

APRENDIENDO JUNTOS Y NAVEGANDO “NEW DESTINATIONS”:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF THE
PILAS FAMILY LITERACY
PROGRAM

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: *Aprendiendo Juntos y Navegando* “New Destinations”: An Ethnographic Evaluation of the Pilas Family Literacy Program

This thesis uses the framework of a program evaluation to highlight the human experience of participants in a community-based family literacy program in the context of a “New Destination” for Latino immigrants. There is first an extensive discussion of how Latino immigrant communities have changed over time in Oregon and specifically in Lane County, followed by description of the nonprofit organizations that cater to these communities in Lane County, focusing on Downtown Languages and their Pilas Family Literacy Program. A selection of literature is reviewed surrounding the themes of the efficacy of program evaluation as a tool, “New Destinations,” the relationship between bilingualism and family in ESL programs, and finally a brief discussion of cultural competency in ESL practices and literacy as human capital. The conclusion of this research contains recommendations for the Pilas Family Literacy Program, as well as other family literacy programs operating in “New Destinations” communities.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the amazing families of the Pilas program. Your enthusiasm, intelligence, and determination are an inspiration for me to be a better student and a kinder human being.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES	1
II. DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW: HOW OREGON HAS CHANGED OVER TIME	4
“New Destinations”	4
Bilingual Support and Inclusion	5
Demographics of Lane County	9
III. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW	16
Downtown Languages	16
Pilas Family Literacy Program	17
Family Literacy Programs	19
IV. THEORETICAL LINKAGES	25
Bilingualism and Family Dynamics	26
Educational Attainment of Youth.....	26
Kids as Cultural and Linguistic Brokers.....	28
Culturally Competent Literacy	31
English and Literacy as Human Capital	32
Applying the Literature to Downtown Languages	34
V. METHODOLOGY	36
Ethnography.....	36

Chapter	Page
Program Evaluation	37
Defining the Need: Why Evaluate?	40
Research Tools	41
VI. RESULTS	45
Participant Observations	45
“New Destinations”	45
Bilingualism and Family Dynamics: “ <i>te aprendas muchos mamá</i> ”	48
Program Quality.....	52
Language Acquisition	53
The Role of Volunteers	54
Teacher Perspective	55
Coordinator Perspective.....	58
Finances	60
Survey Results	61
“New Destinations”: A Divide Emerges Between Eugene and Springfield	62
Bilingualism and Family Dynamics	66
Beliefs about Language	66
Home Dynamics	68
Educations.....	71
Program Quality.....	73

Chapter	Page
Focus Group Results	77
VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	83
New Destinations.....	85
Bilingualism and Family Dynamics	88
Program Quality.....	91
VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS	93
Expand on Successes	93
Pursue Opportunities for Improvement	95
Incorporate Perspectives	98
Recommendations for “New Destinations”.....	99
IX. EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS	102
Evaluating the Evaluation.....	105
APPENDICES	108
A: SURVEY QUESTIONS, SPANISH	108
A: SURVEY QUESTIONS, ENGLISH.....	111
B: TOTAL PARTICIPATION	114
C: BREAKDOWN OF ANSWERS PER QUESTION, TOTAL POPULATION.....	115
D: FOCUS GROUP ANNOUNCEMENT.....	118
E: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS, SPANISH	119

Chapter	Page
E: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS, ENGLISH	120
REFERENCES CITED	121

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Language barriers permeate every facet of interpersonal relationships, societal participation, and family stability. When people are divided along linguistic lines, isolation and misunderstanding have room to blossom. When citizens and their community institutions are separated by language, populations are uninformed of their rights and unable to advocate for themselves within bureaucratic channels. When families are fractured by language abilities and preferences, daily tension between parents and their children can fester and develop into intergenerational divides. This thesis is dedicated to an evaluation of how one organization in Oregon is working to remedy these social, systemic, and familial divides through a family literacy program.

