ABSTRACT

CRAWFORD, RACHEL. *Negotiating Identities* of Mexican-American migrant students through their participation in the migrant student AIM (Action Inspiration Motivation) Club: A case study based in Randolph County, North Carolina. (Under the direction of Dr. Paul Bitting.)

The purpose of this qualitative case study based in Randolph County, North Carolina, is to determine whether AIM Clubs (middle and high school after-school clubs) can help to facilitate the Mexican-American migrant students' process of transitioning or incorporating into the American society by allowing them to negotiate their identities in an empowering rather than disempowering manner; and, if so, how? The study proceeds by applying Cummins' (1996, 2001) framework for empowering culturally diverse students in a diverse society, as he details in *Negotiating identities: Education for empowering in a diverse society.* The application of this research is for schools to analyze the substance and quality of their AIM Clubs or other extra-curricular clubs, in hopes of creating clubs that help ease the transition of culturally diverse students into American society and schools.

Participants include students, parents and staff in 12 in-depth interviews, 25 surveys, 2 focus group interviews, and observations of club activities and special events. Data also is gathered through an extensive review of artifacts.

Findings are reported by common themes in response to the study's five guiding research questions:

1. What are the practices, beliefs and attitudes of people in the club?
2. What are the specific and types of activities in which students participate?
3. What are the perceived academic and/or social benefits and effects on migrant students who participate in the AIM Club?

4. Why do students participate in the AIM Club?
5. Are there issues of the transitioning process that surface for the students?
    - How do students feel about becoming "an American?"
    - What would students like to see happen regarding this process?

Major themes emerging in data analysis include: parent involvement, school and community service and participation; sharing, acquiring and maintaining culture; committed staff, social and academic benefits, a need to learn English, personal cultural adaptation and community cultural adaptation. Analysis involves aligning the findings to the four components identified by Jim Cummins (1996, 2001) that contribute to the academic and positive identity development of culturally diverse students:

- Affirmation of students' cultural identity and encouragement of primary language literacy and language development;
- Encouragement of active parental participation;
- Cognitively-challenging instruction that provides opportunities for students to draw on their background experiences while working collaboratively to explore issues and topics that are relevant to their lives.
- The above interventions "are implemented in a school context where issues related to the education of culturally diverse students have moved from the periphery to the center of concern for the entire school. Educators, both individually and collectively, have defined their roles in such a way that their interactions with culturally diverse students actively affirm students' identities. The educational structures established in the school reflect these role definitions." (pp. 146-147)

The conclusion reached through data analysis is that AIM Clubs *can* positively facilitate Mexican-American migrant students' transition into American society and schools by helping them to negotiate their identities in an empowering manner.

NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN MIGRANT STUDENTS THROUGH THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE MIGRANT STUDENT AIM (ACTION INSPIRATION MOTIVATION) CLUB: A CASE STUDY BASED IN RANDOLPH COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

by
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the teachers of Hall District Elementary School in Watsonville, California, during the years of 1991 through 1994. It was during my tenure as principal and the implementation of the Biliteracy Program at the school that they began teaching me the importance of bridging the home and school cultures, so that students might be empowered to succeed in a setting that they might otherwise deem hostile. Their unwavering dedication to the students' success and fervent belief that we would make a difference has set the stage for the remainder of my professional career. I think of them always and hold them up as the models I endeavor to emulate.

BIOGRAPHY

Rachel Crawford was born in Habana, Cuba, immigrating to the United States at the age of seven in 1961. She grew up in Coachella, Gilroy and Bakersfield, California, closely relating with Mexican-American migrant and non-migrant families. In 1976 she received a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Bethany College in Santa Cruz, California, and in 1981 a Masters Degree in Education Administration from San Jose State University in San Jose, California. Her professional career history includes both teaching and administrative assignments at the school, district and state levels. She began her career with 10 years of teaching in bilingual classrooms in grades 3-8 in San Ysidro and Watsonville, California. Throughout the 10 years of teaching, all but a handful of students were Mexican-American and many were migrant. Administrative assignments have included Assistant-Principal of Curriculum and Instruction of Watsonville High School, Principal of Hall District Elementary School, also in Watsonville, California; Coordinator of Programs for Limited English Proficient students in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District in Monterey, California; and since 1998, State Consultant for Migrant Education with the Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, North Carolina. She belongs to Phi Kappa Phi, an academic honor society.

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It is with heartfelt thanks that I acknowledge the persons that have contributed to my completion of this dissertation. While there were lonely times as I struggled with certain aspects of this process, I always felt connected to a wonderful support network of personal and professional friends, colleagues and family on whom I could count for support, encouragement, clarity and, at the very least, a cheerful, "Aren't you done yet?"

First of all, I would like to thank the students, parents and staff of the Randolph County AIM Club for their willing participation in this project. Without them this study would not exist. To Ms. Denise Beane and, especially, Ms. Roxanne Taylor, I am particularly grateful for their unique contribution of timely and dependable assistance, coordination and facilitation during the stages of data gathering. Above all, I'd like to acknowledge their dedication to the migrant students of Randolph County and to the AIM Club. They, collectively, provide a brilliant model for AIM Clubs in North Carolina and across the nation.

I will be ever-grateful to those who extended wide-ranging professional and technical support and advice. Such persons are the professors on my dissertation committee, especially my advisor, Dr. Paul Bitting, whose close counsel guided me through the least circuitous route to "get out-a Dodge!" and Dr. Peter Hessling, my qualitative research professor who reviewed, edited and commented on as many drafts of the report as I would send to him. Another major contributor is my dear friend and colleague, Irene McGinty, who inspired me to write on this topic. Through her personal and professional life, Irene personifies the essence of a caring, inspiring educator, whom Jim Cummins (2001) would recognize as an educator that has "defined her role in such a

way that her interactions with culturally diverse students actively affirm their identities." (p. 147) I feel honored that Irene was willing to practice her craft on *this* Hispanic immigrant, as she instructed me in the fine intricacies of affirming diversity. Dr. Lynne Warren provided much-needed critique and editing during the final stages of the report. Her positive enthusiasm and knowledgeable contributions were timely and invaluable. Finally, I am grateful to my good friend Dr. Janie Barnes who tutored me and got me through the first statistics class—the first class of the program.

Steadfast personal support came from Morgan Crawford, my husband, my main source of support and solid rock. Morgan has been willing to pick up the pieces at home when I could not contribute my fair share. I am grateful for his constant encouragement, dependable, technical support and delightful sense of humor. Other friends and colleagues like Belinda Black, Dr. Frances Mellott, Angela Lowe, Dr. Janie Barnes, Janette Toth, Leath Pitta, Georgia Grijalva, Irene McGinty, Bridget McGilvra, Orlando Hernandez, Cintia Aguilar, and Mary Lee Moore, were equally available to listen to the trauma-of-the-day and offer words of wisdom and encouragement on a regular basis. If what I needed was a push, friends were also at hand for that, as in the case of my dear friend Dr. Janie Barnes who, tiring of my complaints one day, was willing to tell me I'd just have to "suck it up!"

Finally, I'm grateful to my cat, Miata, for sitting on my lap during the long, lonely writing sessions, keeping me company and helping me to remain on-task. ☺

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 1. Introduction

"Yo sueño de México" ("I dream of Mexico")

…closing my eyes
I think about the nice things
I have done in Mexico…
In the USA my life goes on right now
I feel like I am in two places at once
My memories are in Mexico
My family and I are here in North Carolina

Jaime Mendoza, Randolph County migrant student

Ni de Aquí/Ni de Allá: Not from Here/Nor from There
Harvard Educational Review, 2001

Statement of the Problem

Jaime Mendoza's experience of feeling like he is in two places at once, or that of not being from here nor from there, is reminiscent of the issues associated with the transitioning process that Mexican-American migrant students encounter as they adjust to their new American environment. Researchers such as E. Garcia (1995), Cummins (1996, 2001), Wong Fillmore (1991b, 1992), and Chahin (1996), have documented that, as applied to students of Mexican descent, the widely proposed and popular perspective for transitioning to the United States would promote a quick "Americanization" of the student, leaving behind Mexican roots of culture and language. In the words of Antonia Darder (1995):

> To be a good United States citizen, students of color have been expected to assimilate to "American" standards and values and in so doing, discard the values

> of their primary culture, breaking free of all bonds to a cultural or ethnic identity. (p. 37)

Cummins' (2001) words are similar, "To be accepted within the mainstream society represented by the school, required that students become invisible and inaudible; culture and language should be left at home" (p. 2). Mexican-American migrant students frequently find themselves somewhere within the stages of the acculturation process, feeling lost and alienated, feeling neither from here/nor from there, resulting in "withdrawal from academic effort and dropping out of school (Darder, 1991; Walsh, 1991)" (Cummins, 2001, p. 12).

Would it not be more productive to provide a positive experience for students of other cultures transitioning to American schools? Jim Cummins' (1996, 2001) framework of *Negotiating Identities*, offers a different paradigm for such empowerment of students from cultures that are foreign to the United States. Cummins' (1996) premise states:

> …when the school affirms the value of students' primary language and encourages them to take pride in their cultural background, it repudiates the escalating societal discourse proclaiming that bilingualism 'shuts doors' (Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 1991) and disadvantages both the individual and the wider society (Newt Gingrich, 1995). (p. iii)

Simply stated, Cummins' argument is that schools can promote environments that engage the whole student including their language and culture, rather than attempting to re-create students *a la American,* through simultaneously ignoring the home language and culture and applying thick layers of American culture. Cummins continues that language and culture are intricate aspects of the student's identity. Schools are wise to foster the

utilization of the culturally diverse students' primary language and culture as the students add their new language (English) and culture (American). For Cummins, Nieto (1996, 1999), Moll (1990), E. Garcia (1991), Freire (1993) and others, if minority students are to succeed in American schools, this system of embracing the primary language and culture is markedly preferable to hoping for their disappearance.

In my position as the North Carolina State Consultant of Migrant Education, I interact with all district directors and other staff of programs for migrant students. It is my observation that the Randolph County, North Carolina, middle and high school student Action Inspiration Motivation (AIM) Club is the largest in the state, as well as one of the longest functioning. As such, I conducted a case study of the AIM Club in Randolph County, taking an in-depth look for the purpose of describing the attitudes, beliefs and practices of all participants in and around the club. Once identified, these attitudes, beliefs and practices are instrumental in addressing the questions, "Can AIM Clubs facilitate the Mexican-American migrant students' process of transitioning or incorporating into the American society by allowing them to negotiate their identities in an empowering rather than disempowering manner? If so, how?" In other words, how can the practice and activities of AIM Clubs be sufficiently vital so that students feel positively connected to their new environment *as well as* their primary culture? How can AIM Clubs change the "pervasive sense of despair" identified by Mary Poplin and Joseph Weers (1992), in *Voices from the Inside: A Report on Schooling from Inside the Classroom*, and summed up by a student as, "This place hurts my spirit." (p.19) into a *place* that builds the spirit and identity of migrant students? The study's significance may impact the practice of conducting AIM Clubs in North Carolina, by increasing the

number of AIM Clubs in the state and influencing their vitality for reaching Mexican-American migrant students. Hopefully then, migrant students in North Carolina will be able to write stories, proudly recounting the advantage of being from here *and* from there.

Overview of Dissertation

For purposes of this study, I research theories and previous studies related to the process of foreign-born students transitioning to the United States. In particular, I describe the experiences Mexican-American migrant students encounter, as they attempt to transition to the United States and American schools. In search of a more viable alternative to the traditionally proposed goal of assimilation (Rodriguez, 1982) as the ultimate road to success in American schools, I explore the related principles of critical pedagogy, and multi-cultural education, as they interact with Mexican-American migrant students and their potential for success in school.

Within the study I use qualitative research methods for a descriptive case study of the Randolph County AIM Club. Utilizing guiding questions to frame the search, I collected data from a variety of sources. Main sources of data include in-depth interviews of staff, students and parents; observations, surveys, focus group interviews and a review of documents and artifacts. While students of various nationalities and ethnicity are identified as "migrant," according to the 2001 North Carolina Migrant Education Program Performance Report, over 93% of the migrant population in North Carolina were of Mexican descent. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the term "migrant" refers only to Mexican-American students or students of Mexican descent.

An analysis of the data yields findings of attitudes, beliefs and practices of the participants in and around the Randolph County AIM Club. Within the theoretical

framework of Cummins' *Negotiating Identities*, I analyze the findings to determine how the Randolph County AIM Club meets the components of Cummins' theory. In conclusion, I answer the study's overarching question and offer practical recommendations that may be included in the future development of AIM Clubs. For Mexican-American migrant students, these recommendations may facilitate the process of adjusting to their new environment, as they learn to negotiate their identities, rather than to lose them. Thus, the recommendations may help to increase migrant student involvement in school. I conclude the study with a final recommendation for related study.

Perhaps, when Jaime Mendoza grows up, he will be capable of theoretically understanding how his high school AIM Club really helped him to become an empowered member of both his home culture and his "new home" culture.

Background

AIM Clubs

At the local county level the Migrant Education Programs (MEPs) in North Carolina sponsor middle and high school clubs, called AIM Clubs, which help migrant students get involved in school. AIM Clubs serve migrant students; however, at times they also include other non-migrant, mostly Hispanic students in the school. While AIM Clubs, as defined in this study, are native to North Carolina, other states may have implemented them as a result of promotion and staff development on the part of the advisors of the Randolph County AIM Club. In addition, high school clubs for migrant students exist in some other states; however, those clubs have different names and may have different goals. AIM Clubs, typically, meet outside of the school day and involve

students in activities that promote increasing their interest for remaining in school. Club advisors include members of the MEP staff or other interested staff in the school. The main goal of these clubs is to encourage graduation and college attendance among migrant students.

State efforts to increase the number of migrant student AIM Clubs in North Carolina have generated the establishment of migrant student leadership retreats. Migrant students interested in developing AIM Clubs in their districts, are invited to attend leadership retreats three times a year to learn how to establish and maintain their own club. In addition, the state provides a summer AIM Conference for interested migrant students from all local clubs. As confirmed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, attendance of migrant students at the summer AIM Conference has increased since 1995 from 35 to over 250. The Randolph County AIM Club advisors have co-chaired the state committee to organize the statewide summer AIM Conference since 2001. The advisors have also visited a number of fledgling clubs around the state helping them to establish themselves more firmly.

Migrant Students

Migrant students are among the most educationally disenfranchised in American schools. As a group, they are subject to just about all features of the "at-risk" factors that predict school failure (Platt, & Cranston-Gingras, 1991). Compounding the influences of very low income, large family size, less educated parents, minority ethnic status, and numerous health risks, is the migrant lifestyle with its continual disruptions in schooling. Traveling from one temporary "home" to another, migrant workers follow the growing seasons across the country, seeking temporary or seasonal work in agriculture, fishing, or food processing (Perry, 1997).

Migrant students often became vital contributors to the family income because of their physical ability to increase the family's production on a piecework pay system. By the time a migrant child is 12 years old, he/she might be working in the fields between 16-18 hours per week (Bell, 1994). Consequently, migrant students must often work rather than attend school. This call to support the family financially, compounded by other factors such as grade retention, overage for grade, school interruption, poor attendance, lack of credit accrual, low academic performance, lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, low teacher expectations, teenage parenthood, limited English proficiency, lack of career planning, low self-esteem, and a lower level of parental awareness and support for education, work to produce a disenfranchised student who tends to drop out of school upon turning 16 years of age (Morse & Hammer, 1998).

Not surprisingly, academic underachievement of many migrant students has been the norm over the years, rather than the exception (Hinojosa & Miller, 1984; Perry, 1997). While school dropout data are difficult to track for migrant students, due to their constant mobility, a 1992 study shows that 50.7% (National Program for Secondary Credit Exchange and Accrual) of migrant students drop out of school. This figure was down from 90% in the 1970's (Gayeff, 1986; Rollason, 1984). Grade retention increases the chance of dropping out by 40%-50% for one year and by 90% for two years. The average migrant child may have attended three different schools in one year. For many children it takes roughly three years to advance one grade level (Bell, 1994). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction testing data (NC DPI, ABCs, 2001), 44% of the migrant students in grades three through eight passed the state-administered End-of-Grade tests in reading comprehension and 54% passed the End-of

Grade math tests in 2001. Additional data from the Department of Public Instruction ABCs indicated that North Carolina had over 10,000 identified migrant students in grades K-12. In 2001, sixty-five migrant students graduated from high school. Given this bleak educational profile, and the 2001 legislative requirements of "No Child Left Behind" to disaggregate student performance data by ethnicity (among others), ensuring that all groups of students make adequate yearly progress, the timeliness for this study and the need to focus on our approach with migrant students becomes even more evident.

Migrant Education Program

The MEP was originally established with the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, and has been reauthorized every three to five years, the latest of which have been the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. According to Perry, (1997), the program was established as a result of the public outcry after Edward Murrow's (1960) documentary, "Harvest of Shame," which increased public awareness of the lives of migrant laborers and their families. Since 1965 the Office of Migrant Education (OME) in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) has administered grants to states for programs that provide both supplemental instruction and support services to children of migratory agricultural workers and fishers. Such programs operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico (MEP Preliminary Guidance, 1994).

At the time of this study there are 49 MEPs in 49 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) throughout North Carolina. Migrant students receive services such as tutorials, test preparation, referrals to social programs and health services, home consultations, counseling, instructional materials, homework help, participation in leadership retreats,

the statewide AIM conference, and local AIM Clubs. Services that the local programs offer are required to be supplemental in nature and to help ameliorate the educational trauma suffered by many migrant students (NCLB of 2001, P.L. 107-110).

Researcher Biography

My professional experience, which includes 22 years working with Latino and migrant populations as teacher, school vice-principal, principal, district office and state level official, offers credibility to the level of expertise I bring to this subject. Currently serving as the state of North Carolina Migrant Education Consultant, affords me the opportunity to learn about and study all aspects of the MEP. During the year 2000, I conducted a study of the MEP in Chatham County, North Carolina, part of which served as a pilot study for this research (R. Crawford, 2000). Further, my native ability to speak, read and write fluently in Spanish added a level of comfort and rapport while interviewing certain participants and reviewing documents.

My personal background of immigrating to the United States from Cuba at age seven provides me a distinct level of empathy with other Hispanic children who immigrate to the United States and transition to this culture. I clearly remember the struggles involved with arriving at a small community in southern California and being the new strange family in town and school. While the Caucasian-American population received us warmly and welcomed us into the community, it was the local Mexican-American and migrant families with whom we felt more "at home." They simply opened up their homes and lives to us and "made room" for our family among them. While I have never been identified as a "migrant" person, there are certain aspects of my background and personal and professional experience that, perhaps, place me in an empathetic role in this research. While the common experience of "coming to America"

provided for a degree of rapport with the parents and students; admittedly, my experience does not compare with the struggles and lack of acceptance that many migrant students and parents encounter in their "new home."

My personal development and transitioning process attests to the importance of the principles in *Negotiating Identities*. Since there was no connection between school and my home, other than my parents' emotional support and expectation for me to excel in school, I was unaware of what I was missing at the time. It was not until I left for college and married a man, now my former husband (who reminded me every day how poor I had been growing up), that I realized the number of missed opportunities by not having parents who spoke English and were involved with the school. If only the school had been more prepared to deal with this strange family in town, my parents' strong personal home involvement and influence could have easily extended to include the school environment.

Being poor and from a family whose parents did not speak English was only part of the issues I faced while growing up. A larger issue dealt with identity development and the related consequence of problems with accessing education at school. I vividly remember a couple of personal incidents that took place when I was in grades 7 and 10, which helped to illustrate these points. Upon observing people's reactions every time I spoke, I was ever conscious of my accent and keenly aware that I sounded different from others. On one occasion, I was involved in a softball game with other students during the lunchtime intramurals at school. As our team was getting ready to go out onto the field, one of the kids asked me, "What are you?" My immediate reaction was to reply, "I'm a Cuban." I was so accustomed to having to explain why I sounded different from others

that I responded without thinking. As she continued staring at me even more perplexed, I offered her another answer, "I'm on second base." That response seemed to satisfy her curiosity better. The point here was that the newcomer is always conscious of being an outsider and that the language difference exacerbates the situation.

The other example depicted a common problem that migrant students also experience while trying to access a quality education. The incident took place at my end-of-year appointment with the school counselor in grade 10. The counselor looked at my report card containing straight As, including Algebra, English I and II and Geometry and asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. All I had ever known that I wanted to be was a secretary. I liked the word 'secretary'—*they kept secrets*. Upon declaring my wishes to be a secretary (and very likely noticing my Spanish accent and surname, 'Placeres'), she informed me that, in that case, I need not take any further advanced math, English or science courses. She proceeded to sign me up for two years of typing, two years of shorthand, two years of bookkeeping, and one year of office practice, despite the fact that I had mentioned a desire to attend college. Since I already spoke Spanish, I asked to take a French class. This was not permitted given that French classes were offered to students in the college-bound track. I cannot think of any other student in my graduate program (of Anglo-American descent) whose parents would have tolerated that curricular program for their child. As it turned out, I never even mentioned the incident to my parents for two reasons. In my experience, I did not think they could make an impact at school; and further, I did not know the implications of that program of study until my senior year when I heard fellow students talking about attending the California state schools and the *pre-requisites* for getting in. I was in for a rude awakening. Thanks to a

more “open-minded” counselor in my senior year and continued high grades, I applied and received an academic scholarship to a four-year private, church school. Thank goodness I could type. I earned spending money in college typing the papers of all those students who didn’t have time to learn typing in high school due to all the academic courses they had to take.

I realize now that mine was a different kind of privilege. Growing up in my Latin family brought with it much warmth, family support, security and unconditional love. All these characteristics served to build in me a certain amount of self-dependency and inner strength. I could not expect my parents to help me with schoolwork or problems, so I developed my own sense of resourcefulness and ability to find solutions to problems at school. Consequently, I recognize that migrant students generally share this same opportunity to develop inner strength and self-dependency. While there may not be much opportunity for playfulness, which leads to the development of creativity and an ability to think critically in the early years, one does tend to develop a “can-do-if-you-try” sort of attitude and “nose-to-the-grindstone” type of work ethic.

These and other personal and professional experiences drive the passion for my work and interest for conducting this study. I envision schools of the future that will embrace all migrant students to the degree that they embrace any successful student from the majority culture. Such schools would consider their role to be one of accommodating to the students’ needs, rather than expecting the opposite.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, I use the following definitions in reference to the terms listed below.

Migrant:

Workers that travel from one place to another following agricultural or fishing work are called "migrant workers." In order to qualify for the MEP, migrant education law [IASA 1994, Sections 1309 and 1115(b)(1)(A) and 34 CFR 200.40(c) and (e)] stipulate that the children of migrant workers must have a qualifying move at least once during a three-year period. Qualifying moves require crossing school district lines for the purpose of seeking or acquiring work in agriculture or fishing related fields. Once establishing a qualifying move, the three-year clock begins again; consequently, students maintain their migrant status as long as the family continues to move. However, according to MEP law, once migrant students enter high school, staff may continue serving them until they graduate from high school, even if their eligibility ends. This is an effort to encourage migrant students to remain in school and graduate. Students qualify for the MEP between the ages of three and 21. States receive additional funding from the federal government to serve migrant students. In North Carolina, the state forwards the funds to 49 school districts that run MEPs.

Limited English Proficient:

Students that are in the process of learning English as a second language are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Other terms assigned to these students are English Learners (EL) and English Language Learners (ELL) (MEP Preliminary Guidance, 1994). At times students are also (incorrectly) referred to as "ESL" students, in reference to the fact that they require instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL). The LEP status is assigned and removed according to the students' performance on the district or state selected language assessment test. In North Carolina, according to the

2001 ESL Testing Guide, students are tested using the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) upon entering school, and yearly thereafter. School officials maintain student records measuring the level of growth in English language acquisition—oral, reading and writing. When students test at a "proficient" level, they are no longer identified as LEP. Additional state funding is available to school districts for providing services to LEP students.

Mexican-American:

This term refers to a student who is born in the United States of parents who are either born in Mexico or are of Mexican descent.

Mexican immigrant:

A student who was born in Mexico and moves to the United States is considered a Mexican immigrant.

Acculturation:

According to Burnam, Telles, Hough, and Escobar (1987), the acculturation process refers generally to "the changes in behaviors and values made by members of one culture as a result of contact with another culture" (p.106). I discuss the various stages of acculturation in the section entitled, "Related Literature" in the second chapter of this study.

Assimilation:

The process of embracing a new culture to the point of relinquishing one's primary cultural identity is called assimilation (Berry, 1980). Margaret Gibson (1988) defines assimilation as "…the process whereby individuals of one society or ethnic group are incorporated or absorbed culturally into another. At the individual level, cultural

assimilation implies loss of identification with one's former group" (p.24).

Incorporation:

"The term 'incorporation' refers to the process initiated and pursued by immigrants for the purpose of becoming contributing members of society. Incorporation is successfully achieved when the immigrant becomes engaged in productive activities that are beneficial to the individual and United States society" (Gonzalez, 2001, p.19).

