, Career Counselor and Outreach Counselor. She is the first and only one in her family to go to college, and

\textsuperscript{12} AB 130 & 131 was signed into law in 2011. As of 2013, undocumented students in California will be eligible to apply for state-funded financial aid and private scholarships.
become a doctoral candidate. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Communication Studies and two Master’s Degrees in Spanish and History. She was an English language learner (ELL) student who spent two years completing remediation coursework in college. She was on academic probation during her first year of college and departed the academic setting to work full-time, only to return a year later after quickly realizing the detrimental impact a lack of education would have on her life. While much of the study participants’ experiences resonated with her own, many distinctions also arose.

To some extent, to fully embrace the demands of college, she consciously separated from her community’s values and beliefs to mitigate her successful adaptation to school. As a college student, she found learned values in constant conflict with those needed to succeed at completing college. It was difficult to balance the multiple worlds (Phelan et al., 1993) she lived in and do well academically at the same time. In general, the study participants came from extended families and two-parent homes. On the contrary, she came from divorced parents and a small family; therefore, her family interactions did not match the rich experience of the study participants. Through reflection of the Multiple World Study (Phelan et al., 1993), she was able to categorize herself as the second type of student in that study. The student that belonged to a world that was different from that of the institution but manages to “get in” in accord with acceptable norms, but not without personal and psychic costs. While the researcher was able to navigate perceived boundaries successfully, at times she denied aspects of her own identity. Consequently, the researcher kept her worlds separate and felt tremendous
discomfort when unable to maintain the separation. Nonetheless, regardless of how painful and uncomfortable entering unfamiliar worlds may have seemed, she searched for different and new settings and succeeded at navigating them.

Due to the survival mechanism used by the researcher to adapt to the academic culture and expectations, she could profoundly relate to the students’ feelings of phoniness and the Imposter Phenomenon, (Wray, 2010) as well as the survivor guilt experienced by participants for being in college. When one is unable to successfully recruit siblings to college, one cannot help but to feel lifelong guilt for failing at getting the college message across in a persuasive way. Similarly, the researcher experienced the same level of joy and accomplishment when she passed the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE), as it reasserted that she was finally English proficient. While the researcher did not entirely shed her cultural heritage suggested as necessary by Tinto (1993), to move from one status to another, she had to constantly reinvent herself, just like many of the study participants. Tinto’s retention notion views college as an initiation ritual, with the success of the students being dependent upon the degree to which they are able to integrate into the social and academic life of the institution. Due to this understanding, making sure that students feel that they can bring their whole selves to CAMP and the university and have their multiple identities affirmed and validated takes priority in her practice.
Conclusion

The declining economic competitiveness in the United States in comparison to both established and developing nations is a growing concern. While the U.S. is near the top in college participation rates, it is close to the bottom in completion rates (Johnson & Sengupta, 2009). The U.S. economy will have 22 million new jobs for college-educated workers by 2018—if we continue at the current pace, the country will be 2 million workers short of filling its capacity (Coghlan, 2011). But, as other countries are doing better in postsecondary completion than the U.S., other states within the U.S. are doing better than California (Shulock, Offenstein, & Moore, 2008). While California remains slightly above the national average for the percent of the population with a higher level degree, over a 15-year period the gap between California and the national average has narrowed (Spence & Kiel, 2009). In order to reverse this cycle, and address the national gap, it is especially important that California find ways to increase college success and degree completion (Moore, Bockenholt, Daniel, Frochlich, Kestens, & Richard, 2010). Therefore, to remain a first-class leader in the global economy, the U.S. must address the barriers impeding postsecondary completion.