The Pilas Family Literacy Program provides Latino immigrant families in Lane County, Oregon, with a rare, free opportunity of beginning and intermediate ESL courses for parents, alongside bilingual homework assistance for their children. Although it is widely believed that a family-centered approach offers benefits such as higher academic success and bilingualism for the children (Jimenez 2000; Potochinick 2014) and improved English proficiency for the parents, as well as parents feeling confident to help their children academically (Menjivar 2002; Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2008), this has yet to be investigated in the context of a non-traditional or “New Destination” for Latino immigrants such as Oregon. Through a program evaluation, this research assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the Pilas Family Literacy Program in coordinating ESL and

bilingual development as a family-centered process and situates them within the larger academic conversation about “New Destinations.”

The goals of Pilas are multiscalar and include, but are not limited to: increased ESL proficiency for the parents, bilingual academic support for the kids, networking opportunities among the families, community resources, and advice for maintaining healthy family relations in the United States. These goals were identified through observations of this program and conversations with Pilas staff members. One of the central aims of this project is to determine if there is a hierarchy of importance among these goals and, furthermore, if the hierarchy does exist, whether or not it is the same for the Pilas staff and teachers as it is for the parents and families participating in the Pilas program. It is my hope that this research can serve as a bridge between the expectations of the hardworking, hopeful staff of Pilas and the experiences and opinions of the overwhelmingly grateful families that participate in the Pilas program. Furthermore, I hope that by documenting and quantifying the successes of the Pilas program that this research will aid future grant opportunities that are crucial in sponsoring this community resource.

It is the belief of Downtown Languages, the organization that coordinates the Pilas program, that the family-oriented environment of Pilas counteracts the feelings of isolation, as encountered by many Latinos in non-traditional immigrant destinations, by encouraging Latino families to embrace the learning process together and interact with a community of people in similar circumstances. These beliefs are supported by the academic literature, which will be explored later in this thesis. Furthermore, the emphasis

on learning as a family remedies the occasionally negative parent-child dynamics that may play out within the stages of intergenerational unequal bilingualism, such as the perception that children possess higher social and cultural capital than their parents due to their English fluency. This research will incorporate the views of parents participating in the Pilas program to understand their opinions about ESL and language learning as a family-centered process, and include them in the academic conversation about “New Destinations” and family-oriented ESL training programs.

CHAPTER II

DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW: HOW OREGON HAS CHANGED OVER TIME

“New Destinations”

Oregon, specifically the Willamette Valley, has a rich agricultural history. In order to support areas like Marion County, known as “The Berry Capital of the World,” or the rapidly expanding Oregon vineyards, the industry relies on the work of immigrant and seasonal farmworkers from Latin America (Kissam 2007: 96). Federally founded during the *Bracero* Program of the mid-twentieth century, fluid migration channels have long existed between countries like Mexico and Guatemala and the agricultural fields of Oregon. However, in recent years, these channels of agricultural migration have shifted due to changing realities in the “traditional” immigrant destinations and growing trends of “Latino disbursement” in the United States (Dondero & Muller 2012: 478). In the decades surrounding the turn of the 21st Century, Latino immigration patterns have been supplemented from “traditional” destinations like California, New York, and Texas to an emerging category of “New Destinations” (Marrow 2005, Hopkins *et al.* 2015). One of these “New Destinations” is Oregon.

According to the United States Census Bureau, between 1990 and 2000 the Latino population in Oregon jumped from 4% to 8% of the total population; this percentage continued to grow to 9.9% by 2005 (Stephen & Mendoza 2007: 18). The 2010 U.S. Census recorded the Latino population as 12.5% of the population in Oregon, which illustrates a 64% increase since 2000 (U.S. Census 2010, Hagan 2011). These rapid

increases carry with them a multitude of implications for “New Destinations” communities and Latino immigrants alike. As described by Hopkins *et al.* (2015), “New Destinations” present unique barriers to immigrants due to a lack of experience with linguistic and culturally diverse populations. This inexperience is especially detrimental to populations without English language skills.