North Carolina ABCs:

In 1996 the state of North Carolina developed an accountability system, called "The ABCs of Public Instruction" (Accountability, Basics, and Local Control), which involves high stakes testing of students in grades three through eight. The state measures and charts the rate of growth for each school; and, teachers in schools that meet or exceed their expected growth are rewarded with monetary bonuses. In addition, schools where 80% or higher of their students are on grade level, as determined by the state tests, receive additional statewide recognition. On the contrary, schools that fail to meet their expected growth and have 50% or more of their students falling below grade level, are labeled "Low Performing" and assigned a series of sanctions, including a state appointed "School Improvement Assistance Team." Since the latest reauthorization of the ESEA law of 2001, "No Child Left Behind," schools receiving Title I funds are expected to show growth for disaggregated groups of students including LEP status and ethnicity, among others. Given this change in law, I expect that schools will place a greater emphasis on seeking success for migrant students, since 93% (NC MEP Performance Report, 2001) of migrant students in the state are also Hispanic.

Having introduced the study by defining the problem, providing an overview of

the study and giving background information, I proceed with the design of the study. In the subsequent section, I discuss the purpose and significance of the study, followed by the guiding research questions, which direct the research. Finally, I include the limitations of the study.

Purposes of the Study

It is my expectation that identifying the characteristics of a long-standing and fast-growing AIM Club, such as Randolph County's, and examining the perceived benefits of the club for migrant students through a theoretical framework of *Negotiating Identities*, will serve a multiple purpose. The intended benefits are to affect migrant students and their families, migrant education staff and the surrounding schools and society.

Purposes which might have practical implications

1. To share characteristics with other clubs around the state so they might improve on the function of their club.
2. To encourage other MEPs without clubs to form one.
3. To motivate and inspire migrant students to get involved in school, remain until graduation and pursue post-secondary education.

Purpose which might contribute to theory and research

4. To expand the literature and research on *Negotiating Identities* as it is applied to migrant students in the setting of an extra-curricular school club.

The purposes are closely related and all contribute toward a goal of expanding the number of AIM Clubs in North Carolina and improving their vitality toward increasing migrant student involvement in school.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is stated in terms of its purposes.

Significance for Purpose 1

For those readers, like myself, who prefer learning from example rather than failed attempts or painful experiences, this study offers a plethora of sound and effective practices for migrant student AIM Clubs. These practices, beliefs and attitudes, hopefully, will help fledgling clubs to acquire a stronger footing in their development, and inspire others to embolden their resolve to improve the education arena for migrant students.

Significance for Purpose 2

AIM Clubs were initiated in North Carolina approximately nine years ago, however, the number of clubs has remained small until recent efforts by the state motivated more MEPs to establish AIM Clubs. Since 2000, the number of clubs in the state increased from 6 in 3 MEPs to 27 in 13 MEPs. Nevertheless, additional opportunity exists for expansion in the number of migrant AIM Clubs in North Carolina, given that there are 49 MEPs in the state.

Significance for Purpose 3

The study is significant in its contribution to migrant students and the staff who work with them. Migrant students, nationally, do not tend to participate in any kind of extra-curricular school activity (Reyes, Scribner and Scribner, 1999). Reasons vary ranging from family financial responsibilities, to feelings of alienation from the school, feeling like they just do not belong.

Multiple researches indicate that student participation in extra-curricular activities is among the major contributing factors toward improving migrant student success in

school (Migrant Education Dropout Prevention Project, 1989; Helge, 1991). Thus, logic follows that a goal of increasing the number of AIM Clubs in middle and high schools across the state and increasing migrant student participation is sound practice for migrant education staff.

Significance for Purpose 4

A review of the literature yielded only one reference to studies conducted on the subject of the acculturation of Mexican-American migrant students (Manaster, And Others, 1992).

Jim Cummins' framework of *Negotiating Identities* applies to immigrants in general, and not specifically to Mexican-American migrant students. Further, the work focuses mostly on activities and practices within a classroom, and the instructional and personal relationship between student and teacher. This study contributes to the existing literature by offering a model that applies the framework of *Negotiating Identities* specifically to migrant students in extracurricular middle and high school clubs, AIM Clubs.

Results of the study may be of interest to educators, specifically MEP staff, at all levels of application, from the national level to the school and club level.

Research Questions

The purposes of practical significance and theory and research suggest the following guiding research questions, which I use to direct the gathering and analysis of data for answering the overall research question:

Research questions for practical significance

4. What are the practices, beliefs and attitudes of people in the club?
5. What are the specific and types of activities in which students participate?

6. What are the perceived academic and/or social benefits and effects on migrant students who participate in the AIM Club?

Research questions for theory and research

6. Why do students participate in the AIM Club?
7. Are there issues of the transitioning process that surface for the students?
    - How do students feel about becoming "an American?"
    - What would students like to see happen regarding this process?

Both sets of questions seek to reveal specific aspects of the club that benefit students academically and socially, and also help to promote the social identity of migrant students.

Limitations of the Study

The study focuses specifically on activities, practices and relationships built in and around the AIM Club in Randolph County. Therefore, the study does not expound on instructional pedagogies, which are specific to the classroom, except as they coincide with club practices. This is not meant to be a platform for addressing the merits of bilingual education or the best instructional programs for serving migrant students. I address instructional practices of *Negotiating Identities* within the principles of multicultural education and critical pedagogy, as they apply to AIM Clubs for the purpose of increasing success in school. In the chapter that follows, I expound on the argument for providing students with opportunities to negotiate their identities in school, rather than expecting them to change their identities to become Americans, as a pre-requisite for school success.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

Theoretical Framework

A review of the literature suggests a theoretical framework for this work. In an attempt to ameliorate the problems that Mexican-American students encounter at school, the response of most educators, documented by George Sánchez as far back as 1943, has been to assimilate the student as quickly as possible (Cummins, 1996, 2001; Epstein, 1977; Lucas, 1981). The rationale is that, the sooner they become "Americans," leaving behind their "old ways," the better they will achieve at school.

However, "success" is yielded at the expense of loss of culture and identity of the individual who assimilates (Rodriguez, 1982; Wong-Fillmore, 1991b; Cummins, 1991a). Several theorists have emerged since the 1960's opposing that students should pay such a price for becoming Americans. Paulo Freire's (1970, 1993, 2000) theory of critical pedagogy supports the crucial need to maintain and develop the native culture of students. Building on prior knowledge becomes central to acquiring new meaning. E. Garcia (1995), talks about how research and practice in culture education have shifted from a focus on "Americanization" and educational equity to multicultural education and the culturally relevant education of children of diverse groups. Other writers (Banks, 1995; Nieto, 1996; Moll, 1990; Cummins, 1996, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995) refer to the need for schools to develop rather than eliminate the students' primary culture.

Most recently, Cummins (1996, 2001) applies the framework of *Negotiating Identities* for students of diverse cultures. Cummins argues that schools must maximize the opportunity for identity involvement as well as cognitive involvement. Not only is it essential to bring the students' heritage and language into the curriculum, but also to

involve them cognitively in the curriculum as part of generating knowledge. Students should be treated as intellectual workers, generating new knowledge for cognitive academic development. According to Cummins, this is best accomplished when students understand who they were (their culture and language) and are fully respected by educators who consider them contributors to the education experience. This is to take place as they are empowered to explore and challenge the society/community around them to bring about any needed transformational change to their realities. This is an extension of the multicultural concept of "building on prior knowledge." Cummins reminds us that positive, mutually respectful, dynamic interactions between educators and students dramatically affect not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also the creation of identity.

This study explores whether AIM Clubs can give students an avenue outside of the school in which to extend their cognitive involvement, build relationships and negotiate their identities without losing the core of who they are. The AIM Club in Randolph County may lead the way, presenting multiple examples of such opportunities.

Related Literature

Migrant students in transition

Traditionally, students coming to schools in the United States from other countries have faced the problems associated with adapting to a new environment, language and culture. Perhaps the most noticeable and immediate is the shock both students and educators experience at the first realization of a language difference. In his study of Mexican-American high school student immigrants and their process of incorporation, Gonzalez (2001) found that "The lack of English language skills is

compounded by attitudes that judge student ability based on criteria that are almost entirely dependent on the student's ability to communicate in English" (p.282). Also, dramatic changes in culture create clashes and misunderstandings for both students and school personnel, which have resulted in less than ideal situations (Darder, 1991; Walsh, 1991). Consequently, due to a perceived added burden on the school, issues of acceptance, or a lack thereof have further compounded some immigrant students' problems, in the school and classroom (Zanger, 1994).

In general, all of these factors mentioned above have plagued the progress of migrant students through the years (Perry, 1994). The question of how best to address these problems has beleaguered educators since the arrival of the first immigrant groups. For over a hundred years, the topic of what should be done and why has been hotly debated on many fronts (Cummins, 1996, 2001). In this review of literature I argue for the implementation of proven methods that best meet the needs of Mexican-American and migrant students. I describe ways by which migrant students can be regarded as resources that enhance the school, rather than ones who present a problem for the staff. When schools are prepared and willing to address issues of language, cultural/social identity and empowerment of the new population during this time of transition, everyone—migrant students, staff and community—can benefit positively (Nieto, 1999).

To develop an understanding of the issues that impact the education of migrant students in the United States, I also explore related issues in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Issues of language and culture, John Ogbu's (1992) concept of voluntary and involuntary minorities, and the process of acculturation—whether to assimilate or incorporate minority students, all have an educational impact. Finally, I show how

educational theories dating back to John Dewey (1916) have paved the way for the present framework of *Negotiating Identities.*

Issues of Language, Culture, Identity and Power

Language and culture is deeply intertwined, and it is not suitable to attempt to deal with one without the other. Peirce (1995) explains:

> …when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus, an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space. (pp. 17-18)

Language is used for expression, communication and learning. Communication takes place with everyone with whom the student comes in contact, including their family and school community. For migrant students arriving to schools in the United States, language is a major barrier to learning. Educators have tried to address this "problem" by simply teaching them English (Garcia, R. 1975). In their eagerness to help students learn English faster, teachers have at times forbidden students from using their native language: "prior to the 1970's it was extremely common for educators to reprimand bilingual students for speaking their home language (L1) in school" (Cummins, 2001, p.2). (Professionals in the field of second language acquisition to refer to the student's primary or home language commonly use the term "L1".) Unfortunately, this approach to help speed up the process of second language acquisition has yielded dismal results (Cummins, 1996, 2001; Lucas, 1981; Sanchez, 1943; Schlossman, 1983).

While students may have learned English, some have suffered side effects impacting their identity and ability to communicate with parents and family (McCaleb, 1994; Wong-Fillmore, 1991b). Richard Rodriguez (1982) proposes assimilation as preferable to incorporation because he does not believe incorporation is possible. Yet, in his book, *Hunger of memory: The education of Richard Rodriguez*, he juxtaposes the happy, chatty times at home with his family with the disquieting moments that followed the visit by the school nuns, who came to his home and convinced the family that they should not speak Spanish at home anymore:

> The family's quiet was partly due to the fact that, as we children learned more and more English, we shared fewer and fewer words with our parents. Sentences needed to be spoken slowly when a child addressed his mother or father. (Often the parent wouldn't understand.) The child would need to repeat himself. (Still the parent misunderstood.) The young voice, frustrated, would wind up saying, 'never mind'—the subject was closed. Dinners would be noisy with the clinking of knives and forks against dishes. (p.23)

This loss of family contact and social identity creates a child that feels neither Mexican nor American, posing larger social problems. Cummins (1996, pp. 21-22) shares Sudia Paloma McCaleb's (1994) discussion on the ensuing dilemma for the child that detects a disconnect between the value of the home culture and the school culture. The child:

> …is often forced to make difficult choices about whose teachings she is going to accept and whose she will reject. When the values and teachings of the home and school are quite different, serious intergenerational conflicts can result…While some students accept their bicultural identities, others want to deny their home

> culture completely…We are beginning to witness the tragedy that may result when students reject the home culture. As students pull themselves away from their roots and family ties, they need to find or become part of another group for support and care. Growing numbers of young people are succumbing to the attractions of gang involvement. (pp. 32-33)

Fueled by the sense of not belonging in the school culture, feelings of isolation in school are common among migrant students (Zanger, 1994). Not surprisingly, a relatively low percentage of migrant students participate in extra-curricular activities (Reyes, Scribner and Scribner, 1999; Gonzalez and Padilla, 1997). This lack of involvement is unfortunate, since participation in extra-curricular activities has been identified as one of the most effective vehicles for retaining migrant students in school and motivating them to graduate (Santa Clara County Office of Education, 1989). In reference to students' lack of connection with the school, Cummins (1996) stated, "Schools can go a long way towards preventing this process when educators affirm the home culture and involve parents as partners in the education of their children" (p.22).

While multiple studies have shown the advantage of affirming the home culture, reinforcing/valuing the student's primary language and empowering students to impact their environment (Ramirez, 1991; Beycont, 1994; Collier & Thomas 1997, 2001) for the academic and social strengthening of language minority students, very little has changed for this group of students. "In spite of considerable rhetoric endorsing equity and justice, little has changed in terms of educational outcomes. Culturally diverse students are still massively over-represented in low–achieving categories" (Cummins, 2001, p. 225).

According to Cummins, this is due to society's reluctance to relinquish power over historically subordinated groups:

> In order to understand why so little has changed in the big picture,…I have argued that the patterns of micro-interactions that culturally diverse students experience in the educational system are a function of the power relations operating between dominant and subordinated groups in the wider society. The power structure in the wider society strongly influences the culture of the school which is expressed in the educational structures implemented in the school and in the ways educators define their roles with respect to culturally diverse students and communities. Thus, it is not surprising that most educational reforms have remained at a surface level where they do not seriously challenge the societal power structure. (pp. 225-226)

An anthropological look at the differences in origins of minority groups seems to provide an understanding for the development of identity and self-concept of the minority groups and the degree of acceptance by the majority culture. Margaret Gibson and John Ogbu (1991) illuminate a possible source for the struggle for identity that migrant students encounter.

Voluntary and Involuntary Minorities

The distinction identified by Gibson and Ogbu (1991) between 'immigrant' or 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' subordinate groups in the United States, is important for understanding the historical and current educational achievement of culturally diverse communities in the United States (Cummins, 1996, 2001). Ogbu defines immigrants as those who choose to come to the United State for economic advantage, political asylum

or personal reasons, such as European Americans, Chinese and Punjabi Indians. In a review of Gibson and Ogbu's (1991) book, Clark (1993) affirms that these groups "arrive with a social identity intact and do not perceive the ideological hegemony of the schools as culturally threatening" (p.66). Clark's quote (1993, p. 66) refers to Gibson and Ogbu's (1991) view of immigrants' regard for their subordinate situation as a temporary obstacle to overcome. Immigrants believe that:

> although school credentials may not enable their young to get the same jobs as …members of the dominant group, a good education from their perspective will certainly enable their young people to get better jobs than would be possible without an education. (p.361)

Therefore, Clark explains Ogbu's view that for these groups, assimilation has often been accepted as a way up the social/career ladder, a way of *making it*.

On the contrary, involuntary minorities are those who are originally brought into the United States against their will. Examples of these groups are those brought through slavery, conquest, colonization, or forced labor. Ogbu (1992) found that "thereafter, these minorities were often relegated to menial positions" (p.8). Since involuntary minorities "do not see themselves as having a homeland with which to compare their current situation, they, therefore, compare themselves to the dominant group and as a result are acutely aware of their subordinate status" (Clark, 1993, p.67). Involuntary minorities see this inferior status as permanent and the only way to change it is through a collective resistance over an extended period of time (Clark, 1993). "Ideological hegemony is viewed as cultural genocide necessitating the involuntary subordinate group's collective resistance to all assimilation attempts by the dominant group" (Clark, p. 67). According

to Ogbu (1992), involuntary minorities were either deliberately excluded from true assimilation or were forced into 'superficial assimilation' by White Americans, all of which was resisted by involuntary minorities. Involuntary minorities developed a tendency to distrust the majority culture, and trust is an essential ingredient for assimilation.

Cummins (2001) argues that Mexican-Americans at times fall into the group of involuntary minorities.

> The division between voluntary and involuntary minorities is not always clear-cut. For example, Mexican-Americans who immigrate to the United States may initially have many of the characteristics of voluntary minorities; however, they quickly encounter the barriers to full participation that Mexican-Americans have historically experienced and their encounters with the dominant group become very similar to those of previous generations of Mexican-Americans. (p.32)

Cummins elaborates further, explaining how the differences within particular groups are sometimes obscured by generalizations such as Ogbu's:

> Any broad categorization, such as Ogbu's voluntary and involuntary minorities, is likely to obscure considerable variation within particular groups. There is enormous variation among different Latino/Latina groups in the U.S. as well as within groups such as Mexicanos (see, for example, Gibson, 1995, 1997; Suárez-Orozco, 1987, 1989; Trueba, 1988; Vásquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994). In critiquing Ogbu's position, Erickson (1987) and Trueba (1988) point out that it does not explain the success of many involuntary minority students.

> Thus, Obgu's distinction between voluntary and involuntary minorities should be seen as a broad categorization describing general patterns of power relations between dominant and subordinated groups but allowing for considerable intra-group variation within voluntary and involuntary minorities. (pp. 52-53)

Given the possible status of involuntary minorities within the group of Mexican-Americans, the critical need for providing migrant students opportunities to negotiate their identities in an educational setting follows logically.

As corroborated in multiple studies with Native American students (Deyhle, 1995), African American students (Fordham, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and Hispanic students (Lucas, 1981), "Ogbu suggests that a major reason why academic difficulties among involuntary minorities tend to be persistent is that cultural and language boundaries become more rigid than is typically the case for voluntary minorities" (Cummins, 2001, p.33).

For a look at how the situation described by Gibson and Ogbu (1991) plays out in schools, I defer to Cummins' (2001) summary:

> …the historical data reinforce the critical role that inter-group power relations and the negotiation of identity play in determining language learning and academic achievement among culturally diverse students. The major points are as follows:

- Subordinated groups that tend to experience the most severe academic disadvantage have never been given the opportunity to assimilate into the societal mainstream: on the contrary, they were subjected over generations to segregated

and inferior schooling, they were punished for speaking their home language in school, and their pride in their cultural identity was systematically eradicated;

- The educational experiences of subordinated group students have reflected the pattern of interactions experienced by their communities in the wider society; both children and adults have been prevented from full participation and advancement in mainstream societal institutions (*e.g.,* schools, the job market, etc.) through segregation and discrimination;
- Although early generations of immigrant children were punished for speaking their L1 and many groups did tend to experience academic difficulties, they were not discriminated against nor segregated educationally to the same extent as involuntary minorities; thus an ambivalent and/or oppositional identity was not internalized by the group and later generations assimilated to the mainstream society and succeeded academically;
- Among both voluntary and involuntary minorities, school failure on the part of culturally diverse students was generally attributed to some inherent deficiency, either genetic or experiential (*e.g.,* "cultural deprivation," bilingual confusion, etc.); this focus on inherent deficiencies of the bilingual child served to deflect attention away from the educational treatment that children were receiving. (p. 39)

Cummins (1996) further describes the situation of these involuntary minorities in school:

> It is important to note that students (and communities) do not passively accept dominant group attributions of their inferiority. Frequently, they resist this process of subordination actively through disruptive or oppositional behavior. While for some students, resistance may contribute to academic development (Skutnabb-

> Kangas, 1988; Zanger, 1994), in many situations resistance has severe costs with respect to academic success and upward mobility; often culminating in students dropping out of school prematurely (Ogbu, 1992; Willis, 1977). (p.145)

Gibson and Ogbu (1991) offer a descriptive rather than a prescriptive cultural anthropologist's point of view of the problem faced by involuntary minorities in school and society (Clark, 1993). To continue describing the landscape for immigrating minorities, I proceed with a sociological description of the process of acculturation.

The Acculturation Process…Should it end in Assimilation? Incorporation?

The acculturation process refers generally to "the changes in behaviors and values made by members of one culture as a result of contact with another culture" (Burnam, Telles, Hough, and Escobar 1987, p. 106). Results range from a total assimilation into the host country, leaving behind native roots, to the production of a truly bicultural person (Manaster, And Others, 1992) who has been incorporated into his new culture. At the incorporated or bicultural level, the individual selects, abstracts, or integrates different components from different cultures (Burnam, Telles, Hough, and Escobar, 1987). According to Berry (1992), it is possible for the process of adaptation to lead to four types of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. In the case of assimilation a group or individual rejects their cultural identity, but considers the preservation of relationships with other groups important. Immigrants select the path of integration when they rejoice in both cultures. Separation takes place when an individual or a group maintains their ethnic culture, but simultaneously tries to avoid interethnic contacts. Finally, the marginalization option is evident when there is no interest in cultural maintenance and when relations with others are not considered valuable.

Although slightly different terminology has been used for the variety I defend, incorporation, integration and becoming bicultural, the results tend to be similar—students end up accepting and adapting to the new culture, while maintaining their identity in their native culture. In a journal article entitled, "Psychological Aspects of Cultural Pluralism: Unity and Identity Reconsidered," J. W. Berry (1974) makes a plea for the recognition of the psychological and cultural value of pluralism in a nation. He recognizes and supports bilingualism and biculturalism, while he discourages assimilation. The single study I identified having been conducted on the topic of the acculturation of Mexican-American migrant students (Manaster And Others, 1992), finds that successful migrant students may have a more defined sense of themselves and the world, feel more able to put together differing aspects from their different cultures, and accomplish and expect to continue to accomplish more in the future than do unsuccessful migrant students.

Manaster uses an abridged version of Kahl's (1968) Modernism-Traditionalism Scale as part of his test to determine levels of acculturation. According to Manaster (1992), students scoring higher on modernism are more integrated with the middle-class value systems of modern society, while students scoring higher on traditionalism reject adjustment to modern society and reflect a negative attitude toward it. While these successful students are identified as having higher levels of acculturation on the Modernism-Traditionalism scale than the unsuccessful group, there is no indication that they have left behind their roots of origin. To the contrary, the study mentions that the successful group feels more able to integrate various aspects of their different cultures; in other words, they are more incorporated than the comparison group. Other studies

including Mexican-American students who are not necessarily migrant reported similar results (Reyes, Gillock, Kobus, 1999; Ramos, Sanchez, 1995).

Findings in support for the merits of incorporation and against assimilation of Mexican-American students abound. Buriel (1980) in a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association, conveys evidence against the common supposition among many social scientists that identification with Mexican-American culture hinders the development of a positive self-concept and the financial prowess among members of this group. Another study, a three-year ethnographic study of academic achievement and schooling orientations among immigrant Mexican and Mexican-American students at a high school in Houston, Texas, that practice assimilation (Valenzuela, 1999), finds that the school turns out Mexican youth as a monolingual, English-speaking, ethnic minority, that neither identifies with Mexico nor is equipped to function competently in America's mainstream. The majority of the school's regular (non-college-bound) students experience schooling as a subtractive process that divests them of social and cultural resources and leaves them progressively vulnerable to academic failure. Yet another study (Huang, G. 1992) examines the relationship between biliterate (proficient in reading and writing skills in English and Spanish) Mexican-American students and their self-esteem. One of the findings of the study is that Mexican-American children who see themselves as biliterates have the highest self-confidence as compared to monoliterates and oral bilinguals. This study reinforces the notion that while living in the United States, it behooves the migrant student to retain his/her Mexican heritage and language while becoming "American." Having presented the anthropological and sociological backdrop, I proceed with a brief look at the related

theoretical landscape, which begins to suggest educational solutions and reasons for the preference for incorporation over assimilation.

Educational Theories

The tenets and strategies promoted by multi-cultural education, critical pedagogy and *Negotiating Identities* have roots dating back over a hundred years to the "progressive" pedagogical philosophy of John Dewey. His philosophy is particularly apparent in his writing, such as *My Pedagogic Creed* (1867), *The Child and the Curriculum (1902),* and *Democracy in Education* (1916). Since then, other "theorists such as Combs (1962), Entwistle (1970), and Jervis and Montag, (1991) have all espoused a child-centered curriculum" (Gay, 1995). "Dewey emphasized the centrality of student experience and the importance of encouraging active student learning rather than passive reception of information" (Cummins, 2001, p.217).