Latino migrant and seasonal farmworkers represent a significant group in the United States with California having the largest concentration of agricultural workers in the nation, totaling more than twice that of the second largest state, Texas (33.5% vs. 15.6%). California also has the largest number of identified Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students, numbering 237,096 in 2007, or approximately one-third of the total
U.S. migrant and farmworker student population. The Latino educational crisis, as referred to by Gándara (2008), is of great significance and in direct correlation to the migrant and seasonal farmworker student population given that 85% of migrant children are of school age (5-18 years old), with Latino students making up 98% of the eligible migrant student population (CMEP, 2007). In addition to the challenges experienced as Latino migrant students already presented in Chapter 2, students from this background have been cited among the most disadvantaged of all groups of students in the country (Green, 2003). In fact, migrant farmworkers and their families have been referred to as an invisible population, due to the lack of attention received from government agencies and the communities in which they reside and work (Nunez, 2009b).

In this vulnerable climate, particularly today, organizations must continually engage in adjustments and modifications to address more effectively their environmental expectations and to capitalize more frequently on environmental opportunities. Organizations that are better able to adapt to their environments are said to have a competitive advantage over other organizations in the same field or industry (Day & Schoemaker, 2005; Porter, 1985). Building on the biological metaphor of systems theory, the adaptive model suggests that organizations are constantly assessing their external environment and internal conditions. Keller (1983) stated that the goal of strategy is “not to prod the contemporary university to behave more like a business, but to nudge it to behave more like an organization. Or better, to get it to behave like an organism that must feed itself, change, and adapt to its environment” (p. 174).
Organizations that apply this model are constantly scanning the environment looking for practices to borrow, markets to enter, and new ideas to implement. Most importantly, organizations that adopt this model are constantly making changes based on new information, rather than waiting for the unexpected or the new fiscal year. To better serve the needs of its students, increase college completion rates and close the achievement gap, institutions of higher education must embrace the adoptive model and become accustomed to its continuously changing environment.

The time has come for institutions of higher education to embrace this complex issue and develop policies and programs that will eradicate this pernicious disparity. As we continue the work of increasing the graduation success of students at Sacramento State, the importance of continuing collaborations cannot be understated. This study takes a step beyond collaboration to introduce the concept of transformational partnerships between and among colleges and universities and high schools; states and their colleges and universities, as well as state departments of education; K-12 public and private schools; public and private two-and four-year colleges and universities; businesses; and philanthropies, as a requirements to address the achievement gap. Transformational partnerships (Butcher, Bezzina, & Moran, 2010) are based on genuine engagement and a focus on common goals and mutual benefits, versus transactional partnerships in which each institution pursues its own goals with little consideration of mutual goals or shared purpose. In transformational partnerships, the quality of the working relationships between stakeholders is considered the most important asset to lead
change. The quality of the relationships is a predictor of how well leaders are able to transform the current culture and environment. Undoubtedly, there may be a widespread unwillingness to admit problems, refusal to take responsibility and overall resistance to adopt the changes necessary to increase graduation rates. Bolman and Deal (2003) introduce four different lenses from which to look at the potential conflict from resistance: 1) The human resource framework approaches conflict as an opportunity to develop relationships by having individuals address differences; 2) The political frame develops power by bargaining and creating losers and winners; 3) Through a symbolic lens, leaders develop shared values and use conflict to negotiate meaning; and 4) The human resource logic fits best in situations favoring collaboration. The careful application of the full range of lenses is necessary to ensure the best outcome is reached when implementing institutional change.

Sacramento State has a long-standing mission and commitment to excellence in student performance, marked both by its clearly defined Graduation Initiative Strategic Plan, and its goal to become a destination campus (CSUS, 2011b). This study illustrates the factors that contribute to the undergraduate experience of Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students at Sacramento State. The strategies shared by participants do not necessarily fit within the mold created for traditional students who have historically attended higher education institutions. In fact, the very factors that were previously thought to be impediments to student success, are actually important sources of strength for these students. The results of this research demonstrate that providing an
environment that facilitates valuable social capital and relationships with institutional agents increases the sense of belonging, motivation and purpose in Latino migrant students. While implementing these recommendations will not necessarily eliminate the many other reasons why Latino migrant students are not adequately prepared for college, they are important steps toward developing a more equitable educational experience for this growing, capable and often invisible population.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Interview Questionnaire

**College Experience:**

1. How would you describe your undergraduate college experience at Sacramento State? When you think back to your first year of college, how did your perceptions change from your freshman year to your senior year?