Accessibility of bilingual resources and educational achievement are two of most prominent realms where “New Destinations” communities experience the implications of a rapidly expanding Latino population. In their research, Dondero & Muller (2012) demonstrate how the differences in preparedness between traditional and new Latino settlement destinations can impact the academic achievement of Latino students due to factors such as lack of bilingual infrastructure. The availability of bilingual resources or ESL services is crucial because even though the majority of Latino public school students are native-born, 70% of these students reveal that they speak a language other than English at home, and 18% report difficulty with English (Dondero & Muller 2012: 478). Dondero & Muller (2012) discuss these statistics within the context of a nationwide shortage of ESL teachers. This shortage is especially detrimental to new Latino settlement destinations, which lack the historical experience with linguistically diverse populations. Therefore, “New Destinations” communities are faced with a rapidly expanding population in need of linguistic resources that may not be readily available.

Bilingual Support and Inclusion

The availability of bilingual resources can mean the difference between complete isolation and productive societal participation among immigrant groups. In Oregon, where 70% of the total Latino population, approximately 287,000 people, speak a language other than English at home, the presence of Spanish-language resources, programs, and community support are vital (Pew Hispanic 2011). Based on U.S. Census data, an estimated 62% of Latinos in Oregon speak English “less than very well;” however, evidence from community-based organizations working with these populations suggest that “up to 90 percent of the recently immigrated adult population is monolingual Spanish speaking” (OSLC-LRT, 2007; OSLC-LRT & FHDC, 2007 as referenced by Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2008:57). But the issue lies in consolidating the data and conveying the urgency of developing such resources; how can state governments be convinced that a void exists without comprehensive data on the population and the specific barriers this population is facing?

In 2008 a group of scholars from the University of Oregon published a report with detailed research, analysis, and recommendations about the immigrant experience in Oregon. Led by Robert Bussel, Associate Professor of History and Director, Labor Education and Research Center, this report was composed in collaboration with an extensive list of interdisciplinary professors and scholars from the University of Oregon; departments represented by the authors include Sociology, Psychology, Geography, Education, and Anthropology (Bussel *et al.* 2008: 3). The goal of Bussel *et al.* (2008) was to inform the public of the nuanced experiences of Oregon’s immigrant communities. Their plea is clear: “It is time for policymakers, employers, educators, and civic leaders

to recognize Oregon's changing social demographics and develop a more systematic approach to helping immigrants adapt to their new environment" (Bussel *et al.* 2008: 9).

The first chapter of this report is dedicated to an exploration of Oregon as an emerging immigrant gateway, or "New Destination." This categorization is supported by statistics demonstrating the rapid growth of immigrant populations over the past two decades. In 2005 the foreign-born population in Oregon reached 9.7%, signaling a more than 60% increase since 1990. An estimated 70-80% of adult Latino immigrants have arrived in Oregon since 1995 (Bussel *et al.* 2008: 9-10). Another insight drawn by Bussel *et al.* (2008) is the trend of Oregonians' "ambivalence" towards immigration as drawn along "desirable" and "undesirable" lines and seen as a potential threat to the majority European-heritage population. In confirmation of this ambivalence, later in the report, contributing authors Hardwick & Martinez Jr. revealed "it is quite common for foreign-born Oregonians to continue to feel estranged from the dominant norms and values of the new Oregon lives" (Hardwick & Martinez Jr. 2008: 17).

In their focus on Latino immigrants, which they cite as "the most populous immigrant group in Oregon," Bussel *et al.* (2008) discussed the nuanced experience of Latinos in the Pacific Northwest to include barriers such as discrimination, acculturation, financial challenges, and finally academic achievement (58-61). The impact of these barriers is evident in consideration with the fact that 70% of Latinos in Oregon concluded their education at or below the ninth grade (Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2008: 57). These barriers make life difficult for many Latinos in Oregon and increase the importance of

implementing state or community-based institutions to address these particular challenges.