Vykgotsky (1962, 1978) first, followed by Tharp & Gillmore, (1988); and Wells, (2000) are other "constructivist" sociocultural theorists who share in Dewey's perspective of the child-centered approach. According to Cummins (2001):

> Vykgotsky (1978) emphasized that intellectual functions develop within a matrix of social interaction and are mediated by the child's inner speech. Language use and social interaction through language are thus crucial for intellectual development both in home and school. (p. 145)

Freire's work (1970) is accredited with influencing the transformative potential of education (Cummins, 2001). According to Cummins, Freire's critical pedagogy or "transformative pedagogy" is similar to constructivist pedagogy; however, it differs in that critical pedagogy:

> …uses collaborative critical inquiry to enable students to relate curriculum content to their individual and collective experience and to analyze broader social issues relevant to their lives. It also encourages students to discuss ways in which social realities might be transformed through various forms of democratic participation and social action. (Cummins, 2001, p. 222)

This process has been referred to as a "critical literacy" (Freire, 1970; Cummins, 2001). All of these theorists have contributed toward the foundations of the principles of multicultural education, within which resides Cummins' framework for *Negotiating Identities.*

Negotiating Identities

Cummins' framework views "the interactions between educators and students as the most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school" (Cummins, 2001, p. 21). The interactions are viewed through two lenses: the teaching-learning relationship, and that of identity negotiations. The former is represented by the classroom strategies and techniques implemented to make input comprehensible (Krashen, 1981, 1993), which is required to promote academic success and cognitive growth. The latter, identity negotiations, is "represented by the messages communicated to students regarding their identities—who they are in the teacher's eyes and who they are capable of becoming" (Cummins, 2001, p.21). As such, school educators have a powerful role to play in determining the impact that the school will have on migrant student success. Sonia Nieto (1999) affirms the impact of the identity choices that educators adopt:

> In the end, if teachers believe that students cannot achieve at high levels, that their backgrounds are riddled with deficiencies, and that multicultural education is a frill that cannot help them to learn, the result will be school reform strategies that

> have little hope for success. On the other hand, if teachers begin by challenging social inequities that inevitably place some students at a disadvantage over others; if they struggle against institutional policies and practices that are unjust; if they begin with the strengths and talents of students and their families; if they undergo a process of personal transformation based on their own identities and experiences; and finally, if they engage with colleagues in a collaborative and imaginative encounter to transform their own practices and their schools to achieve equal and high-quality education for all students, then the outcome is certain to be a more positive one than is currently the case. (pp. 175-176)

The challenge remains for schools to meet the needs of migrant students at both of these levels—the need for appropriate instructional pedagogy and the need for a positive negotiation of identity. Having one without the other does not produce positive results. (Gándara *et al*., 2000; McNeil, 2000). Offering English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for a few minutes a day does not take care of the "problem" for either the school or the children (Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2001). Further, even if the instructional pedagogy were excellent and on target for the language minority child, it would not suffice without the positive teacher-child relationship (Cummins, 1996, 2001). Likewise, providing a culturally conscientious, caring, nurturing, and supportive environment for migrant students without adequate academic rigor and cognitive development yields academic failure for all concerned (Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2001; Cummins, 1996, 2001).

Since a major focus of this paper is centered on issues of identity, I do not elaborate further on specific instructional pedagogy and classroom techniques, except

where they also apply to AIM Clubs. Suffice it to say that teachers must make all academic input comprehensible to students. According to researchers such as Krashen (1981, 1999a), Nieto (1996, 1999), Cummins (1979a, 1981a, 1986, 1989, 1996, 2001), Hakuta, Butler and Witt (2000), Hakuta & Diaz (1985), Wong-Fillmore (1992), Banks (1995), E. Garcia (1991, 1995), Moll (1990), Thomas & Collier (1997, 2001), Ramirez (1991), J. Crawford (1995), and many others in the field of pedagogy for second language learners, this is best accomplished by providing ESL instruction for the development of English oral, reading and writing skills, while simultaneously increasing the likelihood for comprehension of content area instruction by using the child's primary language for instruction or support. In cases where it is not possible to support the child's primary language, the next best recourse is to use strategies such as those presented in "sheltered instruction" (Krashen, 1981). These strategies include the use of visuals, manipulatives, hands-on experiences, role playing, graphic organizers, summarizing, reporting back, cooperative learning and any other activities that help the student comprehend and internalize the material.

In addition, opportunities for cognitive growth are maximized when students are provided instructional opportunities that provide cognitive challenge and contextual support. Cummins (2001) explains:

> Contextual support involves both internal and external dimensions. Internal factors are attributes of the individual that make a task more familiar or easier in some respect (*e.g.* prior experience, motivation, cultural relevance, interests, etc.). External factors refer to aspects of the input that facilitate or impede comprehension; for example, language input that is spoken clearly and contains a

> considerable amount of syntactic and semantic redundancy is easier to understand than input that lacks these features. (p.72)

The concepts of multicultural education (Nieto 1996, 1999; Banks, 1995), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) involve and propose the need for internal factors of contextual support (Cummins, 1996, 2001). It is here that the connection is made between the native culture and the opportunity for students to negotiating their identities with a caring, trusted educator at school.

Caring educators intent on empowering students to think critically and transform their realities, must be willing to explore the ways in which dominant groups have maintained their power in American society (Cummins, 1996, 2001; Moll, 1990). They must guide students through activities that yield an understanding of how coercive power works in their own lives and communities. One example of coercive power is the discourse that asserts the need for bilingual children to assimilate and give up their primary language. When students *wake up* and realize the need to maintain their language and culture, they become empowered and begin to negotiate their identities within the school culture. In his study, Gonzalez (2001) found that Mexican immigrant high school students:

> …feel proud of their Mexican identity and criticize Mexican-origin persons who deny their heritage by not speaking Spanish and pretending to be something else. They believe that a denial of their cultural roots and ethnicity weakens the image they have of themselves. They are aware of perceptions by some people in the U.S. of Mexican culture and people as inferior, but instead of feeling defeated,

> they feel challenged to prove that Mexicans are as intelligent and capable as any other person. The positive image Mexican immigrant high school students have of their cultural roots contributes to a positive self-image and to their successful incorporation into U.S. society. (p.283)

The loss of shame over their identity is energizing, and they gain more freedom to delve deeply into the business of school seriously: "…the more critically literate students become, the more they generate the power to define their own identities and realities rather than being subject to the kinds of external definitions that historically have served to disempower subordinated groups" (Cummins, 2001, p. 137).

This dynamic empowerment only takes place when the teacher-student relationship is respectful, trusting and collaborative. Cummins (1996) references Lucas, Henze, and Donato's (1990) study of six successful high schools serving primarily Latino/Latina students in Arizona and California, who document the affective dimensions of the interactions between educators and students. Cummins (p. 147) describes this interaction with the following quote from this study:

> At all of the schools, students mentioned teachers who had given them special help and attention, often crediting them with providing personal counseling as well as academic support. Typical student comments included the following 'The teachers here don't just teach; they care about you' and 'Teachers stay after school to explain what we didn't understand.' (Lucas, Henze, and Donato p.336)

Cummins (1996, p.184-185) further quotes from the book, *Reclaiming Our Voices: Bilingual Education, Critical Pedagogy & Praxis* (Frederickson, 1995), pointing out the

account of two former students' memory of the personal transformations they experienced as students in one empowering teacher's classroom:

> We had heard before about a different classroom at our high school, and we were about to step inside it for the first time in our junior year. Mr. Terrazas was a different teacher, you felt special in his class, like a "somebody." You could honestly say it was your class. We were surrounded by butcher paper hanging from the walls with bright colors, beautiful drawings, and big letters. There were no desks or rows; instead there were big round tables. You could choose your own seat and you were responsible for your own work and production.
>
> The most exciting thing we can remember is going into the classroom and having one of those deep and powerful dialogues. In these powerful dialogues we also shared and examined our own lives…As students we were taking control of our lives, getting to know ourselves, and we were able to share our feelings with others. If we had known that sharing and looking closely at our cultures, our lives, and society was so transforming, we would have done it sooner!…
>
> Our classroom was full of human knowledge; all of us knew something different and we were confident enough to share it with each other. We had a teacher who believed in us; he didn't hide our power, he advertised it. He gave us the opportunity we truly needed to reclaim our voices. He too was sharing his oppressive life experiences, his human knowledge, his cultural truth—this is what we appreciated the most. He shared information about oppression, discrimination, and exploitation of oppressed peoples in the United States. We had never heard this history before. (1995, p.255)

In empowering educational settings, students are acknowledged for the unique contributions they can make to the classroom and the school. Luis Moll (1992) writes about how language minority students and communities have "funds of knowledge," which are historically developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for households and living. He argues that these funds of knowledge are to be treated as resources in educational settings rather than deficits or problems. Moll's (1990) Community Knowledge model requires teachers to inventory the resources in the community and include them in the curriculum. By so doing, instruction becomes more relevant to the family and community experiences of the students. Students are recognized for the knowledge they bring about other countries, cultures, languages and customs. Parents are brought in to speak to their children's classrooms as experts in specialized topics. Bilingual students are seen as "language brokers" in the classroom, assisting monolingual students and teachers.

In summary, once again I refer to Cummins (2001) as he enumerates the components that contribute to the academic and positive identity development of culturally diverse students. These components are incorporated into the analysis in Chapter 5:

- Affirmation of students' cultural identity and encouragement of primary language literacy and language development;
- Encouragement of active parental participation;
- Cognitively-challenging instruction that provides opportunities for students to draw on their background experiences while working collaboratively to explore issues and topics that are relevant to their lives.

- The above interventions "are implemented in a school context where issues related to the education of culturally diverse students have moved from the periphery to the center of concern for the entire school. Educators, both individually and collectively, have defined their roles in such a way that their interactions with culturally diverse students actively affirm students' identities. The educational structures established in the school reflect these role definitions." (pp. 146-147)

This literature review and theoretical framework provide a basis for my study of the AIM Club in Randolph County. Whereas previous literature has applied these concepts to a classroom setting, my study contributes to the literature by applying the ideas in an extra-curricular setting. I look for possible ways in which the migrant students are supported linguistically and culturally as they are empowered through opportunities to negotiate their identities with local staff. In other words, I seek for ways that the AIM Club might help students to incorporate into the American culture—embracing both their native culture and their new one in a positive manner.

II. DESIGN

Chapter 3. Methodology

Setting

Randolph County is centrally located in the state of North Carolina. Data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce indicates a total 2002 population of 135,885. The ethnic breakdown of the population is 90.12% White, 6.63% Hispanic, 5.94% Black, .81% Asian/Pacific Islander and .77% American Indian. Despite the relatively large Hispanic population in the county, compared to other minority groups, the identified migrant student population is 425—this is not very high considering other counties that have 900 and 1000 migrant students. This low number of migrant students might correspond with the .9% agricultural industry in the county. The largest percentage of workers in the county are in manufacturing—44%, and this type of work does not qualify students for MEP services.

Nevertheless, the Randolph County AIM Club stands head and shoulders above other middle and high school AIM Clubs throughout the 49 MEPs in North Carolina. The Randolph County AIM Club is considered to be the largest and longest functioning club in the state. Other local MEPs have made attempts to form AIM Clubs throughout the past seven years; however, few have remained past the awkward beginning stages. The Randolph County AIM Club is one of the few that has been active and strong since its inception seven years ago.

I selected the AIM Club in Randolph County as the case to study due to the long-standing nature and relatively large student membership of the club. The club reports a comparatively large membership of 150 students throughout seven different county

schools and a relative history of longevity, compared to other clubs in the state. These data alone place the Randolph County AIM Club at the forefront of all AIM Clubs in the state. Most other clubs serve anywhere from 10-40 students in one to three different schools, and only one or two has been in existence longer than two years. In addition, the Randolph AIM Club advisors serve as leaders and trainers in the state, helping others to form and develop AIM Clubs in their own school districts. Informal observations over recent years led me to believe that this club provided an information-rich case for in-depth study (Patton 1990). Due to the club's features, purposive sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) logically led me to select the Randolph County AIM Club for the setting.

According to Sarver, Johnson and Verma (2000), the worthiness of a youth organization is determined by its ability to a) prepare youth to be contributing members of society, (b) provide family support, and (c) satisfy developmental needs of youth. In selecting a viable club in the state in which to conduct this study, it was my observation, as State Consultant of Migrant Education, as well as the observation of other migrant staff in North Carolina that the Randolph County AIM Club met these criteria over the past few years. Prior to the study, it was apparent to members of the migrant staff that the workings of the club illustrated cases of people working together across programs, agencies, communities and cultures, providing exemplary services for middle and high school migrant students and other Latino students in the district.

Sample

Within the Randolph County AIM Club, I investigate the attitudes, beliefs and practices of staff members, students and parents. Participants include the MEP director, the two main club advisors, one school principal, two school certified staff members,

three students, three parents and other groups of students and parents. The above-mentioned participants also contribute their ideas regarding the perceived benefits and effects of student participation in the AIM Club. In the following table I name and describe the participants interviewed, along with the characteristics I required of each position:

Table 1

Participant names and required characteristics of participants that were interviewed in-depth.

Person interviewed	Years in school	Years in U.S.	Years in AIM Club	Special required characteristics
MEP Director • Stuart Bullock	N/A			
Club Advisors (2) • Denise Beane • Roxanne Taylor	N/A			
Principal, • Drew Maerz	N/A			
School certificated staff members (2) • Maureen Becker • Steve Taylor	2 years longer than AIM Club			
Student 1 • Fernanda Alcántara		Close to 1 year	1 year or less	Identified Migrant, of Mexican descent
Student 2 • Ramiro Aguilar		3-5	2 or more	Identified Migrant, of Mexican descent
Student 3 • Rebeca Avila		6 or more	3 or more	Identified Migrant, of Mexican descent
Parents (3) • Anselmo Alcántara (Fernanda's dad) • Gorgonio Aguilar (Ramiro's dad) • Imelda Hurtado (Rebeca's mom)		N/A	N/A	Parents of each of the students

The participation of the program director, Stuart Bullock, is essential for validity since it is the director's role to approve all actions and expenditures of the club. Stuart has been the director of the MEP for three years, though he has been in the central office for 12 years. The club advisors, Roxanne Taylor and Denise Beane, further contribute to the richness of the data since they are the ones who carry out (and in this case) initiate most club activities. Denise has worked with the MEP for 17 years and Roxanne 10 years. The principal and school certified staff members are not direct staff members of the MEP; therefore, I include their thoughts as they might offer a different perspective from that of the program director and club advisors. I thought perhaps theirs might be a more detached view of the AIM Club and its effects on students. Drew Maerz, principal of Southwest Randolph High School, has been at the school for four years. The two school certified staff members have been at the school at least two years longer than the AIM Club has been established. This helps to verify longevity and knowledge of how things were before and after the formation of the AIM Club at the school. Maureen Becker, one of the certified staff members has been a counselor at Randleman High School for 10 years. The other certified staff member, Steve Taylor, a teacher and coach at Southwest Randleman High School, has been there for eight years. Finally, the students and parents represent the ultimate recipients of the club's intent. Their thoughts are crucial to the findings.

Students are selected by a variety of criteria. Since I needed students to verify issues of adjustment to American schools, it was important to select club members with varying lengths of time here in the United States. Student number one, Fernanda Alcántara, a 10th grader, has been here one year and two months. Student number two,

Ramiro Aguilar Serrato, a senior, has been three and a half years in the United States, while student number three, Rebeca Avila, also a senior, has been here eight years. Even though eligibility for the MEP expires after three years, students remain eligible if their family moves across county lines, so it is possible for a student to remain eligible for migrant services for more than three years. This situation is not uncommon given the high mobility of migrant families. Further, it was important for students to have sufficient experience as club members; therefore, Fernanda has been a club member for one year. Ramiro has been a club member for three and a half years, and Rebeca has been a member for six years. For the purpose of continuity of data verification, the parents selected are the parents of the students in the sample. Anselmo Alcántara is Fernanda's father. Gorgonio Aguilar Guadalupe is Ramiro's father, and Imelda Hurtado is Rebeca's mother. I randomly selected other groups of students and parents for focus group interviews and qualitative surveys. To help focus, simplify and facilitate group interviews, all student and parent participants in the sample fit a pattern of homogeneity (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in that they all at one time fit the definition of migrant, as per the MEP guidelines for eligibility; and, they are all of Mexican descent. The methods for data collection are varied and I elaborate on these in the next section.

Data Collection

Collection of empirical data involves a multi-faceted approach, from interactive to non-interactive methods (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). While I began the study with a definite plan in mind, I followed Bateson's (1985) advice and remained open to finding possible clues in sources that I had not previously considered. I conducted in-depth

interviews, observations, surveys, focus group interviews, and a review of documents and artifacts.

Qualitative Methods

In selecting the preferred method of study, and considering Marshall and Rossman's (1999) notion of matching the particular genre to the overall strategies, I selected qualitative methods as most appropriate. In Marshall and Rossman's matrix of genres and strategies, this study falls under the category of "those focusing on *society and culture*" (p. 60). The unique strength of this genre for describing requires the researcher to develop a deep understanding of participants' values, ideas, attitudes and lived experiences:

> Studies focusing on society and culture, whether a group, a program, or an organization, typically espouse some form of *case study* as an overall strategy; this entails immersion in the setting and rests on both the researcher's and the participants' worldviews. (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p.61)

Interviews, observations, surveys, focus groups, surveys and document/artifact analysis are all consistent with appropriate methods for a qualitative case study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

In-depth Interviews

I employ LeCompte and Preissle's (1993) in-depth interviews of key informants for the two club advisors. The two advisors, Roxanne Taylor and Denise Beane, are not typical of AIM Club advisors throughout the state. Most club advisors are teachers, whereas the two advisors in Randolph County are not certified as teachers. They serve in the positions of recruiter/tutor and data manager. Roxanne and Denise both work for the Migrant Education Program at the district level. These informants yielded specific

historical data on the AIM Club, which other interviewees did not know. The two club advisors were chosen as they were the initiators of the club and continue to be the coordinators of all club activities. They were expected to provide specialized and relevant information necessary for analyzing and identifying significant findings (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). In-depth interviews of key informants provide opportunities to gain thoughtful, insightful information from those who are most closely related to the AIM Club.

Additional in-depth interviews involve other participants who are affected directly or indirectly by the AIM Club: students, parents, school certified staff members and the MEP director. The director and school certified staff members supply comparative data for the experience of migrant students at the school before and after the AIM Club was established. In-depth interviews further serve to document the personal narratives and the direct effect of the club on the migrant students and their parents.

The different groups of participants, director (see Appendix D for interview guide), club advisors (see Appendix D for interview guide), school certified staff members, principal (see Appendix C for interview guide), students (see Appendix A for interview guide), and parents (see Appendix B for interview guide) are asked a different set of questions, allowing for a certain degree of overlap in questions as appropriate for the role. Denzin's (1978) nonscheduled standardized form of interview facilitates a level of uniformity with simultaneous flexibility for variation as the situation demands. I used focus groups for practical purposes, allowing me to include more people at a time. Focus groups, (Krueger, 1988) consisting of 10 migrant parents whose children participate in AIM Clubs add breadth to the scope of parental input and participation. The focus group

interview with 10 migrant students was held separately from those with the parents. All interviews were tape-recorded for ease of transcription and accuracy.

While the participants' voices are of main interest, I was conscious of my participation as research instrument. As an observer-participant, I asked questions, observed, and interacted with participants in both in-depth and focus interviews. My role varied from passive to active participation (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), depending on the requirements of the specific interview. There were cases where additional probing of an informant yielded valuable data that otherwise might have been omitted.

Observations

Observations of club meetings, special events and activities served to verify the other data gathered as well as to add depth and breadth to the study (Patton 1990). I conducted these observations as specified in LeCompte & Preissle's description (1993) of "participant observers," so as to build rapport with migrant students and be able to capture their natural behavior. A variety of places to observe yielded different contexts for the club members' actions and interactions. Club advisors have videotaped several club activities in the past. One of the activities I observed, the Hispanic Gala Night, was also videotaped, giving me another opportunity for increased accuracy in recording interactions, tone, morale and attitudes. I observed club activities in two of the schools with the largest populations of migrant students, Randleman High School and Southwest Randolph High School, as well as in the large group setting.

Surveys

The surveys were administered to 25 migrant students and served the purpose of further triangulation of data as well as "improving the representativeness" (LeCompte & Preissle, 193, p. 164) of student participants. To increase the number of respondents,

students were given the opportunity to respond to written surveys at an AIM Club meeting. The surveys contained questions similar to those that were asked of the students being interviewed in depth as well as additional questions necessary for clarifying data during analysis. I wrote the surveys in English and Spanish to allow for increased comprehension by the students.

Review of Documents and Artifacts

There are a wealth of documents and artifacts that exist about the club and it's activities in and around the Randolph County AIM Club. Newspaper articles, published books (by migrant students), journal articles, minutes of club meetings, evaluation reports and artwork are samples of the artifacts available. The whole of these artifacts serve to richly document the activities, beliefs and attitudes of those involved in and with the club. These materials further serve as evidence of the common themes and stories that emerged from participant reports (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The review of artifacts provides, yet, another data source for triangulation.

This wide array of data, shown in the table below, provide sufficient field notes to produce what Geertz (1973) calls "thick description" of the workings of the club and those people around it.

Table 2

Sources of data.

Data Source	Who/What was involved?	Description
In-depth interviews	MEP Director, Stuart Bullock AIM Club Advisors (2) Denise Beane Roxanne Taylor Principal, Drew Maerz Certified staff (2) Maureen Becker Steve Taylor Students (3) Fernanda Alcántara Ramiro Aguilar Rebeca Avila Parents (3) Anselmo Alcántara Gorgonio Aguilar Imelda Hurtado	In-depth interviews using the questions listed in the appendices as a guide
Focus group interviews	Students: 10 students, Mexican-American, migrant Parents: 10 parents, Mexican-American, migrant	An interview leading to group discussions using the questions in the appendices as a guide
Observations	3 club meetings 2 large group activities 1 field trip	Club meetings with 10-20 participants in each meeting AIM Day Camp at Camp Caraway with 75 students Hispanic Gala Night with 75 students performing and over 350 in the audience Group of 12 students attended the Hispanic Summit in Raleigh
Surveys	25 students, Mexican-American, migrant	Students responded in writing to questions listed in Appendix A and other questions required for verification of data
Review of documents and artifacts	Meeting minutes, newsletters, newspaper articles, budgets, books, calendar of events, field trip forms, student rosters, student membership contracts, power point presentations, correspondence, posters, fliers, artwork, murals, computer disks, mission statement	

Data are only as valuable as the resulting analysis and report, on which I elaborate in the next section.

Data Analysis

Bogdan & Biklen (1998) define data analysis as, "…the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others" (p. 157). A variety of processes exist for accomplishing this task. Given the descriptive nature of this study, I analyzed the data using Patton's (1990) cross-case analysis, which involves grouping together answers to common questions across participants. This process enabled me to find evidence in the data that illustrated common themes in the participants' attitudes, beliefs and actions.

As is widely recommended by qualitative researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1998; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1988), I engaged in data analysis concurrently with data collection. Listening to participants and observing the events around the AIM Club allowed me to begin formulating concepts, ideas, and overall themes as they emerged. Thinking through the data in this fashion, forced me to listen critically altering the interview questions as I proceeded. Led by the guiding research questions (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and the emerging common themes, I began to analyze the data in my thinking with the use of commentary field notes and memos (Glesne, 1998). By embedding commentary and field notes within the transcripts of interviews and observations, I was able to begin identifying common topics and themes.

For the actual work of analysis I employed QSR's N6 (QSR, N6, Version 6.0, 2002), a qualitative data analysis software program, embedding codes for common topics within the text of the transcripts and observations, as they emerged in reading through the transcripts (Glesne, 1998). Once coded, N6 allowed me to conduct searches of all the codes, grouping common thoughts and topics together. Initially I began sorting the data and organizing the codes in *tree nodes* for the purpose of establishing hierarchical levels within the concepts. As I proceeded, it was easier for me to group the coded text of the topics within common themes without further use of tree nodes. I grouped the topics under the themes in a matrix. Next, using another matrix, I further grouped the themes under the guiding research questions. This method facilitated the identification of overarching themes, and categories within the themes. A final matrix for mapping the recurrence of references to the themes and sub-themes by the respondents permitted me to see patterns of emphasis and degrees of support for each of the themes analyzed before writing the report. By proceeding cautiously and accurately at every stage of data collection and analysis, I achieved greater degrees of validity in my study, discussed in the next section.

Validity

A completely valid qualitative study, according to Wolcott (1990), is not necessarily an appropriate goal to seek. More accurately, he proposes the pursuit of better understanding the described situation. Eisner & Peshkin's (1990) quote expresses this concept clearly:

> Wolcott's point is that the deepest and most important aspects of social situations are not quite that focused and are far more complex and subtle. The problem is

> not validity, but understanding, or some new term as yet to be invented that will capture the significance of the drama the qualitative researcher wishes to share with reader. (p. 98)

My goal, like Wolcott's, was to immerse myself sufficiently into the situation as to "get it right" more than not. By following Wolcott's (1990) nine steps incorporated into the next section, I had a better chance of getting it right.

As luck would have it, I happen to be an auditory learner. This quality served me well in the first step, "Talk Little, Listen a Lot." I consciously listened and asked questions that broadened the amount of information and description given. Since I know so much about the subject, I guarded against putting words in the mouths of informants and interpreting meanings they were not conveying. This step coupled with the second, "Record Accurately" complemented each other, since I tape-recorded conversations for transcription. Keeping focused on the workings of the machinery served to remind me that my main role, like that of the tape recorder's, was *to listen.*

The next three steps having to do with the writing aspect were essential for getting it right, "Begin Writing Early," "Let Readers 'See' for Themselves," and "Report Fully." I wrote a brief draft of my expected findings early on in the process and compared it with my findings as I proceeded. This exercise also allowed me to fill in gaps in my fieldwork as I proceeded through interviews and observations. Further, I was able to develop more specific questions for interviews and focus group discussions. By using original quotes from participants and thick description of observation, the reader is able to *see* the participants' actions and hear their voices.

The final steps, "Be Candid," "Seek Feedback," "Try to Achieve Balance" and "Write Accurately," reminded me to pay attention to the personal touch I contributed to the findings and to check and double check for balance and accuracy. I certainly had an opportunity to express my reactions and recommendations at the end when I suggested guidelines for the clubs to use. However, unlike Wolcott, I intended to keep my personal feelings, reactions and biases out of the report of findings to the maximum degree possible, given that I was the research instrument. By seeking feedback from participants I checked for accuracy of quoted material and interpretations of observations. Other colleagues familiar with the subject lent professional advice on interpretations and application to the theoretical framework. Finally, during the editing stage my editor checked for balance in reporting, ensuring that findings are reported fairly and in the proportionate manner they deserve. The editing stage also provided an opportunity to verify writing style and correctness of form.