8. Were there particular individuals that facilitated your success? Were there individuals that helped you overcome any barriers? Were there individuals that made it difficult for you to succeed?

**Success Strategies:**

9. How would you describe yourself as a student? To what extent did you feel prepared for college? What did it take for you to graduate from college?

10. Can you tell me about a time when you felt very accomplished as a college student (other than graduation)? What about a time you felt discouraged?

11. Did you ever feel some of the values necessary to succeed in college contradicted your own values? What are the myths and facts of being a Latino migrant/seasonal farmworker college student?

**Institutional Recommendations:**

12. Among the many resources available on campus, which did you actually utilize throughout your undergraduate experience? What are some student
needs you think were not addressed by those resources? Were there services available on campus that you were unaware of and as a result did not utilize?

13. Did you use campus personnel (e.g., staff, faculty, tutors) as a source of emotional, personal and informational support throughout college?

14. If you were in charge of making decisions at Sacramento State, what changes would you make to ensure Latino migrant and seasonal farmworker students are successful? Do you feel Sacramento State prepared you to enter the professional world?
APPENDIX B

Interview Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Viridiana Diaz, a candidate for the doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy at California State University, Sacramento. Based on an extensive review of the literature, there was relatively little information on the experience of migrant students in higher education from the perceptions of those who have successfully graduated. The available research focused on student decision-making when entering college, support systems for student success, and self-perceptions after first year college enrollment from the perspective of currently enrolled students.

By allowing me to understand your college experience, we can begin to attain a more complete view on the experiences of Hispanic migrant students in higher education. The aim of this study is to understand the undergraduate experience of migrant students, specifically how do these students insure their academic prosperity in higher education. The purpose of this study is to a) uncover schooling experiences in higher education through perceptions and attitudes, while at the same time offer insight into what they consider to be resources on the campus versus challenges; and b) identify strategies developed by these students in response to their schooling experiences which has insured the successful completion of a bachelor’s degree at Sacramento State.

Specifically this research would like to interview 10 alumni from the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Sacramento State who will reflect on their undergraduate experience. The determined criterion for selection includes: 1) being of Hispanic descent; 2) completed the first year of college as participants of CAMP (migrant and/or seasonal farm working background); and 3) participant has successfully graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Sacramento State.

All interviews will be individually conducted at the time and location that is most convenient and comfortable for you. Each interview will be no longer than 40 minutes to an hour in length. Please note that the interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed. In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, a pseudonym will be provided to protect your identity. Your responses will be known by number only—your actual name will never be associated with a number. All interview materials will be destroyed 6 months after completion of this project and data will be securely managed so that your real name cannot be matched to the response.

Some of the interview questions may seem personal, but you do not have to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering. Your participation in this research is
entirely voluntary. Your honesty and openness are appreciated, but you have the final say in how much you reveal to us, and what questions you feel comfortable answering. If at any time you do not wish to continue participation in this study, you are free to do so. The Department of Health and Human Services 700 A East Parkway, Suite 1000 Sacramento, CA 95823 (916.875.7070) or by visiting http://www.sacdhhs.com is an available referral source if you need psychological assistance.

By participating in this research, you may gain additional insight into the attitudes and perspectives of your own college experiences as a Hispanic migrant undergraduate. Findings from this study will add to the body of literature on the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of Hispanic migrant college students. With your permission, I would like to contact you to if additional clarification is required after conducting the interview. I will contact you by email/phone. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the interviews.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Viridiana Diaz at viridiaz@csus.edu (916) 208.6117 or Dissertation Chair, Dr. Caroline Turner at csturner@saclink.csus.edu (916) 278-2281.

I also agree to have this interview audio recorded _______ YES _______ NO

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ___________________
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