In the age of political campaigns that tout isolationism and anti-immigrant sentiments, it is not difficult to fathom that Latino immigrants in the United States encounter discrimination. However, alongside the 30-50% of Latino youths who report experiencing discrimination based on the “color of their skin” (Martinez Jr. *et al* 2008: 59), there is also a pervasive racial hierarchy within the Latino community (Stephen *et al.* 2008). This racial hierarchy is described in a 2006 interview with an indigenous Mexican student completing the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) in Eugene, Oregon: “Other people from the north think they are better because of their color. They discriminate against us because they are whiter. They think that they are invincible and better” (Stephen *et al.* 2008: 50). This hierarchy can fracture the broader Latino immigrant community and construct yet another barrier to life in the United States.

Academic achievement of the children of Latino immigrants is a crucial dichotomy between those residing in “traditional” destinations and those in “New Destinations.” According to 2006 statistics from the Oregon Department of Education, the number of Latino students in the Oregon public school system increased by 200% between 1996 and 2006 (Martínez Jr. *et al.* 2008: 60). Causa, an immigrants’ rights organization in Oregon, reported in 2012 that:

Nearly one in four children under age 5 in Oregon are Latino, and 21% of students enrolled in Oregon k-12 public schools are

Latino. The Latino student population grew 113.1%¹ over the last decade. While the large majority of these students are U.S. citizens, many of them have immigrant parents. In Oregon, approximately 1 in 5 native-born children live with at least one foreign-born parent (Causa 2012:1).

Furthermore, scholars estimate that by 2020 Latino children, either immigrants themselves or children of immigrants, will represent 28% of all school-aged children in Oregon (Bussel *et al.* 2008: 9-10). Bussel *et al.* (2008) also highlighted the particular need for community-based interventions for Latino youth that “incorporate the concept of familism into school curriculum and interactions with staff members. Sensitivity to the role of family in Latino life would facilitate more effective parental involvement in the education of Latino youths” (11). Thus, the research, analysis, and recommendations provided by Bussel *et al.* (2008) called for the creation of a program like the Pilas Family Literacy Program, which was founded in 2009, a year after this 2008 University of Oregon collaborative publication.

The combination of these statistics serve to paint a picture, albeit with a broad brush stroke, of how the Latino immigrant community in Oregon has changed over time. Furthermore, the internal familial dynamics within the Latino immigrant community are intricate and demand specific attention and accommodation. In order to further examine the circumstances surrounding the Pilas Family Literacy Program, this paper will now discuss the specific demographics of Lane County, Oregon.

Demographics of Lane County

¹ The discrepancy between the estimated increase of 113.1% from the nonprofit Causa and the estimated increase of 200% by the Oregon Department of Education signifies a lack of shared information among state government and nonprofit entities.

Lane County, Oregon is located in the center of the state along the I-5 corridor in the heart of the agriculturally prosperous Willamette Valley. Eugene and Springfield are the two most populous cities in Lane County, with the University of Oregon located in Eugene. These neighboring cities, although closely intertwined, are commonly believed by residents to represent opposing sides of the socioeconomic dichotomy: Eugene is white collar, while Springfield is blue. The socioeconomic differences between these two cities are crucial to consider when evaluating one program that aims to serve the same population in each city.

The Latino immigrant population of Lane County increased by an estimated 83% between 2000 and 2010, and is primarily served by the nonprofit sector. Therefore, in discussing the experience of Latinos in Lane County, this research will rely on statistical evidence in combination with an ethnographic discussion of personal experiences as a professional working with a nonprofit dedicated to serving the Latino community. By incorporating information gathered through experience in the nonprofit sector, this research can present a more nuanced description of the Latino immigrant community in Lane County.