Triangulation

Patton's (1990) notion of triangulation is that it should be used mostly for the purpose of adding breadth and depth to the data. I expected to learn more from the data by acquiring information from a variety of data sources. Different people recounting the same story are likely to report different versions as they remember the account. This variety in accounts served to fill in gaps in the data. In addition, using a wide variety of data collection methods further substantiated the verification of data through triangulation. As LeCompte & Preissle (1993) report on Glaser and Strauss' earlier work (1967), "Triangulation prevents the investigator from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions; it enhances the scope, density, and clarity of constructs developed

during the course of the investigation" (1993, p. 48). It also serves to correct for possible biases that might have occurred through my observations.

Finally, my previous experience conducting a similar study in Chatham County (R. Crawford, 2000) gives further credibility to my ability to conduct this study. The Chatham County study is a descriptive case study analyzing the beliefs, attitudes and actions of the MEP staff and students, for the purpose of identifying the characteristics of the program that makes it successful. The methods of data collection and analysis are similar to the ones proposed in this study. The MEP staff in Chatham County verified the study and was pleased with the results. The data generated by that study serves as additional background for the anticipated findings in this study.

The resulting report provides a deep understanding for the readers of the workings in and around the AIM Club in Randolph County. All the above steps complement each other; thus, enhancing the validity of the study.

Generalizability

The traditional meaning of "generalizability" as applied to quantitative research is neither appropriate for qualitative study nor sought-after in this study. As Donmoyer, in Eisner & Peshkin (1990), propose, "for practitioners concerned with individuals, not aggregates, research can never be generalizable in the sense suggested by Thorndike. Research can only function as a heuristic; it can suggest possibilities but never dictate action" (p. 182). Further, a descriptive case study need not concern itself with generalizability as much as with description. The kind of generalizability that I propose to attain is closer to Lincoln & Guba's (1985) concept of *transferability.* In other words, this study is directly "transferable" to another AIM Club only to the degree that the other club is similar to the Randolph County AIM Club. Donmoyer's theory of generalizabilty

applies here; the reader determines the degree to which the study applies to their situation (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990).

AIM Clubs throughout the state differ in size, student profiles, leadership, morale, drive and level of commitment; however, there are sufficient commonalties among clubs (MEP guidelines, similar student profiles, basic staff requirement, etc.) to allow for a degree of transferability. While all AIM Clubs across the state may not be able to duplicate each specific activity identified in this study, it is intended that within the overall findings, most clubs will find some activities that will be applicable to their setting. These activities may foster the positive attitudes and relationships that promote *Negotiating Identities* of migrant students.

Subjectivity

My professional and personal background provides an advantage in conducting this research in a variety of ways. First, my professional experience with migrant students and the MEP, provides insights that allows for easier interpretation of references to programmatic issues. Secondly, my position as state consultant gives me access to data beyond that which is provided by informants, such as statewide student performance data and interpretation. Adding my personal background further enhances the accessibility of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) in that it is easier to build rapport and trust (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) with migrant students and their families. Given my underlying understanding of the concepts and experiences that were related by some of the informants, I noticed that my level of empathy was heightened. Thirdly, the passion and enthusiasm with which I approach my work spill over into my study. I am not a "detached" observer, but a "participant observer"(Glesne, 1998). This passion and

concern carry me through to the end of the research. As stated by Smith (1960), passion, belief and interest in the subject are essential to seeing a project through.

By the same measure, I guard against preconceived notions and expectations, remaining open to changes that may have taken place in society over the past 40 years, since I first arrived at American schools. As much as possible, I look at the situations expressed by informants through their eyes, rather than mine. The research methodologies I employ assist in this process considerably. As Bogdan & Biklen (1998) propose, I spend considerable time collecting, analyzing and interpreting empirical data. In manipulating the data, I was confronted with my own opinions and prejudices constantly; however, in face of the barrage of empirical data, my own notions are confirmed or changed. Further, Bogdan & Biklen remind us that the researcher's primary goal is to add knowledge and generate theory, not to pass judgment or blame. I attempt to describe as many dimensions as are visible, rather than my own initial ideas. Finally, I questioned my own biases regularly and kept them in check, as I recorded field notes of my own responses and reactions to interviews and observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Ethics

The protection of human subjects is important in this study as participants are asked to share personal beliefs and attitudes about public matters that take place in their school and community. Eisner & Peshkin (1990) promote the notion of doing good and not doing any harm while conducting qualitative research. I take precautions for protecting human subjects beyond those required by the North Carolina State University "Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research." I take Eisner &

Peshkin's advice to heart and go beyond the university's legal requirements for I care deeply for this group of people and do not wish to see them harmed in any way.

Recruitment of Participants

The total human subjects include 12 people in personal interviews, 45 in group interviews and surveys; and 350 observed in public meetings and events. The research participants were recruited as follows: The program director and two club advisors were participants by nature of their role. They agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed in depth. The club advisors sought the rest of the people to be interviewed in depth (two school certified staff members, one principal, three students and three parents). I observed the remainder of the participants in public (student or parent) meetings, interviewed them in group settings, or had them respond to written surveys.

First, I provided all participants with a "Cover Story" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) of the dissertation proposal (see Appendix E) in Spanish and English. In the "Cover Story" I stated the purpose and nature of the study along with my identity, what I planned to do with the results, the possible benefits and risks to the participants, the guaranty of participant anonymity (if they wished it so) and confidentiality, the number of interviews or observations, the length or duration of each interview or observation session, and permission to record interviews or observations through audio or video taping devices. All participants in the in-depth interviews requested that I use their own names in the report.

Upon explaining the purpose and nature of the research to all participants, they agreed to sign the "Informed Consent" form (see Appendix F), which I had also translated into Spanish. Providing information about the study (orally and in writing) in Spanish for those participants who understand Spanish better than English, offered

another occasion to add a layer of validity and rapport. I explained the purpose and nature of the study to participants at each meeting that I observed and gave them an opportunity to exclude themselves from the meetings or group interviews if they so desired. None chose to be excluded.

Minors and Other Vulnerable Populations

The minors involved provide the most critical data, since they are the immediate recipients of the treatment they receive in their schools and AIM Clubs. They are between the ages of 11-19. Both the students and parents are from an (typically) economically and educationally disadvantaged group. The data they provide is critical to the study, since they receive the direct services of the AIM Club at the schools. They are in a position to give voice to how the services are actually received. Procedures to minimize their vulnerability were critical, and I adhered strictly to the guidelines I had set up for the study regarding informed consent.

Procedures Followed

For district staff participants, after orally explaining the purpose and nature of the study, I presented each participant with the "Cover Story" and "Informed Consent" forms. I informed them that their participation could end at any time during the process, if they so desired. Further, if they wished to withdraw their data, I would destroy it and not use it. I told them how much of their time was required and for which activities. I gave them an opportunity to review their interview transcripts for accuracy, and let them know that their anonymity would be maintained (on my part) throughout the study and beyond, if they wished it so. They had the opportunity to "retract" any data they did not wish for me to use. Given the small number (12) of in-depth interviews, I acquired the individual's approval for any quotes that I used. I explained potential risks and benefits, as I

understood them. However, I also asked if there were any specific concerns that they had regarding their participation, so I could address them to their satisfaction.

For students and parent participants, I followed the same procedures as above, explaining orally in Spanish, when necessary. The only exception from the previous sentence was that, since I interviewed parents and students in groups as well as individually, I did not seek approval for anonymous quotes from parents and students interviewed in groups or surveys. This was due to the higher number of students and parents involved in the study—around 13 parents and 38 students, and anonymity happened naturally by not mentioning names of the group participants. Minor participants signed the "Informed Consent" form along with their parents. All participants were allowed to refuse to answer any questions asked of them.

In-depth interviews required from one to two hours. Group interviews were around 1 hr to 1 hr 30 min in length. Observations did not require extra time of the participants, as they coincided with the observed event.

Potential Risks

I do not anticipate any serious potential risks, other than perhaps some embarrassment, which are significantly minimized or eliminated by the procedures I follow. I asked student and parent participants to speak about their experiences in adjusting to living in the United States. Some of them share personal information about their feelings toward the schools, staff, and life in general in Randolph County. This information may be potentially embarrassing once school staff hears about it. I informed them that any information they shared would remain anonymous unless they wished for me to use their names, specifically. Some participants share unsolicited information regarding their illegal status. In these cases, I do not include names. Since there are many

students and parents participating in total, individual participants are not identified, unless they wish for me to do so. I asked no questions regarding private behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other legal matters.

Staff participants were offered the same level of anonymity. There is a similar potential for embarrassment for them as well, as they share personal beliefs and attitudes.

Methods for Confidentiality

I do not perceive that any of the procedures are offensive, threatening, degrading or producing of stress or anxiety—especially given all the steps taken to minimize risks. I audiotaped all interviews and one event was videotaped. I transcribed all tapes in written form and stored, analyzed and reported all data by myself. To promote anonymity, I write reports in aggregate terms, except in situations where only one individual is quoted, such as the principal, a parent, a student, a teacher, etc. In such a case, if the individual participated in an in-depth interview, I sought approval before using his/her quote. All participants had an opportunity to select a name for themselves in the study; they had the option of having their own name reported. All individuals who were interviewed in-depth requested that I use their real names. There was no deception of human subjects.

Potential Benefits

I expect that participants will benefit indirectly in that AIM Club activities may become more conducive to building self-esteem for students and developing their identity with their primary culture. Parents may benefit by having children who become more interested students and better able to relate to their home language and culture. Parents and students, both, have an opportunity to have their voices heard on a topic that is close to their hearts and lives.

There was no compensation for participants in this study. A small token of appreciation was given each of the participants interviewed. Students did not receive any class credit.

This concludes the second section describing the design of the study. In the following chapters I report the analysis of data including findings, analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Chapter 4. Findings

The purpose of this study is to determine whether AIM Clubs can help to facilitate the Mexican-American migrant students' process of transitioning or incorporating into the American society by allowing them to negotiate their identities in an empowering rather than disempowering manner; and, if so, how? A detailed analysis of the data reveals the findings reported in this chapter. The guiding research questions, which I systematically address here, serve as a vehicle, initially, for gathering the data, then for reporting the findings. In chapter 5, upon further analysis of the findings through the lens of Cummins' theory of *Negotiating Identities,* I interpret the findings and draw conclusions, which respond to the overarching research question. Finally, I end the research paper with recommendations for further related studies on AIM Clubs in North Carolina.

The findings of the research are reported in connection to its guiding questions.

Findings for research questions for practical significance

1. What are the practices, beliefs and attitudes of people in the club?

The underlying beliefs of the people within an organization form the core from which they operate. Whether or not these beliefs are formally acknowledged through a mission statement or goals, they shape the cornerstone for ensuing attitudes and outward practices. Staff, students and parents, involved with the Randolph County AIM Club express or exhibit the beliefs, attitudes and practices reported here. These beliefs, attitudes and practices are reported within the common themes that emerged during data

analysis.

History and Organization of the AIM Club in Randolph County:

The Randolph County AIM Club began following an inspirational trip taken by Roxanne, Denise and four students to the statewide AIM Conference in 1994. According to Denise, they had responded to an invitation from the state to attend the summer conference despite the fact that they did not have an established AIM Club in Randolph County:

> I think it was in '94 the first year we actually, we didn't have a club, but we picked several students that had excelled somewhat…And from then on we said, "We're going to try to have a club and not just choose kids here at the end of the year."

Roxanne reports a similar account:

> The way it started, as I mentioned, was at Randleman Middle and Randleman High. We had two siblings at the high school, and they had younger siblings at the middle school. I believe it was a total of 10, maybe 12 kids at the most between the two schools, with about only four families involved. And I saw when we took some of these kids to the AIM Conference that past summer, they were like, "Oh, Miss Taylor, we need to do something when we go back." And I said, "You know what? We will." And so at the beginning of the school year… (the principal then had club day) we were able to go Friday mornings and do club activities. So we said, "Okay we're going to have the AIM Club so we'll plan something each time we come."

They began as a club of 10 to 12 students from two sites and over the years have grown

to a membership close to 150 students from seven different sites in the county, with Roxanne and Denise as the club's main advisors. Roxanne's account of the club's history continues:

> And what we did was, the high school girl (one of the kids left so we had one girl left at the high school) would come to the middle school in the morning, and we would take her to the high school when it was over. The principal from the high school allowed that. So we started out very small…And you know this was seven years ago.
>
> Then with each school year we had more students involved. And then about the third year in I realized that Southwest High had the population. We started inviting the kids from Southwest High to the Randleman activities. We did evening activities. And at that point some of the kids from Southwest High School started, "Oh, we want to have a club too. And we're going to call it, 'Brown Pride.'" And I kept saying, "No, no. If it's going to be AIM, and if I'm going to help you and you're migrant, we're going to call it AIM. And it will be an AIM Club and we'll do activities together." And so that's how we started to reach out to the other schools.
>
> And in all this, Denise and I have been the advisors the whole time…Then with each year that we got more ESL teachers; we began to recruit the ESL teachers to help us to be advisors. Denise and I planned the big activities, but then the ESL teachers and/or Spanish teachers at that school would help out with notifying the kids and helping schedule activities, or be a part of the activities to help us out.

Through the years other school staff has joined to actively support the work of the club. As Stuart, the district director of the Migrant Education Program recounts:

> We have some ESL teachers that have become, in the last couple years, very active. They see the benefits and work with Roxanne and Denise. We had one—unfortunately he was a VIF (Visiting International Faculty) teacher and last year was his third year—just took off and went flying with it. And he was very instrumental in helping the growth in the southwestern area. Another one of our ESL teachers, who was in the eastern quadrant, knew what was going on and was very interested in getting the same thing started in the eastern quadrant. And that is up and running at both the high school and the middle school now, and is growing and becoming very large. The only quadrant that we don't have as much participation, and that is actually due to numbers, is the Trinity quadrant.

The club is organized with a mission statement/goal, objectives, a student contract, regular meetings, activities, student leadership and club advisors. Since the inception of the club, the advisors adopted the state's AIM Program's mission statement/ goal and objectives for their own local club. The AIM Club's mission statement/goal reads, "To take action that will inspire and motivate students to stay in school and graduate, by offering them educational, cultural and social experiences that will increase their opportunity to succeed." The club's objectives are:

- To provide guidance services to migrant students to help them make appropriate social, educational and career decisions.
- To help migrant students achieve high self-esteem for school performance.
- To expose migrant students to positive role models and mentors who have a

personal interest in their life goals.

- To provide educational, cultural, and social experiences for migrant students, which will increase their opportunity to succeed.
- To assist migrant students in setting and reaching long and short-term goals.

Students who are interested in becoming members of the AIM Club or participating in club activities or field trips are required to sign *and* abide by an "AIM Student Contract," which reads:

> It is important that I work to the best of my ability in school and as an AIM Club member. Therefore, I shall strive to do the following:
>
> - **Go to school each day ready to learn.** I will try my best to complete my assignments at school and home and will make up any work due to an absence.
> - **Achieve good grades in all classes.** Though my limited English may present difficulties, I will rise to the challenge and tell myself that failure is <u>not</u> an option.
> - **Attend school regularly.** Excessive, unexcused absences and cutting classes will not be tolerated.
> - **Follow the general rules of student conduct.** All rules that apply to school also apply to the AIM Club. I must refrain from behavior that will result in detention and/or suspension.
> - **Maintain respect for others.** I must not be quick to judge. I have not walked in the other person's shoes; so therefore, I do not know where that person is coming from or what they have had to endure. I must focus on people's

positive characteristics. If I have a conflict of interest with another student, I will not bring it to the AIM meeting. If things cannot be resolved on their own, I will ask for guidance and/or conflict resolution from school staff or AIM leaders.

The day-to-day operations of the club involve all the local site AIM Clubs as well. The overall AIM Club is sub-divided into smaller local site clubs, which meet either weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, depending on the availability of Denise, Roxanne or a school staff person to help run the meetings. In addition, each site holds their own individual activities, as well as joint events with other local site AIM Clubs, which are directed by Denise, Roxanne or a local staff person. Each local site club elects their own student officers to help carry out the activities and meetings along with the advisors. The larger countywide club holds monthly activities for all AIM Club members in the county. Denise and Roxanne hold yearly meetings with the local club presidents to help plan the monthly countywide activities. Given that Roxanne speaks Spanish, she is the person most often responsible for conducting individual club meetings. Denise substitutes in Roxanne's absence, assists at the meetings and with planning, organizing and technical support for the club. Denise's technical skills have served through the years to provide extensive documentation of the club's activities with power point presentations, program descriptions and budget detail. Consequently, Denise has also served as the main historian for the club, archiving club records, artifacts and memorabilia, much of which was used in conducting this study. Having set the stage with the history and organization of the AIM Club, I proceed with another prominent theme that reverberates within the data, that of parent involvement.

Parent Involvement:

At every level of the research process, participants comment on the mutually supportive relationship that exists between parents and those associated with the AIM Club. School staff members express their desire to include parents so that parents in turn will be better equipped to support their students. In the meantime, parents express gratefulness for the degree of care and concern that the club's advisors demonstrate toward them and their family. Denise speaks of their deliberate intention to engage the parents early on:

> The first year…didn't take off very well, but seemed like the next year was when we invited parents from the beginning of the year and said this is what it is. This is what we want to do. And it really took off the next year…Parents in any culture are going to…be curious, "Is this what my child is really doing?" "My child says they have a meeting, is this true?" And the parents even kept coming to the meetings…And the kids finally said, "Can we plan something to do without our parents?" So, I think that was one of the biggest reasons we got off to a good start. Parents are real involved.

Roxanne echoes, "You know, in the beginning we had so much parental involvement that we had to finally tell the parents this is for the kids!" Maureen Becker, counselor at one of the high schools who has offered support to the club since its inception also attributes part of the success of the club to parental engagement: "Another reason for the success is the emphasis on family participation. The club has won the support of the parents, and so they allow their children to participate." Parents participate in club activities that are designed for students, others that are designed for parents, and yet others that are meant

to involve the entire family.

Through the relationships they establish within the club, parents gain knowledge, which serves to unlock some of the mysteries of the American educational system for them. Stuart speaks of the club's role in opening doors for communicating with parents:

> And through those efforts and some of the things that we've done through the AIM Club, we felt that there was a need for more parent meetings to make sure that they understood what was going on, especially with all the new regulations that are coming down with the No Child Left Behind Act…the gateways and the ABCs and things like that. So we're going to have combined ESL/migrant parent nights once a quarter…just sort of, "This is what to expect." And Roxanne, of course, is bilingual, so that for the parents that don't understand English, we could do it in English and Spanish.

Stuart further discusses the staff's intentions and reasons for wanting to include parents in the students' program:

> And that's what we're here for. We don't want them to become frustrated by the system and drop out, which would effectively have a major negative impact on their lives. We want them to stay and, at least, graduate high school…If money is a problem, work with their parents. If that is not in the parental belief system of where the parents came from, say, "Yes we know that the child is now 16 and can go to work to support the family, but, it would be at a level such as working at McDonald's or something at a minimum wage situation. If you can work with us and help us help your child to graduate, then there's a potential for a better job, which will be able to help the family more. And if you can go even further to take

them to college or to a four-year degree program, a much greater benefit to the family."

Parents express gratitude for the efforts of the club's advisors, especially Roxanne and Denise. They appreciate Roxanne and Denise's level of concern for needs that extend beyond school business. Anselmo Alcántara, Fernanda's father, responds to my question, "How well do you know Denise and Roxanne?" with the following expression of gratitude: *"Perfectamente, puedo decir. Y estamos muy agradecidos por el apoyo que nos han brindado, porque no solamente han aprendido las cosas de la escuela, sinó se han preocupado porque tengan sus vacunas."* ("Perfectly, I can say. And we are very grateful for the support that they have offered us, because they have not only learned things about the school, but they have concerned themselves for them (their children) having their shots.") He continues in reference to Roxanne*, "Porque algún problema que tengamos lo comentamos con ella, y siempre ha sido una muy excelente persona con nosotros. Nos ha apoyado mucho."* ("Because any problem we may have we talk over with her, and she has always been a very excellent person with us.") Gorgonio Aguilar, Ramiro's father responds similarly to the same question: *"Amigos. Son muy buenas gentes ellas. Nos han ayudado, o estan ayudando bastante."* ("Friends. They are very good people. They have helped or are helping us quite a lot." Imelda Hurtado, Rebeca Avila's mother further expresses an appreciation for her ability to communicate in Spanish with Roxanne. *"Pues, muy buena relación, por lo menos con Roxana. Porque, más que todo porque habla Español, nos entendemos mucho. Cualquier pregunta o duda que tenemos pues uno puede entenderla muy bien, porque ella está hablando en nuestro propio idioma."* ("Well, a very good relationship, at least with Roxanne. More than anything because she

speaks Spanish, we understand each other very much. Any question or doubt that we have, one can understand her very well, because she is speaking in our own language.")

Parents also appreciate the degree to which both Roxanne and Denise respond to students; and, they express gratitude articulating the trust they have developed for the club advisors. Anselmo mentions how he feels about Roxanne and Denise's work with the students:

> *Bueno, pues definitivamente yo admiro su labor, su trabajo. Porque dedicarse al apoyo de la gente que no tiene mucho conocimiento de la vida y las costumbres en los Estados Unidos...Y ellas, pues, les dan confianza y los ensenñan, sobre todo el idioma, a irlo dominando poco a poco. Yo estoy muy contento porque mis hijos, aunque tenemos muy poco tiempo de vivir aquí, y ellos no sabían absolutamente nada del idioma Ingles, ahora yo veo que ya casi estan hablando.* Definitely, I admire their labor, their work. Because to dedicate oneself to the support of people that do not have much knowledge of life and customs in the United States…And they, well, they give them (the children) confidence and they teach them, above all, the language, to be able to master it little by little. I am very happy because my children, even though we have been living here a very short time, and they knew absolutely no English, now I see that they're almost speaking.

In short, the common feelings expressed by parents regarding the AIM Club is succinctly articulated by Anselmo, *"¡Es buenísimo!"* ("It is very, very good!")

The Randolph County AIM Club is found to include in its practice far-reaching levels of parent involvement—more of which are reported in subsequent sections of this

study—which extends its influence into the community at large. Stuart paraphrases this scenario explicitly: "We want to do more parent involvement. And I see that the work that the AIM Club started has mushroomed into more than just a club to help the students, it's now helping the whole community."

Community Service and Participation:

One of the common themes emerging from the data is the awareness of the club members' participation in community events and providing community service. Maureen conveys the perception of teachers at her school:

> There is a core group of teachers that makes it a point to know what is going on all over the school. These teachers are well aware of the AIM Club and its activities. They have often expressed great admiration for the work the club members do in the community. It performs more service activities in a school year than most other organizations. The AIM Club is among the most active organizations on my school campus. It has set a positive example of service to the school community.

Everyone interviewed speaks of the importance of this connection of the club to the community. Artifacts document the events and display appreciation for the students' contributions. Those interviewed feel that serving the community in this manner serves a multiple purpose of: 1) helping students feel like they belong in the community, 2) allowing students an opportunity to take responsibility for their community, and 3) creating better public relations in the community for the migrant population.

In her interview, Roxanne affirms her basic belief that explains why students are encouraged to be active participants of their community: "I'm a firm believer in that you

have to be a part of where you're at, that you have to be a part of the community in order to belong… I don't want to change them… But I want them to know that they can be a part of the society that they're living in now.**"** In addition, Denise's underlying motive continues to affirm why students' participation is such a focal point for the club. "And that's one of the things we want to teach the kids, don't just take, take, take, but give—whether it's to our school or community or family or whatever."

Several students from the focus group interview articulate their views on the subject of community participation. One student, arriving from Mexico to Randolph County since the age of three (and speaking with a southern accent), comments:

> Whenever we go to like to the rivers and clean, well, sometimes it makes us feel good about ourselves because we have helped in our community, and have helped out in picking up trash, making this world a little bit cleaner than it is, and putting things in order. It's one of the things that Miss Taylor has taught us, the AIM has taught us, to put things in order and to sort everything out in your life. Well, sometimes it just makes us feel like if we're here, we need to help out in every little thing that we can, to sort things out, and to set things the way they were.

Another student residing in Randolph County for eight years adds her reasons for participating in community service:

> I think maybe, people, American people think that just because we're Hispanic, now we're not from here and that we don't do anything for our community. But I think since we do "Make a Difference Day" and we do "The Big Sweep" it makes me feel like I'm giving back to what they have given me. Maybe it hasn't all been

positive, but I'm trying to make any Latino or Hispanic look good by putting a little of my part.

From the administrative perspective, Drew Maerz, the principal at Southwestern Randolph High School reinforces the merits of the club's participation in the community:

> It (the AIM Club) also gives a voice in the community, a positive voice that allows the migrant workers and the families, especially the migrant students, a chance to explain who they are and how they've come to be here in a positive light. And we get enough press in the paper, and there's some ill will within the communities about migrant workers stealing jobs and all. They need to see the positive sides. And these kids in this school are just fantastic. They are the best spokespeople for their community. I could never even equal or imagine a better spokesperson.