The 2010 U.S. Census states that of the 351,715 people living in Lane County, 26,167 are Latino, which means that Latinos make up 13.4% of the population in Lane County (U.S. Census 2010). To break it down further, there are 12,200 Latinos within the population of 156,185 in Eugene, and 7,194 Latinos within the population of 59,403 in Springfield (U.S. Census 2010). Since 1990, the Hispanic population is estimated to have grown from 6,852 people to 26,954 people in 2011. This represents a 293% change in a

20-year span. The total county population expanded by 24% during this same time (Pew Hispanic 2011). Even though the state is attempting to design and implement the necessary services, nonprofit organizations have stepped up to fill the void. Although this program evaluation will focus on the work of one specific nonprofit, Downtown Languages, it is also necessary to weave in the story and work of other organizations, such as Centro Latino Americano, to paint a complete picture of how Latino immigrants are interacting with institutions in Lane County.

Centro Latino Americano was founded in 1972 and according to Oregon's state website, "Centro Latino Americano continues to be the single largest agency in Lane County dedicated to serving the Latino population and is the primary access-point for the Latino community in the county, especially those with limited English proficiency" (Oregon.Gov). However, this list, which claims to advertise "Community Connections" available for Spanish-speaking families, failed to mention Downtown Languages or Huerto de la Familia, two of the other leading organizations working with the Latino community in Lane County, therefore calling into question the validity and comprehensiveness of this resource.

Additionally, during this time I was employed by Centro Latino Americano as an Oregon Health Plan Outreach and Enrollment Coordinator. This position, which was full-time, began in April 2016 and concluded in July 2016 due to the expiration of the sponsoring grant. The funds for this position were provided by the Oregon Latino Health Coalition (OLHC) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Through this position I traveled around Lane County providing bilingual presentations and flyers to Latino immigrant families and organizations or institutions that commonly work with Latino immigrant families. The promotion of a state Medicaid program was particularly interesting with this community because of the level of anxiety and fear involved in providing one's information, including lack of legal status, to a government database. A lot of the work I did in this position focused on dispelling misconceptions about the connection between the Department of Human Services (DHS), which orchestrates OHP, and government institutions like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the other DHS, Department of Homeland Security.

In talking with community members I learned that anxiety was very high during my time working for Centro and completing my research with the Pilas program. The pastor of a local church, which provides Spanish-language services, informed me that attendance rates for his services fluctuate a great deal and are noticeably lower after a string of immigration raids in the community. He also lamented that in an effort to close the gap between Latino immigrant families and law enforcement, he invited the police chief to speak at an upcoming service. Although the pastor collaborated with a leading figure in his Latino church population, no one attended the service with the police chief.

Through my position with Centro, I worked with a wide variety of people and organizations attempting to engage and support the Latino community in unique ways. One primary resource for reaching out to these families was through English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers employed in the public schools around the county. Most of these teachers offered stories of inadequate translation services, such as having an ELL teacher

with admittedly low Spanish proficiency interpret for legal conversations between students and parents. Another case was when the school composed an announcement for parents in English, entered it into Google translate, and sent it home with Spanish-speaking students without considering the high level of mistranslations that occur with Google translate. The ELL teacher I spoke with said parents met this announcement with a mixture of frustration and inability to understand what was actually trying to be conveyed. An interesting piece of advice given to me by an ELL teacher was to always provide outreach materials in Spanish and English because a lot of times the parents and the children are illiterate in Spanish; however, the children are literate in English and can translate the document orally for their parents.

The governmental institutions of Lane County are beginning to take notice and action to support the Latino immigrant community and their specific linguistic and cultural needs. While I was conducting this research, I learned that the City of Eugene, in conjunction with the University of Oregon, was conducting interviews with Latino community members about their experiences with the public park system in Eugene. Some of the interviews for this study were conducted with Pilas families in the Eugene location during program hours. Through this study, the City of Eugene hopes to uncover barriers to Latino immigrants utilizing their park system and remedy these issues in order to encourage a more cohesive and inclusive community.