Stuart echoes Drew's thoughts on the results of student involvement in the community:

> I see that this club has been the nucleus that has opened that even more in the community. They are constantly looking for ways to do community service, which is helping the transition with the community too. Any time you see young folks who are doing something for their community it's really a good PR thing. And that is a lot of what AIM is doing. And the more we do in the community, the more we are helping. I mean, it's easy to say, "oh we're going to work on diversity training in the community so the community is more acceptable." But, to paraphrase an old quote of, "a picture is worth a thousand words," an action such as the AIM Club going out and doing community service, that action is worth much more than a thousand words of rhetoric on "They have a different culture,

this is this, this is this."

Closely related to the theme of community participation is the practice of sharing cultures between Latinos and Americans, along with the emphasis on students' developing and maintaining their own culture.

Culture: Sharing, Acquiring and Maintaining

The importance of sharing Hispanic culture with the school and community, learning about and acquiring the American culture, and further developing the Mexican culture in students is an important aim for those people surrounding the club. Students, parents and staff all speak at length of the need for promoting these three aspects of culture for the sake of the students, parents, the school and the community.

Students in the AIM Club are often the vehicles for delivering or facilitating communication of culture and language between the American and Hispanic groups. AIM Club students are valued as interpreters for school events and parent meetings. According to Roxanne:

> They're really going to take advantage of the AIM Club this year. At PTO meetings, Open House meetings and orientation, if our high school AIM Club kids are available to go to the elementary schools, they will be interpreters for the schools. We did do it in two of the elementary schools last year. It worked really well. And we're going to try to hit our four elementary schools that have the highest Hispanic population, or non-English Spanish-speaking, for the AIM Club kids to be there when they have these things in the evening. Because if you have one or two ESL teachers and you have 40 families show up, that's a lot for those teachers. They could be there all night talking. Because I've already been there,

done that, at the schools that I've tutored in.

The other thing is, we're going to talk to the high school principals that have an elementary school within a five mile radius about getting the older AIM Club kids, just because of credits and driving privileges, maybe do some type of internship at the elementary school as far as maybe one block go be peer tutor or office assistant at the elementary school. And that way the office would have a bilingual person there in the morning.

The community also seeks out the club for interpreter services. Roxanne continues:

Then this past year, very fortunately through our local Ash-Rand EMS, Emergency Medical Service, they actually came here and talked to all the kids. Then we went to their station and did a tour, going through all of the station, ambulances and everything. And we actually had three kids enroll at RCC (Randolph Community College) in the paramedic's class; and, the Ash-Rand EMS paid for their books and their tuition to go to those classes, because they see the need of bilingual people in the EMS field. And there are two girls that have really stuck it out.

Drew speaks of the value that students add to the classroom by sharing their unique culture with the others in the class:

And they bring a background for discussion that may not already be there. For example, in the history classroom, we do talk about world cultures. But when a student can say, "Well when I was in Mexico City, or I was in San Salvador, or I was in Panama City; this is what I saw," you start to have a rich discussion about people's personal experiences which goes so far beyond what a book or movie

can show. And you start to, "Well, what was it like to live in this type of setting?"

We take a lot for granted here. And I think that when we start to delve in, "Why are you here?" We start to break down stereotypes, we start to break down the intolerance, and we start to break down the lack of respect that may have been experienced in the past. And that's the biggest issue, breaking down intolerance and leading to understanding. And I think that that's something these students, the more actively they are involved, the more they add to the school culture.

Students contribute another valued reason for sharing their culture and learning the American culture—that of being perceived in a more positive manner by people from the American culture. As one student in a focus group interview shares regarding why it is good to have American students in their club:

> Because actually I'll learn more about them and how they interact with other people. *And* how also they learn about our culture. Because it's a pretty good pleasant feeling to see them learn about us, and how we're not really that bad people that they have a bad view of our culture. Because the news, there's always bad news about us. A Hispanic was arrested for blah, blah, blah, and all this stuff. And we're not all like that.

Another student adds: "What happens is they see the good side of us, not the bad side of us every time." Yet a third joins in the discussion:

> Yeah, but some of them are afraid because they think, oh this AIM Club is just for Hispanics. I have a lot of friends that always want to join in our group, but they say, oh this is just the Hispanic group. And everybody seems to think the AIM Club is just Hispanics. So I think it would be a good idea because it would help us

interact with different people. And like everybody else was saying, we can learn about their culture as well as they can learn about ours.

Aside from valuing the sharing of culture and language, participants voice a strong interest in having students further develop and keep their own cultural identity. Parents and students, both, emphasize the importance of keeping their Mexican culture, even as they learn and add a second culture. Staff members also discuss how the club reinforces and facilitates the maintenance of students' cultural heritage. Anselmo summarizes the feelings shared by all parents on the issue of maintaining their native culture:

> *Quizáz nosotros, como padres de los niños, será nuestra obligación recordarles siempre sus principios, de su origen. Tratar de que ellos no olviden la historia de México, nuestro caso. Que sigan cultivando la cultura Méxicana, el idioma, las tradiciones, que es muy importante. Ahorita son de muy poca edad, y si seguimos viviendo en este país, quizáz si nosotros no les recordamos, ellos pronto olviden su origen. Pero yo considero como obligación estarles recordando de que no se olviden de su tierra, y de sus constumbres y de su idioma.*
>
> Perhaps we, as parents of the children, it would be our obligation to always remind them of their beginnings, their origin. Try so that they will not forget the history of Mexico, our case. That they will continue cultivating the Mexican culture, the language, the traditions, that are very important. Right now they are of a young age, and if we continue living in this country, perhaps if we do not remind them, they will soon forget their origin. But I consider it an obligation to be reminding them not to forget their land, and their customs and their language.

When asked what students feel about maintaining their Mexican culture, their responses unanimously echo those of their parents. Ramiro's comment is:

> *Bueno, pues, no puedo dejar a mi cultura. Yo soy Mexicano y no puedo ser Americano. Sí se puede, por la ley sí se puede. Un Americano, decir, "Yo soy Americano, yo soy blanco," no se puede. Aunque diga, de mí no se puede, porque viene del alma.*
>
> Well then, I cannot leave my culture. I am Mexican and I cannot be an American. Yes, it can be done, by law it can be done. (To be) an American, to say, "I am an American, I am white," it cannot be done. Even if I were to say it, to me it cannot be done, because that comes from your soul.

Rebeca's response is equally passionate: *"Y pues, corre la sangre por mis venas ser Latina, ser Hispana. Tú núnca niegas lo que eres. Yo no niego. Siempre he tenido bien en alto mi cultura, no importa qué, porque estoy contenta de lo que soy."* ("To be Latin, be Hispanic is in the blood that runs through my veins. You never deny what you are. I do not deny (it). I have always held my culture up very high, no matter what, because I am happy of what I am.") Imelda refers to the AIM Club's practice of helping students maintain their culture: *"Porque las personas que la estan ayudando (a su hija Rebeca) del club les hablan mucho de su cultura. No las han dejado perder su cultura. Más que todo, pienso yo que ellas les han ayudado mucho a mantener las raíces de su cultura.* ("The persons that are helping her (Rebeca, her daughter) from the club speak to them much about their culture. They have not allowed them to lose their culture. More than anything, I think that they have helped them a lot to maintain the roots of their culture.")

In conversations with staff members, it is made clear that they purposely intend for students to have opportunities to study and further develop their culture. Stuart attests to this intent:

> One of the philosophies in our ESL program is that what the student brings with him in terms of language and culture is equally as important and helps them make a transition. So we do not want them to feel that they have to do away with where they came from and who they are, and totally be somebody new; but, to become adapted to their new environment and use strengths and knowledge that they bring with them of their customs and their language from their home country, as a building block to help with the transition to fluent English speakers.

Dealing with issues of culture is one example of the club being responsive to students, which is the topic of the next section.

Being Responsive to Students:

Another common theme coming through the data is the club leaders' responsiveness to students. It is general practice for the advisors to design activities and carry them out as is deemed necessary for students. Adults who support the club speak of planning with students, bringing in role models and mentors to club events, recruiting heavily among migrant students to join the club, and delighting in the success of individual students or the club.

In the past, the advisors had done all the planning for the year's activities, however, at the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, Roxanne and Denise met with all the local club presidents to plan the year's activities. According to Denise, they "think this is going to be a better way to get them involved, and make it feel more like

it's their club." Roxanne asserts, "I leave it up to the kids. Like tomorrow I'll ask them, 'What do you want to hear?' 'Who do you want to come this year?'" They both feel this type of planning will help to build leadership skills in the students.

A commonly reported practice is to bring in successful role models and ex-students who have experienced success to speak with AIM Club students about their experiences. Students hear from a variety of Hispanic professionals in the community and other parts of the state or country. In cases when it is not practical to bring the role models to the club, students are taken on field trips to experience the sites first hand. Denise explains the importance of this goal:

> Well, the goal, of course, is to keep kids in school and to graduate, but we want them to be successful as they do that. Not, just you know, to be a body there, but be successful. We want to educate them, improve their academics if we can in any way. We want to improve their self-esteem, which we know if their self-esteem is improved it's going to help in everything. We want to provide to these kids…role models, mentors and career decisions. We want to try to teach them about maybe setting short and long term goals and making career decisions. So, by doing all that and helping them with that, we want them to finish high school and go on, be successful in the community and their lives.

The advisors, staff and other students recruit students for the AIM Club. As Maureen explains, "Students are also attracted by the enthusiastic recruiting efforts of the club's main sponsors, Roxanne Taylor and Denise Beane. When you are personally invited to an event, it is difficult to construct excuses not to attend." Drew gives further explanation of how students are attracted to the club:

> I think they enjoy it. There isn't a stigma to it. I think choosing a name like AIM was important. If it were the "Migrant Student Association" there would be a stigma to it. But we have students come to these events because every student should be motivated to action and to inspiration and to motivation, no matter what your nationality background, cultural background, success rate is. So we have students that come to these because they want to learn more. They have friends in it. There is no stigma. Students like to have the opportunity to get actively involved in their school. Like I said, when a student shows up today and we know that they're part of a migrant family, tomorrow, if not today, someone from that group is going to try to contact them. And then they have a built-in network and support group. And when you have that support group it's so important for success.

Drew further elaborates on his part in recruiting students to the club:

> My personal philosophy for any student is, "You need to find an avenue or a location or a group at school that's positive and that you can become a part of." Every research I've read says that student engagement, student involvement increases attendance, increases performance and opens doors to future education after high school. So I highly encourage parents and students to find an avenue to get involved. And I have students that come here and I say, "Find a group. You're going to find students that speak your language, I know during the day you're frustrated, because you're struggling to learn English sometimes."

When asked how they recruit, Roxanne responds:

> That goes by them just wanting to be in the club. But I do talk to the migrant students. "We're going to have an AIM Club, if you'd like to be in it, you're more than welcome." Because I do find that some of the kids, especially the first year aren't ready to do all this extra stuff. And some of it may be the whole language barrier and not feeling like the other kids in the school. I have some kids, like one year, that really participate in everything and the next year it's not as much. But then towards the end of the year they're right back in it again. So, it's open to migrant, then the ESL, then the Hispanic, and then any kid in the school who wants to be in the club.

Many people at different levels and for different reasons recruit students for the AIM Club. According to students and staff, the great majority of Hispanic students in the schools belong to the AIM Club.

Denise and Roxanne's pride and delight in the club and the students is evident. Over the past four years that I have known them, I cannot recall many conversations when they did not mention some wonderful thing that had recently happened to a member of the club or all of them together. Just recently, Roxanne mentioned how one of the AIM Club members had been selected to be interviewed by *Teen People* for a story on immigrant students in the southeast. This interview was published in the March, 2003 issue of the magazine. Another girl had been recently selected Homecoming Queen at Southwestern Randolph High School. This is the second year in a row that a Hispanic, AIM Club member is selected as Homecoming Queen at the school. In 2001, the *Harvard Review* published five pages of a book that members of the club had written regarding their experience immigrating to the United States from Mexico. The pages contain poetry

and artwork created by the students, as part of a project with Duke University and an artist-in-resident, Robert Shreefter. Roxanne wraps it up, simply: "But, see it's just a matter of in the community, I have people calling me, 'Could your AIM Club do this?' or 'Would they be interested in that?' And, so that makes me feel good."

Even less significant stories of the club bring them joy. Denise laughs while she tells the story of the club's visit to a rest home on "Make a Difference Day" a few years ago:

> Oh, that was the day we did hygiene packets, I think, yes. All the kids collected like toothbrushes, soap, washcloths, things like that. We all came together in school. We had little zip lock bags, we fixed the hygiene bags and they delivered them to an adult home or rest home…They gave a bag to a gentleman who kept trying to give the toothbrush back. And, Veronica said, "Ms. Taylor, he's wanting to give the toothbrush back." "No, tell him he can use it." And Veronica went back and said, "No, no, no, you keep this toothbrush, this is yours." And the man looked up at her and said, "But I ain't got no teeth!" And he grinned real big. And they all got the biggest kick out of that. I thought that was so sweet.

Leaders of the club respond to student needs, for which students and parents are grateful. In the next section, I further detail the level of dedication and commitment the staff reportedly demonstrates.

Committed Staff and Strong Leadership:

The advisors of the Randolph County AIM Club are known around the county for their level of commitment, dedication and strong leadership—in particular, Denise and Roxanne. The advisors, in turn, recognize the efforts of the staff at the schools

(counselor, ESL teachers, Spanish teachers and administrators) that support the club's activities.

Every person interviewed comments on the subject of Roxanne's and Denise's commitment to the club, the students and their parents. Steve Taylor, contributes:

> I accredit the success to the advisor dedication. I do not say this because I know them personally, but I know that if the advisors did not go that extra step to plan and implement, the club would falter and fade. The kids expect the advisors to plan and even more so, just be there for them. The relationship between the advisors and the students is very exceptional.

From the principal's perspective, Drew has this to offer about the advisors' dedication and leadership:

> Roxanne Taylor is an incredible person. Denise Beane is an incredible person. They both, in their hearts, have the kids' best interest. And in every pore of their being, they show that. They will be a student advocate, they'll be a teacher advocate, they'll be a parent advocate. And that's what the kids need, especially with the ones whose parents have language difficulty. They need an advocate. They (teachers) are frustrated when we get students in with whom they can't communicate. And Roxanne and Denise, every fiber of their being believes that these kids can be as successful as any other kid in this school, and I can't help but concur. But they need support. And that's why I think AIM is so important. And I think leadership is the key...And I think we have two really strong leaders. I think that helps a lot for the county.

Anselmo gives his parental opinion on the club's leadership as well: *"Bueno, una de las cosas que yo he visto para que este club tenga el éxito que ha tenido, ha sido por las personas que lo están dirigiendo. La capacidad y la experiencia que estas personas tienen…(Ellas) son quienes han llevado a este club."* ("Well, one of the things that I have seen that has given this club its success has been due to the persons leading it. The capacity and experience that these persons have are what have taken this club forward.") Denise acknowledges Roxanne's special dedication: "Roxanne is very dedicated at what she does. I mean, I feel like I'm dedicated, but she is *very, very* dedicated." Stuart echoes Denise's sentiments regarding Roxanne's effort:

> I would definitely have to say that the motivation for, I think, it would continue, but I think that our AIM Club here in Randolph Co. is to the point that it is through the work of Roxanne. She is so committed. So having a committed staff member, and she and Denise both spend numerous, numerous, numerous hours over and above their actual work time doing activities, not only for the AIM Club but also for the migrant program in itself. But the hours they spend just on AIM Club is incredible because they believe in it, they know I believe in it. And that shows to the community and to the students, too, that we care. But I would dare say that, probably, the guiding force that got us where we are today is Roxanne. Her commitment, it is just outstanding.

Denise speculates on why she feels they have experienced success:

> And I think, I guess the success is well, Roxanne and I have worked so well together…Well, somebody helped us when we started. That's the way it is, just helping each other. But, I really feel like for whatever reason we've been blessed

> because we've really clicked. We work really well together…And, we know if I'm better at something than she is, I mean, it just kind of fits together like a puzzle.

Finally, both Denise and Roxanne express appreciation for the staff members at the schools that help the club at the site level. They realize that without their help the club can not grow, since the two of them can not possibly staff all the meetings at seven different sites. Denise comments:

> But it takes some people with some dedication and some real, I feel like, love and interest. The gentleman that I talked about that's the VIF teacher that's leaving this year, he had a real passion and a love. And that's why we really hate to see him go…he has that passion. I think you need some passion to have a successful club.

In closing I defer to Maureen's summary, "All of this is possible ONLY because of the efforts of the club's sponsors, Roxanne Taylor and Denise Beane."

In conclusion, the practices, beliefs and attitudes of the AIM Club are reported through the common themes that emerged during data analysis. Next, I proceed with the second guiding question regarding student activities.

2. What are the specific and types of activities in which students participate?

The AIM Club participates in a variety of activities every year. Some are related to holidays or to yearly community or school events, while others take place only as a special event. The advisors plan the year's calendar with the club presidents at the beginning of the year. However, they also keep abreast of special community events or unique opportunities in which the AIM Club can participate, and bring those back to the

Club for consideration. The types of events include, among others, community service and participation, cultural enrichment—sharing and maintaining their culture, building self-esteem/inner strength and self-advocacy, fun and social development, family events, and school participation and service.

Community Service and Participation:

Everyone interviewed refers to the community activities in which the AIM Club participates. Maureen explains: "One of the areas that the club really excels in is community service. The AIM Club performs more service activities in a school year than most other organizations. They try and do an activity each month." These community activities include:

- North Carolina Clean Sweep: The AIM Club joins the Science Club and the Boy Scouts to clean up the Deep River. They take a segment of the river and collect debris in large plastic bags. Over the last three years they have collected 3,200 pounds of trash.
- Make a Difference Day: Students make up hygiene packets and deliver them to jails, homeless shelters, nursing homes, etc. According to Denise, in 2002 the AIM Club won first place at this event.
- Relay for Life: Students participate in this yearly walk to raise money for cancer cures, etc. It is held annually in May.
- Adopting a family at Christmas: The club adopts poor families in the community at Christmas and donates food and gifts for the children. A student shares her thoughts:

  We also sponsor little kids for Christmas. Cause, you know, there are people out there that don't really don't have much. And I just like to have that feeling that we

actually help someone that doesn't have much, to get something for Christmas... Like right now, I know that I'm supposed to be getting three kids for Southwest. And it's just a good feeling; because you know maybe they're having a hard time to get money. And the parents aren't probably not even going to be able to give them a good gift for Christmas. And it's just a good feeling to actually be able to give something to someone that they can't really have.

- Red Ribbon Week: Students participate during this drug awareness campaign. Roxanne recounts:

  In October, when we do the parade, our Safe and Drug Free Schools person lets us have the cameras and gives us the red ribbons. And the kids have actually given out, you know like that week is the Red Ribbon Week for drug awareness, the kids actually wrote on these little ribbons, *"Dile 'no' a las drogas." "Nomás dí 'no'."* ("Say 'no' to drugs." "Just say 'no'.") Yeah. They wrote it all out with little sharpies and handed out ribbons to the other Hispanic population that were at the parade.

- Canned food drives, fund-raisers: Frequently, admission for club events or field trips consist of cans of food, which are delivered to community food banks or needy families. They also hold fund-raising events for their own field trips and activities.
- Christmas Parade, Fall Festival Parade: Students make banners and floats and participate in these community parades each year.

The preceding activities are the most commonly mentioned among the participants. It is apparent that community service and participation is an important aspect of the club. The next section describes activities promoting cultural enrichment.

Cultural Enrichment—Sharing and Maintaining:

As mentioned previously, the club emphasizes the goal of sharing cultures and further developing their students' Hispanic culture. They take part in various community events that are culturally inspired. They also originate their own events in the schools and community. Some of these events are:

- La Fiesta del Pueblo at Chapel Hill: This is a statewide yearly celebration of Hispanic arts, music, dance, informational booths, food, etc., that attracts over 20,000 people.
- Hispanic Summit: Students attend this statewide yearly event, which is held in Raleigh at the Centennial Campus of the North Carolina State University. It is a one-day conference for middle and high school Hispanic students, who acquire information on topics of interest to them. Topics include health, education, preparation for college, community resources and leadership development, among others.
- Hispanic Gala Night: In celebration of the Hispanic Heritage Month and *Dia de la Raza*, the AIM Club presents a yearly night of poetry, song, dance, traditions and information about various Spanish-speaking countries, some of which are represented in their schools. Within the presentation, they also include information about the United States. This year's program, "Hispanic Americans: Strength in Unity, Faith and Diversity," was held at Randleman Elementary School. The event attracted over 350 persons from the community and was totally student-run, from the masters of ceremony to the performers. A total of 75 students were involved in the performance. The audience consisted mainly of Hispanic families from the community and a few (less than 40) non-Hispanic persons. For me, the highlight of the evening was the

"Danza de los Viejitos." ("Dance of the Elderly") The master of ceremony shared the traditional legacy of the dance: When Christ was born, some elderly folks wanted to offer Christ long life, so they danced for him. This dance is from the state of Michoacán, Mexico. What follows is an account of my observation that evening:

> As the curtains opened, 12 dancers stood at one end of the stage hunched over, holding canes and wrapped in multi-colored *zarapes*, and wearing masks and hats that dangled colorful ribbons. They beat their canes on the stage and stomped their feet, shaking their fists angrily in the air at the students who were struggling to get technology and music together. The audience laughed loudly.
>
> When the music started, the dancers proceeded onto the stage—including two very young dancers (judging by their size, maybe four to five years of age). The audience laughed and applauded the dancers who frolicked and played around on the stage, feigning feebleness, shaking their hips and canes. They danced hunched over the entire time. The dance consisted of a snake-like movement where they joined by canes and snaked around the stage, first slowly, then speeding up, then eventually slowed down again until they stopped. Then they sped up again, so fast that a few fell and lost their hats, causing the line to break in two. The audience increased the level of clapping and cheering. Toward the end of the dance, a small boy, around four years old, walked up along the two lines of dancers waving his hat at them. Then seeming pandemonium broke loose as they danced until they dropped on the stage. The last dancer was dragged off the stage by fellow dancers.
>
> Given the crowds' enthusiastic cheers, whistling, clapping and yelling, it seemed

like the 350 people in the audience were duly entertained.

- Cultural fairs, mini cultural days in classroom: Some of the family events the club conduct include cultural fairs, where different cultures display arts, crafts, music, food and traditions. These are held on Saturdays on the school grounds. In addition, the club organizes cultural days to be celebrated in classrooms. On these days people of various nationalities are invited to speak to groups of students and share any memorabilia they can take. I was invited to speak about Cuba to a group of 50 students in grades 2nd through 4th.

Building Self-Esteem/Inner Strength, Self-Advocacy:

Students participate in activities that help to develop their character, resilience and future careers.

- Guest speakers: Through the club, students hear guest speakers on various careers, staying clear of drugs, writing workshops, staying in school, health for women, law enforcement awareness, conflict resolution, scholarships, the DREAM ACT (an effort in the current legislature that proposes to help undocumented students who attend U.S. schools for more than four years and are in good standing with the law to be allowed to enroll in North Carolina colleges and universities paying in-state tuition), and others.

  Whenever possible, guest speakers are other Hispanics or ex-migrant workers who have succeeded in their field. Two of these such examples were a young man, whose professional name is "Chocolate." He is a Harvard graduate and spoke to students about his personal transformation from being in gangs to graduating from Harvard. (Just to attest how "Chocolate" has *made* it, his fee for motivational

speaking for one hour was $1,500.) Another guest speaker was Luis Rodriguez, ex-migrant student and professor at the University of Santa Clara. Dr. Rodriguez is the author of several books on the subject of growing up migrant. His latest book, *Breaking Through,* deals with his personal road to success.

- Book Writing: Follow-up activities to the guest lectures involve student writings of their own. Students in the club have been participants in several book-making opportunities. The most publicized of these is the book leading to their publication in the *Harvard Review, Ni de Aquí Ni de Allá.*
- College visits: Students attend several North Carolina colleges and universities for orientation to college. The state sponsors "College Days" for migrant students throughout the state. The Randolph County AIM Club students attend the ones sponsored by the state as well as others that are sponsored by their AIM Club.
- State AIM Conference: Migrant students from Randolph County have participated since 1994 in the state AIM Conference, which is held in June every year. This conference is described in Chapter 1 of this study.

Other activities for building self-esteem include a mother-daughter make-up day, making murals with local artists that are displayed in the community, mask-making and writing about the masks.

Fun and Social Development:

According to Roxanne the most popular social event of the club is the End-of-Year Dance. Students dress as if they are going to the prom. Through their own fund-raising efforts the club hire disc jockeys for the dance. Other fun socials include: Skate Night, AIM Day Camp at Caraway and Country Line Dancing.

Family Events:

The club holds events for the entire family to participate; these tend to happen around holidays. Holiday meals are traditional for the club. The October Fest is another all-day celebration time for the entire family.

School Participation and Service:

The AIM Club participates in each of their schools as any other club would participate. Roxanne explains how they decide on activities for individual schools:

> Some of the schools we go with what's going on in school. We have football season. We have Spirit Week. So for Spirit Week everyday they do something. Well, the clubs themselves will decide, because see, I'm not there on a daily basis. When it's "Backwards Day" or "Twin Day"…they themselves dress alike or do whatever. Like, last year at Randleman High during Spirit Week when it was "Twin Day," four girls dressed in the same shoes, same pants, their AIM Club t-shirt, and the same ribbons in their hair. So there were four of them that looked exactly alike that day at school. But they chose to do that.
>
> In the past when there was something like that with Spirit Week or October Fest, the principal opened it up to selling something so that you could make money for your club. We participated there. So, it's a per school thing once the school year gets going. If there are any other activities at school going on, then the AIM Club participates like any other club in the school. If there's a clean-up afternoon, then the AIM Club meets and, you know, they go and clean up the school, just like the rest of the kids.
>
> The AIM Club, as mentioned previously, also provides interpreters and office

interns for the school. They participate in banner competitions, and make homecoming floats.

These and other activities keep students busy year round. In reviewing the objectives for the club enumerated above, it is my observation that the activities cover each one of the club's stated objectives. In the next section I list the perceived benefits for students who participate in the AIM Club.

3. What are the perceived academic and/or social benefits and effects on migrant students who participate in the AIM Club?

Participants report multiple benefits for migrant students who participate in the AIM Club. The immediate benefits they notice are social in nature, which, in turn affect their academic awareness and pursuits, impacting their future plans and personal development. Here, within the themes of social and academic benefits, I include the most commonly expressed benefits reported by participants.

Social Benefits:

Among the social benefits reported are developing in students a sense of belonging in school, which help migrant students to participate in other school clubs and sports groups. Their participation in AIM serves to bring visibility to the migrant and Hispanic students in the school, at times helping to bridge sensitive issues between cultures. Other benefits for students are learning to relate to others, improving their self-esteem, and broadening perspectives.

One student explains how the AIM Club helps students feel like they are connected to something at school:

It makes them feel like they belong somewhere. Because I remember whenever I

> wasn't in the AIM Club, I didn't really feel like a part of anything. Basically, I wasn't very involved with many things. I wasn't very social…And I think it makes you just want to belong somewhere and it makes you like you *feel* a part of something. And those members of that club want you there because it will make things bigger and better.

Yet another student speaks of the purpose the AIM Club serves of relieving the anxiety that newcomers feel while trying to fit in to the new school:

> I've never lived through it. I mean I grew up in the United States all my life. I lived in California since I was little, and I see people just come from Mexico. I think the AIM Club makes them feel like it's not all over. 'Cause I'm sure when they come here, *everything* is new, and you don't even have someone who talks like you. The AIM Club, since we all get along and everything, it just makes them feel good, makes them not feel out of place…If they weren't in the AIM Club, you know, you just feel all alone and you feel like you don't have any friends or it's very different. I'm sure it's a big change, but, they enter the AIM Club and we all try to help and we're all really friendly and I'm sure it makes them feel good to know that they have people they can talk to.

Stuart explains the same scenario with an administrator's vocabulary:

> I see the club as providing our students with an opportunity to find a sense of belonging very quickly. Having not done it myself, but only imagining what it must feel like to be their age and being uprooted from everything that is familiar, and brought into a new situation where nothing is familiar, including the language, I have visions of just feeling like I was adrift and had nothing to cling

> to. And with our AIM Club this is a group of students who are experiencing the same situations. It gives them an identity, something that they can cling, join into. And there's always, to use an old quote, "There's safety in numbers." They feel more secure. It's a whole lot better feeling, "Hey I've got friends in this group that I belong to that are going through the same thing I am," rather than, "I'm the only one here going through this." I see that first and foremost.

The AIM Club serves to encourage participation in other school activities as well. Nationally, migrant students tend not to participate in clubs or activities in school. In Randolph County, According to Roxanne approximately 80% of the migrant students belong to the AIM Club; and, within that group a growing number of them are beginning to participate in other activities, clubs or sports at their school. Three of the seniors, including one who is second in her class in academic standing, said they had waited until their senior year to join other clubs. Students give credit to the AIM Club for helping them out of their shell to participate in other clubs or sports. Steve speaks of the changes he has seen at Southwestern Randolph High School over the years the AIM Club has been established there:

> When I began at SWRHS there were few Hispanic kids and maybe two migrant kids. I noticed then that those students were withdrawn. I am the type of teacher who believes in participation in class and I can remember that due to being the minority of the SWRHS student body, the students then did not join clubs or sports and did not speak to many people. With each year our migrant/Hispanic population grows at SWRHS; and, each year the club grows because whether the ESL/Hispanic kid is migrant or not, they all want to be part of the AIM Club. It

> gives them the freedom to be Hispanic. I mean, keep their culture alive within the club and share their culture with the student body. I see kids from the AIM Club involved in sports, other clubs, and becoming somebody at SWRHS. The AIM Club and one of its advisors in the last two years has brought about more cultural awareness at SWRHS and opened the eyes of the students and staff that these kids are just that, kids like everyone else who want to belong and have success.

Roxanne echoes this experience:

> We're having more kids involved in other clubs, playing in sports, being in drama, chorus, school plays, things like that. Yes, the girls are playing on the soccer team, yes ma'am. I say, "Yeah!" "If the boys can do it, you can do it too." And they're going out and they're making the soccer team. A couple of our schools have the Hispanic kids that are also in AIM, in ROTC, the Junior ROTC Also, just being a part of the student body, speaking up, as I mentioned chorus, drama, band. We have one girl that's the only Hispanic girl in the whole band at her school.

Roxanne also mentions how, for the second year in a row, ex-migrant students (both members of the AIM Club), have been selected as their school's homecoming queen.

Aside from helping to increase migrant student participation in school, AIM Club participation helps students to better relate socially, improve their self-esteem and broaden their perspectives. Anselmo speaks of the changes he saw in his daughter after joining the AIM Club.

> *Creo que le ha ayudado mucho a relacionarse con otras personas, y a cambiar de aire…Uno de los grandes beneficios es que ha habierto ella un poquito más su*

mente. Ha despertado en ella un interes por tomar otra actividad fuera de la escuela, y le ha ayudado. Entre parentesis, mi hija es un poquito, si Ud. la conoce, es un poquito cerrada, ¿verdad? No es de muchas palabras. Pero esto le ha despertado, le ha servido mucho. Y yo estoy muy satisfecho con eso. Pienso que es muy bueno. Pero, el club, le diría yo que es un medio de apoyo, es un medio de darles un poquito más de confianza y de conocer otras personas.
(I think it has helped her a lot in relating to other persons, and it has helped her change her attitude…One of the great benefits is that she has opened up her mind a little more. It has awakened in her an interest in taking another activity outside of the school, and it has helped her. In parentheses, my daughter is a little bit, if you know her, is a little bit closed, right? She is not very talkative. But this has awakened her, it has served her very much. And I am very satisfied with that. I think it is very good. But, the club, I would say, is a medium of support, it is a medium for giving them a little more confidence and for knowing other persons.

Fernanda, Anselmo's daughter reinforces her father's comments: *"Sí, porque me siento más segura así. Es como, que tengo más facilidad para ya expresarme en el ambiente en el salón. Me ha quitado un poco el miedo."* ("Yes, because I feel more sure of myself. I have a greater facility to express myself in the classroom environment. It has taken away some of the fear.") Rebeca's sentiment is similar when sharing what the club does for her: *"Me ayuda a sentirme bien, que soy parte, que valgo algo en la escuela."* ("It has helped me to feel fine, that I belong, that I am worth something in school") Finally, Imelda and Rebeca comment on how the students' wide exposure in activities broadens their perspectives. Imelda offers: *"Les hacen participar en muchos eventos para que*

tengan muchos conocimientos ellos de muchas cosas." ("They have them participate in many events so that they will have much knowledge about many things.") Imelda's daughter, Rebeca, concurs: *"Realmente todas (las actividades) estan interesantes, porque en cada una aprendes diferentes cosas que no has aprendido en tu vida."* ["Really all (the activities) are interesting, because you learn things in each one that you have not learned in your life."] In addition to the social benefits included here, participants report other benefits which serve students academically.

Academic Benefits:

The most common academic benefits reported are an increased motivation to stay in school, graduate and go on to college; thus, increasing students' aspirations for a more successful future than they had previously anticipated. Students are further helped to learn English, advocate for themselves and learn about their school.

Students commonly express how motivating the club has been for them. Fernanda speaks of how her desire to quit school and return to Mexico changed after joining the club. Then she adds that upon graduating in another year, she plans to attend college. Ramiro comments on his thoughts for graduation: *"No. No pensaba en eso. Antes nomás pensaba llegar aquí y aprender ingles y trabajar. Y ahóra tengo las metas más adelante."* ("No. I did not think on doing that. Before I just planned on arriving here and learning English. And now I have set my goals farther ahead.") Rebeca's thought are related: *"Bueno, así cuando no estaba en el club sí pensaba ir al colegio, pero no así seriamente. Siempre decía, 'No Rebeca, ese es un sueño que nunca tú vas a alcanzar porque eres Latina y todo.' Pero ahora que estoy en el club, sí. Sí, lo he pensado, y sí.* ("Well, when I was not in the club I did think about going to college, but not seriously. I

would always say, 'No Rebeca, that is a dream that you will never reach because you are Latina and all that.' But now that I am in the club, yes. Yes, I have thought about it, and yes.") Other students have similar thoughts on how motivating club participation has been for them. One student who has been here seven years says:

> It opens up my eyes to see beyond what you can accomplish. For me, I thought if I was to finish high school, I couldn't go to college because I'm Hispanic and I don't have, uh, something (documentation) that will get me up there. Now that I'm going to finish…I think I can go to college, which I thought I would never do that. Now I think I can, go to college, become something, and even own my own business someday.

Other students speak of the higher standards they are encouraged to strive for while in the club:

> It made me realize I had an opportunity, actually, to be somebody, and not just because of where I'm from or what I am, or what everybody tells me I am. It gives me an opportunity to see that I can actually be somebody and make myself somebody. And not just because, "Oh, I'm Mexican, I can't go to, I can't finish high school, I can't finish college," just because of my background. It makes me realize I can be whatever I want and don't have to look back… it gives me the opportunity to seek higher than everybody's, the people's standards are, the Hispanic standards.

At this point another student clarifies: "The Hispanic standards. It makes you seek higher than what the standards are for Hispanics here in the United States." Yet another student has thoughts on the subject of motivation in spite of being a Hispanic:

> And whenever I see somebody become someone that was in the AIM Club, like Carlos, well he went on, and he's now, you know, getting a career. Not only his parents motivated him, but Miss Taylor and the AIM Club made him want to build his house up, and you know, get it higher than an average Hispanic would.

Aside from motivational factors, students also learn to advocate for themselves, as in the case of the letter-writing campaign for the Dream Act. Those that are newcomers improve their English-speaking skills by interacting, in a non-threatening environment, with those who are already bilingual. Denise relates a poignant story of a case involving three Tarasco (Indian tribe in Mexico) students who had recently arrived in Randolph County:

> One of the reasons it (this particular bookmaking activity) stands out the most, I'm thinking of this one particular migrant family and these kids that were Tarasco. And, of course they had to learn Spanish when they got here and then they had to learn English. So these kids were very quiet, I mean well mannered, but very reserved. And through this book thing, Robert Shreefter was asking him, especially the boy, all kinds of questions. (He, Shreefter) finally got him talking. These were children that had been doing things with us that were so quiet, and here they were talking and telling about their story and what they had done! And it just, just makes your heart warm. These kids can speak!!

Finally, reportedly, students also learn how to better manage different aspects of the school, their new environment. Drew explains the transitory nature of migrant students and how their involvement in the club helps ease the problems caused by the interruption in schooling:

The first day they arrive, they're usually placed. A number of these students are placed in an ESL classroom if there's some language issues. We do get a number that were maybe born in California but the parents are still migrant. So they are naturalized, not naturalized but they're born citizens. However, they still fall within this group and they're some still unique characteristics about the migrant or transitory patterns that they go through within their lives with work. And we get a number that end up staying in this community. There is work available in this community, and they may be migrant up to this point, and some choose to stay. Unfortunately, some next year will be going elsewhere, and that continuity of education will be affected. But we have such a group that have already been through that, and have learned the tools of the trade. I don't know how else to put it, but the tricks for being successful. And the more they interact with those students, and the more they interact with the adults who have been through this before, the better prepared they are for this year when they're here and next year wherever they are. And that's probably the number one benefit they get is learning how to be successful, and then getting a taste of that success. And I honestly believe any student that gets a taste of success wants more. And we're really finding that the students, when they get actively engaged in AIM Club, they really take the idea of the motivation and there is success across the board, at home, in their church life, in the community life and in their school life. That's the benefit, and that's why it's a very important club in this community.

Participants share not only the benefits of club participation for migrant students, but also their stated reasons for wanting to participate. These findings are included in the next section.

Findings for research questions for theory and research

4. Why do students participate in the AIM Club?

According to participants in this study, students are involved in the AIM Club, first and foremost, for social reasons. High on their priority is the opportunity to relate to other students who are also Hispanic, facing similar issues in their school and community. In fact, one of the complaints that students express about the club is disillusionment over the fact that the club has not yet attracted 100% of the Hispanic students in the schools. Other complaints are that not all members of the club attend all the activities and that the club does not meet every day. They enjoy the opportunities for conviviality with peers, while they practice their culture and learn of new ones in a fun, supportive and carefree environment. After giving a long explanation of why students participate, Stuart simplifies his response: "From a purely non-educational reason, they have fun! Those activities they plan, the dance at the end of the year, the things they do. They have fun." Steve also explains his thoughts on the subject:

> I think the kids join AIM because it is a very positive support group, a place to belong where kids can be themselves, use their native language freely and plan and participate in activities that they decide upon. As I mentioned before, the belonging is there, plus several think Mrs. Taylor is cool. She understands these kids and lets them be themselves.

I have discussed at length in previous sections of this paper the social aspects of the club with its ability to provide a "comfortable" cultural atmosphere for students; therefore, I proceed with the final popular reason that students give for wanting to participate in the AIM Club, that of showing support for the advisors.

Students express a sense of trust for Denise and Roxanne and feel a certain responsibility to help Roxanne and Denise by supporting the club. By so doing they convey their appreciation to the advisors for the generous manner in which they have extended themselves to the students. Ramiro, the club president at Randleman High School shares the following regarding his active participation in the club: "*Porque Miss Taylor me ayudó, y yo tengo que ayudarla tambien a ella. Así para que la gente se reuna más en el AIM Club, para que tengamos más apoyo.*" ("Because Miss Taylor helped me, and I have to help her too. That way people will get together more in the AIM Club, so that we have more support.") Another student in the focus group interview has a similar sentiment: "It (the club) has made me stronger. It's made me want to be somebody, help people that need help. It made me give back what Miss Taylor has given me." Students acknowledg the special nature of their advisors. In a focus group interview with students, they express deep gratitude and trust for both Denise and Roxanne. Following I include a portion of the interview:

> *Student:* Having people like Miss Taylor and Miss Beane, they are helping you and giving you *consejos* (advice) and support and you know, just helping you out. I owe a lot to Miss Beane and Miss Taylor 'cause they have always been there and supported me in any decision I took, and my parents. And I think Miss Taylor

has a lot to do with me being so strong today. I owe it to them a lot because they have taught me a lot and stuff.

Rachel: How do the rest of you feel about your two advisors?

Student: With me they're like my second mom. (several laugh)

Student: Yeah, cause, Miss Taylor has cried with me and she's been with me and everything. She's the most wonderful lady I've ever met.

Student: And the only thing she gets back is our smiles and our thank yous!

Student: And seeing us graduate.

Student: It makes her feel so good when we accomplish it, when we graduate, and when we go on to college. But she didn't even know us, and she took the time to learn to know us, and all she gets is we graduate, and we're going to be somebody. And that just makes her feel so good.

Student: It's like she just took you from the hand and guided you towards the path that you were meant to go and the path that you are supposed to go.

Student: I think she gets satisfaction when she knows we have advanced.

Student: And I think she'll put some of us in, like, an example towards the other kids and our brothers and sisters and smaller kids than us.

Rachel: Do you feel like you have a very trusting relationship with her?

Studenst: (All) Yes!

Rachel: How about Ms. Beane?

Student: She's real…awesome. They're two…

Student: Angels dropped from heaven.

Student: They're always helping each other.

Student: I think if we have someone to thank it's mainly our parents, but secondly, we, all the AIM Club members have to thank, we can never thank them enough for supporting us and telling us. When people told us, "You can't do anything," they told us, "Yes you can, and you'll be able to."

Student: It's like they gave us the extra push.

Student: Miss Taylor goes all out, Miss Beane, they go all out. They're great people!

Students participate in the AIM Club for social and cultural reasons, as well as in response to the respectful and personal, trusting relationships they have developed with the club advisors. In the next and final section of the findings I respond to the last guiding research question regarding issues of the transitioning process for migrant students.

5. Are there issues of the transitioning process that surfaced for the students?

- How do students feel about becoming "an American?"
- What would students like to see happen regarding this process?

Participants communicate certain issues that are of particular concern for migrant students in regards to their transition to the United States. Students and parents speak of their lived experiences to date in the United States and translate them into opinions on how they wish life would be for them here. Other participants offer opinions based on their observations of the students and their families. Concerns raised are related to issues of language, personal cultural adaptation and community cultural adaptation.

Need to Learn English:

For newcomers not yet having acquired a fluent level of English proficiency, the single most pressing need they express is that of learning to speak English. Students and

their parents encounter problems at school as well as in society at large. Fernanda reports that she was not accepted in some of her classes because she did not speak English: *"En algunas clases los maestros sabían que yo no sabía Ingles. Les decían a los alumnos y me veían mal, y no se acercaban a mí mucho. Pero ahora no, no es con mucha frecuencia.*" ("In some classes the teachers knew I did not know English. They would tell the students and they would look at me in a bad way, and they would not come near me very much. But now it doesn't happen very frequently.") Parents express a lack of ability to comment on the quality of their children's education, due to their inability to communicate in English. Imelda states her feelings in the following manner: *"Quizáz a lo mejor no tiene uno mucho conocimiento, porque como uno no habla bien el ingles, a lo mejor no tiene uno el conocimiento para decir, 'Esto si está bien, esto no está bien.'"* ("Perhaps, one does not have much knowledge, since one does not speak English well, perhaps one does not have much knowledge to say, 'This is right, this is not right.'") Anselmo speaks of his inability to speak openly with teachers, having to communicate through his children's translations. Yet, he recognizes that, thanks to his children's interpretation skills, he is able to communicate with their teachers, even if it is to a limited degree: *"No tenemos una plática muy habierta porque nosotros no sabemos hablar ingles, mucho. Pero, con la ayuda ya de los hijos, pues tenemos acercamiento con las personas de sus maestros, los directivos, inclusivo de allí de la middle school o high school."* ("We do not have a very open conversation because we do not know how to speak much English. But, now with the help of our children, we have a certain approach with their teachers, the administrators, even the ones at the middle or high school.") A parent encounters problems becoming a citizen due to not being able to communicate in

English: "*Yo traté de hacerme ciudadano, ¿verdad? Pero no pude, porque, pues no hablo bien el ingles. Y en esa forma no me pasé."* ("I tried to become a citizen, right? But I could not, since I do not speak English well. And for that reason I did not pass.") Rebecca reminisces being in the same situation when she first arrived and states the problem succinctly: *"Las puertas se cierran a la persona que no habla en ingles. No te podías comunicar con nadie."* ("Doors shut for those persons that do not speak English. You were not able to communicate with anyone.")

Personal Cultural Adaptation:

Issues of cultural adaptation at the personal level impacts all students and parents, whether they have been here a long time or just a few months. As stated in a previous section of the findings, all students express a desire to maintain their Mexican heritage and culture, while at the same time develop the American culture. When asked what they think is meant by the expression becoming "an American " and how they feel about that, all students say they feel that it means leaving their Mexican heritage and becoming *only* an American. None spoke favorably of that scenario. One student suggests that it means: "Probably losing our nationality. Having to change cultures and everything. That's one way." Fernanda's version goes like this: *"Sería como rechazar a mis costumbres o mi país. No. Es bueno sí, conocer la cultura Americana, pero tambien seguir siendo Mexicana."* ("It would be like rejecting my customs or my country. No. It is good, yes, to get to know the American culture, but also to continue being Mexican.") Though it is not mentioned very often, students show concern with issues of citizenship—particularly as it impacts their aspirations of attending college. One student explains what becoming "an American" means to her:

> To me becoming an American means, *BEING LEGAL HERE!!* To me that's what it is, being legal here. Because that would make you an American, but you wouldn't lose your culture. You would bring your culture with you and teach everyone your culture and learn to socialize with other people. And that's what basically it means to me.

All students feel just as strongly that it is possible and preferable to develop both cultures, since they are Mexican *and* in the United States. Rebeca states her thoughts on developing both cultures simultaneously: "*Puedes balancear las dos al mismo tiempo. Porque para mí es bien importante mantener esa cultura Hispana que yo tengo, que mis padres me han inculcado. Y tambien es bonito ser en la cultura Americana. Son totalmente diferentes, pero sí puedes balancearlas en el mismo nivel.*" ("You can balance the two at the same time. Because to me it is very important to maintain that Hispanic culture that I have, that my parents have ingrained in me. And it is also nice being in the American culture. They are totally different, but you can balance them at the same level.") Ramiro, has the same view, as he speaks matter-of-factly about adding his third culture:

> *Pues es que cuando estaba en México, hablaba Tarasco. Luego iba a la escuela tambien a la Ciudad de México. Luego fuí aprendiendo más en Español y todo eso. Luego llegué aquí, y como quiero, le agarré las tres culturas, pues. Son como tres culturas. Y ya yo dije, "Pues hay que agarrar las tres, porque pues, no puedo dejar mi cultura que es el Tarasco, ni el Mexicano, y pues, tengo que agarrar el Americano tambien.*

> Well, when I was in Mexico I spoke Tarasco. Then I used to go to school also in Mexico City. Then I was learning more in Spanish and all that. Then I arrived here, and since I want to, I got all three cultures. There are three cultures. And I said, "Well, I must get all three, because well, I can not leave my culture that is Tarasco, nor the Mexican, and well, I have to get the American one too."

While all students emphasize a preference for developing both cultures simultaneously, particularly for students who have been in the United States a longer time, this phenomenon tends to pose some ambiguity. They describe a process of self-discovery as they wonder where they belong and how they should categorize themselves. At times they do not feel like they belong here nor there, while at other times they feel like they belong in both countries. One student expresses this ambiguity:

> I feel the same way as (named another student) because I grew up here too. I was using Spanish since I was five. I went to school like all years here in the United States. I know most of the culture here, and I'm used to it now; but, whenever I first got here, I was like, everybody characterized me as Mexican that's it. But now I feel like I'm both. I feel both Mexican and American, and I know that will never go away. I know that and I'm very like *proud* I guess, of being a Mexican. I know that, and it will never go away just because I live here. But, whenever I'm in Mexico, they say, I don't belong there either. I would feel so left out in Mexico, because I know the traditions here, I know the culture now here, and if I go to Mexico they're like, I wouldn't belong there because everybody would say, "Oh, you live there, you're more American now, you shouldn't be here in Mexico anymore, you can belong in America now." And I guess I would feel left out in

Mexico too.

Other students describe arriving at a resolution of the question for themselves. They just accept the duality of cultures in their life. This is one student's experience:

> Yeah, I feel exactly the same way, cause, like I said, I was born here. And ever since I was born, we would go to Mexico every year. So basically I was learning both cultures, both languages at the exact same time. So that was kind of hard, but that's why I feel like I'm both. But in a way, I still feel like I'm more Mexican in a way, cause it's just my family and I mean, it's just so different from the American culture. It just, I don't know, it just catches my attention. But it was very difficult to learn like both things at the exact same time. And I mean there were even things that I couldn't say in English that I could say in Spanish and I couldn't transpose it or anything. Then with time passing by, you know, I learned how to be able to learn both things at the exact same time and get it straight in my head. But, that's why I consider I'm kind-a both, and like she said my background is Mexican.

Another student has resolved the issue of what she is. She is an American, *and* she is a Mexican:

> I think that's how I feel. I'm an American. I'm here. I'm living here. This is where I'm at, you know, this is where I'll be, I think, for the rest of my life. But, yet, my background is Mexican. I'm from Mexico. My parents and all my family are from Mexico. Personally, that's what I categorize myself as.

Rebecca expresses a similar sentiment when asked whether she considers herself Mexican or American. She includes the fact that indeed she *is* an American citizen :

Es una pregunta muy dificil. Las dos. Mexicana, porque nací en Mexico. Americana, porque me vine para America. Aprendí el idioma, que es muy dificil de aprender. Pero si pones esfuerzo y no te das por vencida lo logras. Y Americana porque ya soy ciudadana Americana, gracias a mi mamá.

It is a very difficult question. Both. Mexican, because I was born in Mexico. American, because I came to America. I learned the language, which is very difficult to learn; but, if you make an effort and do not give up, you can attain it. And American because I am an American citizen, thanks to my mom.

Aside from the personal cultural issues with which the students struggle, participants also raise concerns over cultural adaptation stemming from the migrant students' encounters with members of the school and society at large.

Community Cultural Adaptation:

Another issue of significance to all students is a perception of not being accepted into the school and community at one time or another. Students identify feelings of rejection and feel racism expressed towards them. While rejection comes mostly from the "American" people, at times other Mexican-American students who have been here a long time or were born here, or even Hispanic students from countries other than Mexico, are the source of rejection and racist remarks. Other participants make observations that concur with the students' comments.

Students express anxiety and fear over not being accepted and being rejected from groups or classes: Fernanda comments: "*Pues, me sentía muy mal por no saber el idioma. No tenía tantos conocimientos y miedo al rechazo de la gente, racismo y todo."* ("I felt very badly due to not knowing the language. I did not have that much knowledge and I

was fearful of people's rejection, racism and everything.") Another student who has been here seven years complains:

> *Aveces con los Americanos, como aveces yo personalmente tengo problemas en la escuela. Mis companeros de clase y los gringos que andan aquí en la escuela, me dicen cosas porque soy Mexicano. Como dicen que soy "mojado" y que debo regresar a Mexico y muchas otras cosas.*
>
> Sometimes, with Americans, I personally have problems at school. My classmates and the gringos around there tell me things because I am a Mexican. They tell me I am a "wetback" and that I have to return to Mexico and lots of other things.

Ramiro gives another example of perceived rejection involving students not being accepted in the soccer teams:

> *Sí puedan jugar. Pero algunos dicen que quieren jugar, pero cuando van a las practicas, dicen que no, porque estamos bajitos, y no estamos muy fuertes, que digamos. Es por eso. Hablo de los Hispanos. Como que no nos dejan en los equipos. No juega ningún Hispano.*
>
> They are allowed to play. However, some say they want to play and when they go to practice, they're told, no, because we are short and we are not very strong, so to speak. That is why. I am speaking about the Hispanics. It is like they do not allow us on the teams. No Hispanic plays.

Yet, two other students agree with the previously expressed feelings, then comment on how they have learned to overcome the rejection. One student mentions:

> There's always people like that that are always going to say that. When I first got here I heard that all the time, and I guess I've learned to accept it. And I can't say

that, a lot of people would say, "Oh, you're a Mexican, you should go back to your country." And I get mad at that. I know everybody, at least Hispanics and Mexicans, I know they get mad, they have to, because just because you live here, they assume that you have to go back to your country. And it makes me feel bad because then I don't feel like I don't belong here, but I don't belong in Mexico either cause I feel different over there too. And it makes me in the middle. So I don't know which way to go. And it makes me feel really bad. But, I've learned to accept it, and as I said before, I know who I am, and nobody can change who I am, so.

The second student's comment is similar:

I think that's true because when I was *más chica* (younger) [personally I think I never experienced like, you know, how *hay gente bien racista* (there are *very* racist people) and you just can't avoid that], but, personally, yeah, I've met racist people and they really dropped my self-esteem down; because, you know, there's people out there that want to hurt you. But, as I got older, now that I'm in high school, I'm a senior, it's very difficult to find even a white person to tell you, "Go back Mexican", or "You're a Mexican." Yeah, I've heard it, and I mean now I have learned that *no nomás por eso me voy a dejar vencer* (not just for that will I allow myself to be defeated). I'm stronger than that, you know. And I think the AIM Club has taught me that you have to be proud of being Mexican even though you're in America. And personally that's what I've learned that when I was younger it used to be worse than what it is now.

Maureen, in reference to the purpose that the AIM Club serves addresses some of the same issues the students brought up:

> First and foremost, it provides them with a sense of belonging within the school community. It is a well-known fact that high school students are more successful when they have close personal associations at school. Many migrant and LEP students lack the communication skills to participate fully in the school community. In addition, they are often overwhelmed by a strange environment and may face prejudices from other students and even staff. The AIM Club is a safe haven for these students.

In his interview, speaking of his concern over the need to get the local community to attend the Hispanic Gala Night Drew comments:

> It's a tough one because there's still some reluctance in this community to accept the changing dynamics. And that's something that administratively we still have to overcome. Staff wise we still have to overcome. We are in a changing dynamic. …And it's one of the things I see as my role. How can I better advertise, better support, and better get information out to parents in the community so that they may be able to attend these things and learn more… And that's why I think AIM is so important. We have neighboring counties that it's not uncommon for monthly there to be editorials about those people coming in.

Participants relate that there are problems of acceptance within Hispanic groups as well. Fernanda explains: *"Sería como varios alumnos aquí que a lo mejor son Méxicanos o algo, pero se vienieron muy pequeños a aquí, y no le hablan a los Hispanos. Entonces, como tambien rechazan."* ("It would be like various students here who are

probably Mexican or something, but they came over here when they were very young, and they do not speak to the Hispanics. Then, it is like they also reject you.") Roxanne recognizes these problems and feels it is the business of the club to help students deal with the problems of different Hispanic cultural groups. She recalls several incidents when conflicts erupt between the various Hispanic nationalities. In this first incident a Mexican girl has been elected president of the club over five other non-Mexican Hispanic girls and one Mexican boy. The problems continue to the point where the club meets on its own to re-elect a president. They elect the Mexican boy president and make the girl, who had previously been elected as president, the new vice-president. Even after that change, the four non-Mexican girls continue to have problems with the decision. Roxanne comments:

> This year I have felt the most (problems between Hispanic groups). And the ESL teacher there that helped me noticed that this year we saw a lot of competition between the different countries. She was Mexican. The Salvadorian, Guatemalan, Nicaraguan girls, it bothered them really bad that the Mexican girl got the vice-presidency. None of them were seniors. But it bothered them that she got it. And there were times when we'd start to meet and there were little comments that were made. And several times the ESL teacher and I had to say, "Look, you're all the same to us here. You're just all AIM Club members. Nobody is better than anyone else. It's not a race thing, it's not about who's from what country. It's just all of you being here just in the club and being members." Because I think, they themselves single themselves out this year, separated by country. Because we're starting to have, I think at that one particular high school we might have 8

different countries represented. And the ones that weren't from Mexico didn't want to be "Mexican" in any way shape or form.

She contributes another story along the same vein:

> Two years ago one of the boys, the boy then at Southwest High was the AIM Club president who was from El Salvador, we were at the Relay for Life and he comes running to me, and said, "Miss Taylor I almost got in a fight today." And I said, "Carlos, why?" And he said, "Because they called me the "m" word." And I said, "The 'm' word?" I couldn't think of any bad word that started with an "m." And he said, "They called me a 'Mexican'." And I just looked at him, and I said, "Oh my gosh." I didn't realize that he would be offended by being called a Mexican. He said, "I don't like when people categorize me something that I am not. I am from El Salvador, and I'm proud to be from El Salvador." And I told him, "Look, Carlos, but you shouldn't get in a fight because you need to educate your peers that not everybody who speaks Spanish is from Mexico."

Drew describes how bringing the issues facing migrant students to the forefront and educating the staff and community about these differences, helps staff and everyone else learn how to relate more positively. He describes one of the multi-cultural activities at school:

> But, no, it's truly multi-culture. There's Colombians, Panamanians, El Salvadorians, Mexicans, some of the island groups, Puerto Ricans…We have so many different cultures that, traditionally, we had lumped together as, "oh, you're Hispanic." Well no, you're more than Hispanic. It's just like us recognize Southern and Northern. That was an eye-opener for me. Routinely I'd dealt

> with… I guess I was ignorant, that's the best way of putting it, to the diverse cultures in there. I didn't realize the breadth of difference between say an El Salvadorian, a person from Mexico and a person from Costa Rica. You think they're so close, but the cultures are so unique. It's exciting to me to learn that. They were teaching me how to dance, and I didn't realize there were so many different dances. And they laughed at me because I had two left feet up there, but it's so enjoyable. And the kids are wonderful. They bring such a unique flavor to our school that, to me, it's a very positive to this school. And we do not have a lot of minority presence at our school. The African American population is under 2%. So we're dealing with a very monoculture. So as our Hispanic student numbers rise, I think there's a lot of positives that we can benefit from that.

Drew feels the AIM Club is a vehicle for bringing about the required visibility to this group of students, so that circumstances might change for them at his school:

> I was not here before (the AIM Club), but I can see the difference when AIM is more active. And it has each year become more and more active. And what I find, not that the population of students is increasing, although it is slightly, but the more active they are, the more the concerns of the students are being addressed by teachers, are being addressed by administrators, and are being addressed by the school system.

The issues listed above are found to be affecting students as they make their transition from Mexico to the United States, mainly ones of language, and personal and community cultural adaptation.

In this chapter I report findings by answering the studies' five guiding questions, within the most commonly appearing themes during data analysis. Having concluded reporting the findings, I move to the last and final chapter where I answer the overall research question and present my analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 5. Summary of Findings, Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to determine whether AIM Clubs can help to facilitate the Mexican-American migrant students' process of transitioning or incorporating into the American society by allowing them to negotiate their identities in an empowering rather than disempowering manner; and, if so, how? I use a qualitative research design with a case study set within the Randolph County Migrant Education Program AIM Club in North Carolina. In this final chapter I offer a summary of the findings reported in Chapter 4 and present an analysis of the findings within Cummins' theory of *Negotiating Identities.* I draw conclusions answering the overall research question based on an analysis of the findings. In the final section I include recommendations for practical implications for AIM Clubs and for research.

Summary of Findings

In summarizing the findings I encapsulate the identified common themes within the responses to each of the guiding resource questions. Beginning with a summary of the answers to the questions for practical significance and ending with a summary of answers to the questions for research and theory, in this next section I provide an abridged version of Chapter 4.

Summary of findings for research questions for practical significance

1. What are the practices, beliefs and attitudes of people in the club?

Summary of the History and Organization of the AIM Club in Randolph County:

The Randolph County AIM Club began in response to a request by students who attended the statewide AIM Conference in June 1994. The advisors, Roxanne Taylor and Denise Beane, who remain in that role until the time of this report, were inspired as well,

and decided to start the club in the Randleman area, where the majority of migrant students resided. Since 1994, club membership increased from 10 students at two different sites to 150 at seven different sites in the county. Through the years, staff members at the various schools have helped to oversee and advise the clubs at their own school. Denise and Roxanne supervise the activities of local clubs not having other staff advisors as well as the those of the larger overall AIM Club composed of all the local clubs joined together. The club's objectives are:

- To provide guidance services to migrant students to help them make appropriate social, educational and career decisions.
- To help migrant students achieve high self-esteem for school performance.
- To expose migrant students to positive role models and mentors who have a personal interest in their life goals.
- To provide educational, cultural, and social experiences for migrant students, which will increase their opportunity to succeed.
- To assist migrant students in setting and reaching long and short-term goals.

Student members are required to sign an "AIM Student Contract" in which they promise to abide by the school's rules of conduct, remain diligent about their schoolwork and respect others. Local clubs meet weekly, biweekly or monthly, while the overall AIM Club holds monthly activities.

Summary of Parent Involvement:

From the inception of the club, Roxanne and Denise made a conscious effort to involve parents within the activities of the club. They believed that if the parents understood the purpose of the club, more students would be allowed to participate.

Parents have been supportive and grateful for the club through the years. They participate through a supportive role in activities designed especially for students as well as directly in events meant exclusively for parents or for the entire family. Students also express deep gratitude for their parents and the support they offer.

Summary of Community Service and Participation:

There is evidence of the role the AIM Club plays in the community. Stemming from the advisors' belief that students should make a concerted effort to contribute to the community in which they live, the AIM Club participates in multiple community activities. Their involvement includes service activities as well as showcase events. Leaders at the district, school and club level, all recognize the impact made by the club toward improving public relations between the Hispanic community and the majority residents of the county. All agree that due to the club's involvement in the school and community, significant in-roads are being paved toward the long road to unity.

Summary of Culture: Sharing, Acquiring and Maintaining:

Students, parents and district staff all speak of the importance of sharing the Mexican culture with others, acquiring the American culture and maintaining their Mexican culture. All students and parents express a desire to develop both American and Mexican cultures simultaneously. None feel it necessary or desirable to give up one to accept the other. Students and parents speak passionately and proudly of the love of their culture and heritage. Turning away from their cultural heritage is not in the realm of possibility for any of the students or parents interviewed.

AIM Club students take seriously their role in cultural awareness. They are aware of their responsibility in sharing their Mexican culture and heritage with the majority

culture. Students understand that they can improve the locals' perception of the Mexican and Hispanic people, by being positive examples in their school and community.

Summary of Being Responsive to Students:

The advisors design club activities with student input. Students are involved in planning the activity calendar for the year. Role models make their way frequently into the lives of the students, to inspire and motivate them. The leaders and school staff exert conscious effort in recruiting students to participate in the AIM Club. Additional recruitment occurs naturally through peer interaction. The leaders purposely selected a name for the club that would attract students positively, rather than risking the possibility of a negative stigma on the membership. The leaders and staff express a tremendous amount of pride in the club and its accomplishments.

Summary of Committed Staff and Strong Leadership:

It was everyone's opinion that Roxanne and Denise are two highly dedicated and strong leaders. They demonstrate strength in their ability to bring together a variety of people and services to add merit to the activities of the club. Denise and Roxanne, in turn, show deep appreciation for the support and work of the local club advisors and other school staff who support the work of the club. The advisors are not only seen as strong, dedicated leaders, but also as strong advocates for the students and parents. Students and parents express great appreciation for the support offered by Denise and Roxanne.

While this first question addresses the overall practices, beliefs and attitudes of the people in and around the AIM Club, the second one details its specific activities.

2. What are the specific and types of activities in which students participate?

Club activities vary from ones designed to impact the school and community to

those expressly designed for personal development.

Summary of Community Service and Participation:

Students participate in a series of community events. Some of the events are firmly established in the community, involving students in a yearly basis, while others are event specific. Students participate in the following community events: the North Carolina Clean Sweep, Make a Difference Day, Relay for Life, Adopting a family at Christmas, Red Ribbon Week, Canned Food Drive, Christmas Parade and the Fall Festival Parade.

Summary of Cultural Enrichment—Sharing and Maintaining:

Students participate in community events to enrich their knowledge and experience of the majority culture and create their own events, which allow them to share their own culture with others. Cultural events in which students participate include: La Fiesta del Pueblo at Chapel Hill, Hispanic Summit, Hispanic Gala Night and cultural fairs.

Summary of Building Self-Esteem/Inner Strength, Self-Advocacy:

Students participate in activities that help to develop their character, resilience and future careers. Some of these activities include: an assortment of guest speakers and role-models, book-writing, college visits, attending the State AIM Conference, mother-daughter make-up day, making murals with local artists and other dramatic and artistic activities.

Summary of Fun and Social Development:

Some activities are strictly for the purpose of letting students have fun and develop socially in a safe, nurturing atmosphere. These are some of the more popular

activities: End-of-Year Dance, Skate Night, AIM Day Camp at Camp Caraway and Country Line Dancing.

Summary of Family Events:

The AIM Club sponsors events in which the entire family is encouraged to participate, usually around holiday meals. Community events and other club performances also attract parents and other family members.

Summary of School Participation and Service:

AIM Clubs participate in their individual schools according to the events taking place at each. In addition AIM Clubs provide interpreters for parent-teacher conferences and school meetings as well as office interns for the schools.

In the next section I summarize the perceived benefits of the club.

3. What are the perceived academic and/or social benefits and effects on migrant students who participate in the AIM Club?

Participants report benefits for students that are both social and academic in nature.

Summary of Social Benefits:

All participants report that students develop a deeper sense of belonging by participating in the club. This sense of belonging helps them to adjust to the school and their new environment. Participants convey a heightened ability to relate to others, broaden perspectives and improve self-esteem. A growing number of AIM Club students are found joining other school clubs and sports. The social benefits spill beyond the confines of the club and its participants. The AIM Club brings a positive visibility to the Hispanic students in the school, adding to the effort of bridging sensitive cultural issues

within the school.

Summary of Academic Benefits:

Students and staff report an increased motivation for students to remain in school and aspire to higher standards than they have previously anticipated. The great majority of students look forward to graduating and is considering the possibility of attending college. Students state that participation in the club helps them learn more about their school and that peer interaction promotes the acquisition of English. They appreciate the ability to practice their English in a nurturing environment. Students express a willingness and desire to help each other succeed. Students who have been here a little longer express a certain sense of responsibility toward helping the newcomers adjust and succeed.

Having presented a summary of the practical research questions, I proceed with the questions for theory and research.

Summary findings for research questions for theory and research

4. Why do students participate in the AIM Club?

The most popular reason students give for participating in the AIM Club is the ability to participate socially with other students who are similar to themselves both socially and culturally. They like the opportunity of relating among other Hispanic students and *just having fun!* They feel it is an easier way of fitting into the school. Students also express disillusionment in that not all Hispanic students participate in the Club.

Students also articulate a deep sense of respect and responsibility toward supporting the efforts of the advisors, Roxanne and Denise. Students appreciate the level of support they receive from their advisors, and feel responsible for acknowledging this

"gift" by participating in the club.

The final question deals with issues of the transitioning process for migrant students.

5. Are there issues of the transitioning process that surface for the students?
    - How do students feel about becoming "an American?"
    - What would students like to see happen regarding this process?

The issues that surface for students regarding the process of transitioning to America mainly involve their felt dire need to learn English, their own personal cultural adaptation as well as the community's cultural adaptation.

Summary of Need to Learn English:

The most immediate need students and parents feel upon arriving to the U.S. is the need to learn to speak English. Students express an inability to fit in at school and to understand class content. Parents similarly share that an inability to communicate in English negatively affects their ability to support their children academically and to confidently communicate with teachers. As one student summarizes: "Doors shut for those persons that do not speak English."

Summary of Personal Cultural Adaptation:

All students and parents articulate a desire to maintain their Mexican culture while adding the American culture. Students feel that the expression "becoming an American" implies leaving behind their Mexican heritage and none feel it desirable to reject their cultural roots while acquiring their new culture.

Students that have been in the U.S. a longer period of time express a degree of ambiguity in not knowing how to classify themselves as they negotiate their transition. At

times they feel they belong neither in Mexico nor the U.S., while at others they feel a part of both countries. The students with the longest time in the U.S. and the club have resolved this conflict for themselves. They consider themselves basically Mexican, but they also consider themselves American.

Parents and students both express great concern over their lack of legal residency and their desire to acquire such status. The main reason they state for desiring to gain legal residency is for the purpose of being eligible for in-state tuition in North Carolina state colleges and universities upon graduation from high school.

Summary of Community Cultural Adaptation:

Students express a fear and perception of not being accepted in school and the community by the majority culture. Students feel rejection not only by the majority culture, but also from the other non-Mexican, Hispanic students in the school. All participants feel strongly that the AIM Club helps to mitigate some of these feelings and anxieties within the school and community. Several students mention having gained an ability to overcome the feelings of rejection and move on with their focus to succeed in school. School staff members feel that the club helps the school and community to mend the rifts that exist between the cultures.

Thus, concluding the summary of findings, I continue with an analysis of the data.

Analysis

To conclude, I analyze the findings reported in Chapter 4 by aligning them to the components that contribute to the academic and positive identity development of culturally diverse students. As identified by Cummins (2001), the necessary components are:

- Affirmation of students' cultural identity and encouragement of primary language literacy and language development;
- Encouragement of active parental participation;
- Cognitively-challenging instruction that provides opportunities for students to draw on their background experiences while working collaboratively to explore issues and topics that are relevant to their lives.
- The above interventions "are implemented in a school context where issues related to the education of culturally diverse students have moved from the periphery to the center of concern for the entire school. Educators, both individually and collectively, have defined their roles in such a way that their interactions with culturally diverse students actively affirm students' identities. The educational structures established in the school reflect these role definitions." (pp. 146-147)

In analyzing the findings I discuss how each of the components compare to the findings of the research.

Affirmation of students' cultural identity and encouragement of primary language literacy and language development

There are multiple examples presented in the findings that give a clear indication that the students' cultural identity is affirmed and that they are encouraged to use their primary language both orally and in written expression. Parents speak of their appreciation for the fact that the club helps students to maintain their language and culture. Students give repeated testimony to the same. The club advisors, Denise and Roxanne, explain how it is their goal for students to be able to get to know their own

culture and language. They ensure that at all club activities the students' primary language is respected. They conduct all meetings and events in both languages when necessary, so that none will feel left out. Students, who are already bilingual, feel comfortable communicating in either language; while those that are still in the process of acquiring English, are at ease speaking in Spanish. Interpreting between English and Spanish is a common experience. Students are encouraged to interpret for parents at a variety of meetings at school and in the school office. Students "rejoice in both cultures" as Berry (1992) would expect of immigrants who select the path of integration.

Encouragement of active parental participation

The club has extensive parental participation and involvement. Parents repeatedly express their appreciation for the club and the advisors' constant attention to their children's needs as well as their own needs. As Denise and Roxanne point out, at the beginning the parents were so involved that they finally had to tell them the club was for the kids! There are many special programs and events for the entire family to participate—and they do, in large numbers. The advisors take the parents into consideration when it comes to designing club activities. Parents are informed about the club and its activities, and they hold the club and its advisors in very high esteem.

Nevertheless, I find that despite all the support the club advisors give the parents, it is not sufficient to make them feel 100% empowered to offer their opinions about the school program in which their children participate.

Cognitively-challenging instruction that provides opportunities for students to draw on their background experiences while working collaboratively to explore issues and topics that are relevant to their lives

While the "cognitively challenging instruction" portion of this component is more relevant to a classroom situation, I find that some of the activities and practices of the club meet this component very well—perhaps even to a greater degree than they are usually met in a classroom setting.

Students have opportunities to write their stories and share them with others. They recount their own lived experiences through written, artistic and dramatic forms. They make oral presentations about their club and their life stories at community and statewide forums. Participants frequently comment on how the students' participation in the AIM Club has facilitated for them a sense of belonging in the community and the school, juxtaposing their experiences before and after joining the club. Students speak freely about the issues impacting their transition from Mexico to the United States. Once again recounting how their interactions within the club help them in making the transition. Students also mention how they have been the subject of a number of projects undertaken by researchers, artists and writers, exploring their unique story and sharing it with the public.

Students learn about issues that impact them directly and take steps to advocate on their own behalf—as in their letter-writing campaign for the DREAM Act. They have numerous mentors and role models available to them for leadership, direction and inspiration. These mentors and role models serve to inspire them to take positive action toward their life goals, and to take pride in their cultural identity.

The above interventions "are implemented in a school context where issues related to the education of culturally diverse students have moved from the periphery to the center of concern for the entire school. Educators, both individually and collectively, have defined

their roles in such a way that their interactions with culturally diverse students actively affirm students' identities. The educational structures established in the school reflect these role definitions." (pp. 146-147)

The AIM Club is instrumental in helping schools move the issues related to the education of culturally diverse students closer to the center of attention at some of the schools in which they reside. I would stipulate, however, that given the evidence, these issues have not yet become "the center of concern for the entire school." The issues are *definitely* the center of concern for the leaders of the AIM Club and other staff members interviewed, but not yet for the entire school.

The leaders define their roles in such a way that their interactions with culturally diverse students actively affirm students' identities. Students and parents give multiple evidence of their interaction with Roxanne and Denise, which reinforces the trusting and mutually respectful relationship that exists between them. One more time, while this interaction is observed between some of the staff interviewed and the students and parents, it is not apparent within the school at large.

Structures established in the club further reflect the respect and role definitions conducive to affirming students' identities. While the club's advisors are found to be very strong leaders, the strength is not diluted by the fact that they keep a balance of power with the students. Advisors meet with the club's leaders for the purpose of planning and setting the club's calendar of activities. The advisors consult students to determine their interests and needs. The advisors are highly responsive to the students' and the parents' needs. These same power relationships are not witnessed in the schools.

These analyses serve to determine my conclusions and answer to the overall research question.

Conclusions

The study's research question is "Can AIM Clubs facilitate the Mexican-American migrant students' process of transitioning or incorporating into the American society by allowing them to negotiate their identities in an empowering rather than disempowering manner? If so, how?" The answer to the question is a resounding, "yes!" While data shows that not all components of Cummins' framework are met 100% of the time within all the schools, the over-arching evidence demonstrates that the components are met within the club itself.

AIM Club students experience an improved ability to relate to their environment and to better negotiate their identities within their school settings as a result of participating in the AIM Club. Students give multiple testimonies to the fact that the AIM Club has provided for them an increased sense of belonging in a place that they might have otherwise considered hostile. Students who have been in the United States and in the club a longer period of time can give an account of their thought processes and experiences leading up to their choice of defining themselves as both "Mexican" and "American." While all student participants and most of the staff acknowledge that others, both white and non-Mexican Hispanics, have expressed negative comments about the students' Mexican nationality, students are pleased to claim their Mexican heritage without shame—and indeed, with pride. Students and club advisors have developed the kinds of trusting relationships that are essential for the success of diverse student populations. All these indicators serve to show how AIM Clubs can facilitate the

Mexican-American migrant students' process of transitioning or incorporating into the American society by allowing them to negotiate their identities in an empowering rather than disempowering manner.

In the final section, I offer practical recommendations for AIM Clubs as well as recommendations for further research.

Recommendations

In order to add value and vitality to the activities of AIM Clubs across the state, I recommend that those involved with the club maintain beliefs, attitudes and practices that are aligned with the essential components submitted by Cummins' in *Negotiating Identities* (2001). By following these recommendations, other AIM Clubs may be able to help Mexican-American and other language minority students to transition to United States schools and society, without losing their native cultural identity in the process.

Recommendations for AIM Clubs

1. Conduct activities that reinforce the students' language and culture. Provide multiple opportunities for students to positively share their culture with each other and with the school at large. Provide opportunities for students to learn about the majority culture as well. Involve students in community/school events. This involvement serves a multiple purpose, helping to make the community/school a better place and positively acquainting the community/school with Hispanics and their culture. It also serves to help students feel like they are a part of the community and encourage students to participate in other school clubs, sports and activities.
2. Inform parents of the goals and purpose of the club. Involve them in some of the club activities, both as participants and as resources and support. Seek the advice and

opinions of parents in designing club activities and events. Provide activities that specifically meet the parents' needs as well. Develop trusting, supportive relationships with the students' parents.

3. Conduct activities that allow students to ponder their lived experiences and generate meaning from them. Allow students to contribute to the majority culture by applying their cultural background and knowledge in specific situations. Allow students to explore issues that are important to them and their future academic and social development. Provide positive, inspirational role models and mentors for students. Allow students to advocate on their own behalf.
4. Assign to clubs only those staff members that are committed to helping this student population succeed and are willing to develop trusting and respectful relationships with the students. Provide students with leadership opportunities and help them bring positive attention to themselves and their unique needs in the school as a whole. Assign staff that will advocate for the needs of the students.

Recommendation for Future Research

Finally, I recommend a future study of North Carolina AIM Clubs. I believe it would be beneficial to conduct further study on the number and quality of existing clubs throughout the state. If we could assess the status of the existing clubs and determine to what degree they vitally serve the needs of the Hispanic population in their school, we might be able to increase the number of clubs along with their significance to this population. Perhaps the Randolph County AIM Club could serve as a model to other clubs in the state. This ending quote is reminiscent of the vitality, care and dedication of the students, parents and staff of the Randolph County AIM Club.

"People who care about themselves,

for others and the world

Full of hope, power and love

A new reality is born."

Amada Irma Pérez,

Reclaiming Our Voices, edited by Jean Frederickson, 1995

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Student Interview Guide

1. Tell me your name, grade and how long you have been in the AIM Club.
2. How long have you been in the United States? In Randolph County? At this school?
3. Tell me what coming to the United States was like for you.
4. Tell me what you like most about your AIM Club.
5. Are there some things you don't like?
6. Would you like for some things about the club to be different? How?
7. Tell me about some of the activities your club has had that you liked.
8. Were there some activities you did not like? If so, which?
9. Why do you like to participate in the club?
10. How do you feel about the other kids in the club? Are they mostly of Mexican descent too? How do you like that?
11. How would you like the club if more Anglo kids were to participate? Would you still join?
12. Do you belong to other clubs in school? If so, which? If not, why not?
13. Does the club help you learn about the American culture? If so, how?
14. Tell me if/how your AIM Club has helped you understand the schools and the United States better.
15. Do you feel more Mexican or American? Explain?
16. Do you want to become an American? Why or why not?
17. How do your parents feel about this (Q. 16)?
18. What does "becoming and American" mean to you?
19. Are there any things you would like to change about your school?

20. Does participating in the AIM Club make any difference in your schoolwork? Why or why not?

21. What are your plans about graduation? College? Have these plans changed recently?

22. If your plans for graduation and college have changed, what caused the change?

23. Tell me about the club advisors. Do you know them well? What is your relationship like with them?

24. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the AIM Club or your participation in the club?

APPENDIX A

Guia de Preguntas Para Estudiantes

1. Dime tu nombre, grado y cuánto tiempo llevas en el AIM Club.

2. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas en los Estados Unidos? ¿En el Condado de Randolph? ¿En esta escuela?

3. Cuéntame acerca de tu experiencia viniendo a los EEUU.

4. Cuéntame lo que más te gusta de tu AIM Club.

5. ¿Hay algunas cosas que no te gustan?

6. ¿Te gustaría que algunas cosas de tu AIM Club fueran diferentes? ¿Cómo?

7. Cuéntame acerca de algunas de las actividades del Club que te han gustado.

8. ¿Han habido algunas actividades que no te han gustado? Si acaso hay, ¿cuáles son?

9. ¿Porqué te gusta participar en el AIM Club?

10. ¿Cómo te sientes acerca de los demás estudiantes en el AIM Club? ¿La mayoría son de decendencia Mexicana? ¿Cómo te gusta eso?

11. ¿Cómo te gustaría el club si más estudiantes Anglo participaran? Si ese fuere el caso, ¿participarías de todos modos?

12. ¿Perteneces a otros clubs en tu escuela? Si acaso participas en otros, ¿cuáles son? Si no participas, ¿porqué no?

13. ¿Te ayuda el club a aprender más sobre la cultura Americana? Si así es el caso, ¿cómo es que te ayuda?

14. Dime si/como tu AIM Club te ha ayudado a entender mejor las escuelas en los EEUU.

15. ¿Te sientes tú más Mexicano o Americano? Explícalo.

16. ¿Quieres hacerte Americano? ¿Por qué o porqué no?

17. ¿Cómo se sienten tus padres acerca de esto? (Pregunta 16)?

18. ¿Que quiere decir para tí, “hacerte Americano?”

19. ¿Hay algunas cosas que te gustaría cambiar acerca de tu escuela?

20. ¿Hay alguna diferencia en tus estudios como resultado de tu participación en el AIM Club? ¿Porqué or porqué no?

21. ¿Cuáles son tus planes sobre la graduación? ¿Sobre la universidad? ¿Han cambiado esos planes recientemente?

22. Si han cambiado tus planes sobre la graduación, ¿cuál fué la causa del cambio?

23. Cuéntame acerca de los lideres del club. ¿Los conoces bien? ¿Cómo es tu relación con ellos?

24. ¿Hay algo más que quisieras decirme hacerca de tu AIM Club o tu participación en el club?

APPENDIX B

Parent Interview Guide

1. Tell me your name and how long you have been in the United States and Randolph County.
2. How long has your son/daughter participated in the AIM Club?
3. How do you feel about his/her involvement with the club?
4. What have been the benefits of their participation in the club?
5. Have there been any detriments? If so how?
6. What activities have they participated in?
7. How do you feel about the activities of the club? What do you think they are intended to accomplish? Do you think they are appropriate?
8. Why do you think your son/daughter likes to participate in the AIM Club?
9. Do you think his/her participation in the club helps him/her in other areas? If so, which?
10. How do you feel about your son/daughter becoming an American? Why?
11. What would you like to see happen about this issue (Q. 10)?
12. How do you feel about yourself becoming an American?
13. What does "becoming an American" mean to you?
14. Have you participated in any of the club activities? If so, how?
15. How did you feel about your participation?
16. Have things changed any for your son/daughter since they joined the AIM Club? If so, how?
17. Do you know the club advisors? What is your relationship like with them?
18. Are there any changes that you would like to see take place in your son/daughter's school?

19. Are there any changes that you would like to see take place in the AIM Club?

20. To what do you accredit the success of the AIM Club?

21. How much involvement do you have with your son/daughter's school and teachers?

22. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the AIM Club or your son/daughter's participation in it?

APPENDIX B

Guia de Preguntas Para Padres

1. Dígame su nombre y cuánto tiempo lleva en los EEUU y en el condado de Randoph.
2. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva su hijo/hija participando en el AIM Club?
3. ¿Cómo se siente Ud. acerca de la participación de su hijo/hija en el club?
4. ¿Cuáles han sido los beneficios de la participación de su hijo/hija?
5. ¿Han habido algunas desventajas? Si acaso las hay, ¿cuáles han sido?
6. ¿En cuáles actividades han participado?
7. ¿Cómo se siente Ud. acerca de las actividades del club? ¿Qué piensa usted que intentan lograr con las actividades? ¿Piensa Ud. que son apropiadas las actividades? Explique.
8. ¿Porqué piensa Ud. que a su hijo/hija le gusta participar en el AIM Club?
9. ¿Piensa Ud. que la participación en el club le ha ayudado a su hijo/hija en otras areas? Si acaso sí, ¿cuáles areas?
10. ¿Cómo se siente Ud. acerca de que su hijo/hija se convierta en un Americano? ¿Porqué?
11. ¿ Qué es lo que Ud. le gustaría que aconteciera acerca de este asunto?(Pregunta 10)?
12. ¿Cómo se siente Ud. acerca de convertirse en un/a Americano/a?
13. ¿Qué es lo que quiere decir “hacerce un Americano” para Ud.?
14. ¿Ha participado Ud. en algunas de las actividades del club? Si acaso si, ¿cómo ha sido su participación?
15. ¿Cómo se sintió acerca de su participación?
16. ¿Han cambiado algunas cosas para su hijo/hija desde que se hicieron miembros del AIM Club? Si acaso si, ¿cómo?
17. ¿Conoce Ud. los lideres del club? ¿Cuál es su relación con ellos/ellas?
18. ¿Hay algunos cambios que a usted le gustaria ver en la escuela de su hijo/hija?

19. ¿Hay algunos cambios que a usted le gustaria ver en el AIM Club?

20. ¿A qué le acrédita Ud. el éxito del AIM Club?

21. ¿Cuánto envolvimiento tiene Ud. con la escuela y maestros de su hijo/hija?

22. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría decirme acerca del AIM Club y la participación de su hijo/hija?

APPENDIX C

School Staff Interview Guide

1. Tell me your name and how long you have been in this school and in Randolph County.

2. How long have you known of the AIM Club at your school? How did you find out about it?

3. What purpose do you see this club serving?

4. How do you think the club affects the migrant students that belong?

5. Do you see any impact in your school before and after the AIM Club was formed? If so, how?

6. Do you see any impact in the migrant students before and after their joining the AIM Club?

7. Why do you think students participate in the AIM Club?

8. Do you think all the teachers/staff at your school know about the AIM Club? How do you think they feel about it?

9. What kinds of club activities do they conduct that you are aware of?

10. How do students feel about participating in this club?

11. Is the AIM Club well known among non-migrant or non-Hispanic students? Is there any interest among them for joining the club? What would it be like for them if they were to join?

12. To what do you accredit the success of this AIM Club?

13. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the AIM Club?

APPENDIX D

Leadership Interview Guide

1. Tell me your name and how long you have been in your position.

2. How long have you been associated with the MEP in Randolph Co. How long have you been associated with the AIM Club?

3. Tell me about your role in the AIM Club.

4. What, in your opinion, is the goal and purpose of the AIM Club?

5. To what degree do you see the goals and purposes of the AIM Club being met? How?

6. What effect do you think the AIM Club has on the migrant students?

7. What effect, if any, do you think the AIM Club has on non-migrant and non-Hispanic students at the school?

8. Why do you think kids participate in the club?

9. To what do you accredit the success of this AIM Club?

10. How do you select the activities of the club?

11. How do you recruit students for the club?

12. Are there any other school staff that help with the club activities? How are they recruited? What is their level of involvement?

13. What are some pitfalls to avoid in planning club activities?

14. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the AIM Club?

APPENDIX E

Cover Story

Topic: *Negotiating Identities* of Mexican-American migrant students through their participation in the migrant student AIM (Action Inspiration Motivation) Club: An intrinsic case study based in Randolph County, North Carolina

My name is Rachel Crawford, I am the State Consultant of Migrant Education with the Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh, North Carolina. My past professional background includes the following experiences: teaching bilingual classrooms in grades 3-8 in San Ysidro, and Watsonville, CA., serving as migrant resource teacher in Watsonville, CA, assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at Watsonville High School, and coordinator of services to students learning English in Monterey, CA. In my current position I am responsible for coordinating the Migrant Education Program in the state of North Carolina. My personal background includes immigrating to the United States from Cuba in 1961 with my family. Consequently, I share a common experience with many migrant students who immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Another common experience that I share with migrant students is that I had to learn English as a child in school. With this study I hope to contribute to the ease of educating migrant students, so that more students will experience success in school, graduate from high school and attend college.

The purpose of the research is to determine whether migrant student AIM Clubs (extra-curricular middle and high school clubs) can provide an avenue for creating situations for migrant students that allow them to adjust to their new (American) culture

without having to leave behind their primary culture and language. This is important because, the traditional method of acculturating students to their new environment, typically, requires that they leave their primary culture and language behind, causing long periods of alienation and poor self-esteem, leading to school failure.

I will interview migrant students from the Randolph County AIM (Action Inspiration Motivation) Club and their parents, a school principal, some teachers, the director of the Migrant Education Program and the club advisors. I will also administer written surveys to larger groups of students and conduct group interviews with parents. I will observe in a variety of settings for club activities. I will ask participants to share information and artifacts regarding the practices, beliefs and attitudes witnessed in and around the functions of the AIM Club. Upon analyzing the data, I will determine whether AIM Clubs can help migrant students develop their identities in a positive manner, so that they can retain their cultural (Mexican) identity and language as they develop their new "American" identity.

The results will be written in my doctoral dissertation at North Carolina State University. Other than that, I will share them with interested Migrant Education Program staff around the state of North Carolina and nationally.

Any information shared will be kept confidential unless the participants give me permission to disclose. There might be potential for embarrassment for participants as they share personal beliefs and attitudes. All participants (staff, parents and students) will be allowed to refuse to answer any questions asked of them. Further, they will be allowed to "retract" any information they give me, so I do not use it.

I expect that participants will benefit indirectly in that AIM Club activities will become more conducive to building self-esteem and student identity with their primary culture. Parents will benefit by having children who become more interested students. Parents, and students, both, will have an opportunity to have their voices heard on a topic that is close to their hearts.

Interviews will be audio taped, given permission from participants, and transcribed by me. Interviews will last around 45 minutes. A follow-up interview may be required in some cases. I will seek permission to use individual quotes of participants that can be easily identified. In no case will individuals be named, unless they wish for me to do so. Some group activities will be videotaped, if it can be done naturally and easily.

It is my hope that the process and results of this study will benefit the Randolph County AIM Club and its participants. I would be happy to answer any further questions or address comments or concerns regarding the study.

APPENDIX E

La Historia

Topico: *Negociando las Identidades* de estudiantes Mexico-Americanos migrantes por medio de su participación en el club de estudiantes migrantes AIM (Acción Inspiración Motivación): Un estudio de casos basado en el Condado de Randolph, Carolina del Norte.

Mi nombre es Raquel Crawford, soy la Consultora del Programa de Educación Migrante con el Departamento de Instrucción Publica en Raleigh, North Carolina. Mi previa experiencia profesional incluye lo siguiente: maestra bilingue en classes de grados 3-8 en San Ysidro, y Watsonville, CA.; sirviendo como maestra de recursos en el programa migrante en Watsonville, CA.; asistente de directora de curricula e instrucción en Watsonville High School, y coordinadora de servicios para estudiantes que aprenden Ingles en Monterey, CA. En mi posición presente soy responsable por coordinar el Programa de Educación Migrante en el estado de North Carolina. Por lo personal, mis experiencias incluyen inmigrando a los E.E.U.U. de Cuba en el 1961 con mi familia. Consecuentemente, comparto una experiencia en común con muchos estudiantes migrantes que vienen de Mexico y se han inmigrado a los E.E.U.U. Otra experiencia en común que comparto con los estudieantes migrantes es que tuve que aprender Ingles en la escuela cuando era niña. Con este estudio espero contribuir a la facilez de la educación para estudiantes migrantes, para que más estudiantes logren éxito en la escuela, se gradúen de la escuela superior y asistan a la universidad.

El proposito de este estudio es determinar si los AIM Clubs (clubs de escuelas intermedias y superiores) pueden proveer una avenida para crear situaciones en las cuales los estudiantes migrantes puedan acostumbrarse a su cultura nueva (la cultura Americana) sin tener que cambiar o abandonar su cultura y lenguaje nativo. Esto tiene importancia porque, la manera tradicional de aculturar a los estudiantes, tipicamente, requiere que dejen su cultura y lenguage primario, a la vez causando largos tiempos de alejamiento y pobre auto-estimo, dirigiendo al estudiante a fallar en la escuela.

Voy a entrevistar a estudiantes migrantes del AIM Club en el Condado de Randolph y a sus padres, un director de escuela, algunos maestros, el director del Programa de Educación Migrante y a los lideres del club. Tambien voy a administrar encuestas por escrito a grupos más grandes de estudiantes y conducir entrevistas de grupos de padres. Voy a observar en una variedad de actividades del club. Les pediré a los participantes que compartan información y objetos acerca de las prácticas, creencias y actitudes que hayan observado en el club y en las funciones del AIM Club. En cuanto analize el material, determinaré si el AIM Club puede ayudar a los estudiantes migrantes a desarrollar sus identidades en una manera positiva, para que puedan retener su identidad cultural (Mexicana) y lenguaje, mientras desarrollan su nueva identidad "Americana."

Los resultados serán escritos en mi disertación para el doctorado en la Universidad del Estado de Carolina del Norte (North Carolina State University). A más de eso, compartiré los resultados con cualquier personal interesado del Programa de Educación Migrante en el estado de North Carolina y al nivel nacional.

Cualquier información que reciba la mantendré confidencial a menos que los participantes me den permiso de divulgarla. Puede haber potencial de que algunos

participantes se averguenzen en caso que compartan algunas creencias y actitudes personales. Todos los participantes (el personal, los padres, y estudiantes) podran rehusar de contestar cualquier pregunta que yo les haga. Es más, podran "retractar" cualquier información que me den, para que no la use.

Espero que los participantes podran beneficiar indirectamente en que las actividades del AIM Club serán aún más conducivas a desarrollar el auto-estimo e identidad del estudiante con su cultura primaria. Los padres beneficiarán teniendo hijos que lleguen a ser estudiantes más interesados. Los padres y estudiantes, igual, tendrán la oportunidad de que se oigan sus voces sobre un tópico que les queda cerca a sus corazones.

Las entrevistas serán grabadas en audio, si los participantes dan su permiso, y escritas por mí. Las entrevistas durarán alrededor de 45 minutos. En algunos casos, se requerirá otra entrevista a continuación. Voy a pedir permiso para usar las palabras directas de participantes individuales que se puedan identificar simplemente. En ningún caso usaré el nombre de individuos, a menos que ellos me pidan que lo haga. Algunas actividades de grupos serán grabadas en video, si acaso se puede hacer naturalmente y facilmente.

Es mi anhelo que el proceso y los resultados de este estudio beneficie al AIM Club del Condado de Randolph y sus participantes. Me daría gusto contestar qualquier otra pregunta o hablar acerca de cualquier comentario o preocupación concerniente al estudio.

APPENDIX F

North Carolina State University Informed Consent Form

Negotiating Identities of Mexican-American migrant students through their participation in the migrant student AIM (Action Inspiration Motivation) Club: An intrinsic case study based in Randolph County, North Carolina

Rachel Crawford

Faculty Sponsor Dr. Paul Bitting
(Committee Chair)

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to determine whether migrant student AIM Clubs can provide an avenue for creating situations for migrant students that allow them to adjust to their new (American) culture without having to leave behind their primary culture and language. This is important because, the traditional method of acculturating students to their new environment, typically, requires that they leave their primary culture and language behind, causing long periods of alienation and poor self-esteem, leading to school failure.

INFORMATION

1. I will interview migrant students from the Randolph County AIM (Action Inspiration Motivation) Club and their parents, a school principal, some teachers, the director of the Migrant Education Program and the club advisors. I will also administer written surveys to larger groups of students and conduct group meetings with parents. I will observe in a variety of settings for club activities. I will ask participants to share information and artifacts regarding the practices, beliefs and attitudes witnessed in and around the functions of the AIM Club. Upon analyzing the data, I will determine whether AIM Clubs can help migrant students develop their identities in a positive

manner, so that they can retain their cultural (Mexican) identity and language as they develop their new "American" identity.

2. Interviews will be audio taped, given permission from participants, and transcribed by me. Interviews will last around 45 minutes. A follow-up interview may be required in some cases. I will seek permission to use individual quotes of participants that can be easily identified. In no case will individuals be named, unless they wish for me to do so. Some group activities will be videotaped, if it can be done naturally and easily.

RISKS

Any information shared will be kept confidential unless the participants give me permission to disclose. There might be potential for embarrassment for participants as they share personal beliefs and attitudes. All participants (staff, parents and students) will be allowed to refuse to answer any questions asked of them. Further, they will be allowed to "retract" any information they give me, so I do not use it.

BENEFITS

I expect that participants will benefit indirectly in that AIM Club activities will become more conducive to building self-esteem and student identity with their primary culture. Parents will benefit by having children who become more interested students. Parents, and students, both, will have an opportunity to have their voices heard on a topic that is close to their hearts.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

COMPENSATION
There will be no compensation for participants in this study. A small token of appreciation will be given each of the participants interviewed.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT is Not Applicable in this study.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Rachel Crawford**, at** 2924 Whitehart Lane, Raleigh, NC 27606**, or** [919-807-3958]**. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)**

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT
I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's signature_____ **Date** _____

Investigator's signature_____ **Date** _____

APPENDIX F

North Carolina State University Forma de Asentimiento Informado

Negociando las Identidades de estudiantes Mexico-Americanos migrantes por medio de su participación en el club de estudiantes migrantes AIM (Acción Inspiración Motivación): Un estudio de casos basado en el Condado de Randolph, Carolina del Norte.

Raquel Crawford

Dirigente de la facultad: Dr. Paul Bitting (Presidente del Comité)

Le invitamos a participar en este estudio de investigación. El proposito de este estudio es el **determinar si los AIM Clubs (clubs de escuelas intermedias y superiores) pueden proveer una avenida para crear situaciones en las cuales los estudiantes migrantes puedan acostumbrarse a su cultura nueva (la cultura Americana) sin tener que cambiar o abandonar su cultura y lenguaje nativo. Esto tiene importancia porque, la manera tradicional de aculturar a los estudiantes, tipicamente, requiere que dejen su cultura y lenguage primario, a la vez causando largos tiempos de alejamiento y pobre auto-estimo, dirigiendo al estudiante a fallar en la escuela.**

INFORMACIÓN

1. **Voy a entrevistar a estudiantes migrantes del AIM Club en el Condado de Randolph y a sus padres, un director de escuela, algunos maestros, el director del Programa de Educación Migrante y a los lideres del club. Tambien voy a administrar encuestas por escrito a grupos más grandes de estudiantes y conducir entrevistas de grupos de padres. Voy a observar en una variedad de actividades del club. Les pediré a los participantes que compartan información y objetos acerca de las prácticas, creencias y actitudes que hayan observado en el club y en las funciones del AIM Club. En cuanto analize el material, determinaré si el AIM Club puede ayudar a los estudiantes migrantes a desarrollar sus**

identidades en una manera positiva, para que puedan retener su identidad cultural (Mexicana) y lenguaje, mientras desarrollan su nueva identidad "Americana."

2. Las entrevistas serán grabadas en audio, si los participantes dan su permiso, y escritas por mí. Las entrevistas durarán alrededor de 45 minutos. En algunos casos, se requerirá otra entrevista a continuación. Voy a pedir permiso para usar las palabras directas de participantes individuales que se puedan identificar simplemente. En ningún caso usaré el nombre de individuos, a menos que ellos me pidan que lo haga. Algunas actividades de grupos serán grabadas en video, si acaso se puede hacer naturalmente y facilmente.

RIESGOS

Cualquier información que reciba la mantendré confidencial a menos que los participantes me den permiso de divulgarla. Puede haber potencial de que algunos participantes se averguenzen en caso que compartan algunas creencias y actitudes personales. Todos los participantes (el personal, los padres, y estudiantes) podran rehusar de contestar cualquier pregunta que yo les haga. Es más, podran "retractar" cualquier información que me den, para que no la use.

BENEFICIOS

Espero que los participantes podran beneficiar indirectamente en que las actividades del AIM Club serán aún más conducivas a desarrollar el auto-estimo e identidad del estudiante con su cultura primaria. Los padres beneficiarán teniendo hijos que lleguen a ser estudiantes más interesados. Los padres y estudiantes, igual, tendrán la oportunidad de que se oigan sus voces sobre un tópico que les queda cerca a sus corazones.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD
La información en los archivos de este estudio se mantendrán estrictamente confidencial. El material será guardado seguramente y será usado solamente por las personas conduciendo el estudio, a menos que usted especificamente dé permiso por escrito para hacer algo diferente. Ninguna referencia será hecha oralmente o por escrito que le adhiera al estudio sin su permiso.

COMPENSACIÓN
No habrá compensación para los participantes de este estudio. Una pequeña seña de aprecio se le dará a cada participante que se entreviste.

TRATAMIENTO DE EMERGENCIA MÉDICA no se aplica a este estudio.

CONTACTO
Si tiene preguntas a cualquier tiempo sobre el estudio o los procedimientos, puede ponerse en contacto con la investigadora, Raquel Crawford**, en** 2924 Whitehart Lane, Raleigh, NC 27606**, o** [919-807-3958]**. Si siente que no ha sido tratado de acuerdo con las descripciones en esta forma, o si sus derechos como participante han sido violados durante el curso de este proyecto, usted puede ponerse en contacto con el Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Presidente del Comité IRB de NCSU para el Uso de Participantes Humanos en Investigaciones, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) o Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148).**

PARTICIPACIÓN
Su participación en este estudio es voluntario; usted puede declinar su participación sin ninguna penalidad. Si decide participar, usted puede retirarse del estudio a cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad y sin pérdida de ningún beneficio que le pertenezca. Si usted se retira de este estudio antes de que se termine la colección del material, se le devolverá su material o será destruido.

ASENTIMIENTO
He leido y entiendo la información escrita previamente. He recibido una copia de esta forma. Estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio.

Firma del Participante_____ **Fecha**_____

Firma del Investigador_____ **Fecha**_____