Despite the signs of positive progress, there is still a lot to be done with the city and state institutions in order to accommodate this new generation of Oregonians. Through my position with Centro Latino, I came to understand that although imperfect

and not widespread, Spanish language resources were much more likely in the larger towns of Eugene and Springfield. This presents particular struggles in smaller periphery towns like Creswell, Junction City, Cottage Grove, Dexter, and Oakridge. Since everyone who participates in Pilas lives in either Eugene or Springfield, it is outside of the scope of this project to discuss the specific situations of periphery towns. However, it is important to understand that Oregon is experiencing the shift into a “New Destinations” throughout the state, not just within the confines of the largest cities.

Latino immigrants have historically migrated to Oregon. However, until recently neither their absolute numbers nor their percentages of the state population were high enough to register as significant within the larger conversation about how best to provide services for all Oregonians. This coincides with Oregon’s reputation as a homogenous, European-heritage state (Bussel *et al.* 2008). However over the past two decades, the Latino population in Oregon has been rapidly increasing. This trend demands attention. Unlike traditional immigrant destinations like California, Arizona, or Texas, Oregon does not possess the infrastructure necessary to accommodate these new Oregonians. The relationship between Downtown Languages, Pilas, and the “New Destination” status of Oregon demands investigation in order to understand the efficacy of program components and situate them within a national context of shifting immigrant destinations. In this thesis, I will use the recent classification of Oregon as a “New Destination” to frame my research through the following questions: Is Pilas successful or necessary in a “New Destination” like Oregon? How does the classification of Oregon as a “New Destination” impact the funding, design, and participation of programs like Pilas? I will also use my

experiences in the nonprofit sector and working with the community to question the appropriateness of classifying Oregon as a “New Destination.”

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This program evaluation focuses on the Pilas Family Literacy Program, which is coordinated by the organization Downtown Languages. The following chapter will describe a brief history of Downtown Languages and the Pilas program in order to convey change over time and situate this evaluation of the spring 2016 session of the Pilas program within the larger narrative of this community resource. The decision to focus on one session of this program was made to amplify the voices of the most recent Pilas participants. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of relevant research on family literacy programs, including support, critiques, and recommendations.

Downtown Languages

Downtown Languages is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides immigrants and English language learners in Lane County with language, literacy, and other educational programs in hopes of increasing professional opportunities as well as building cultural competency and respect among native and immigrant populations. The goal of Downtown Languages is to foster “a vibrant community where people of all cultures feel welcome and can participate effectively” (DTL, n.d.). The organization aims to accomplish these goals through educational, outreach, and professional development programs, which invite immigrants from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds to utilize services together. However, the Latino population is by far the most prominent immigrant and English language learner population in Lane County, and therefore Downtown

Languages has designed programs that specifically cater to the cultural and linguistic needs of that community.

Pilas Family Literacy Program

Since its founding in 2004, Downtown Languages has evolved to meet the changing needs of its clients. In particular, specific programs have been developed to cater to the growing Latino immigrant community in Lane County. One such program is the Pilas Family Literacy Program; *pilas* is Spanish for batteries, or as it is colloquially translated “to get a move on.” Identified by the staff of Downtown Languages as their primary program within the Latino community, Pilas aims to bridge the gaps between Spanish-speaking Latino parents and their children growing up in the U.S. Public School System. These goals are pursued by offering resources such as adult ESL courses, at the beginner or intermediate level, and academic support for children between the ages of 0-13. Ultimately, Pilas encourages families to learn together in an environment that values their linguistic and cultural traditions.

Founded in 2009, the Pilas program is offered twice a year and occurs over a 10-week period with classes meeting twice a week for two hours each time. There are separate Pilas programs for Springfield and Eugene; Springfield courses are held on Monday and Wednesday evenings, while Eugene courses are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. On the second evening of each week, the last 30 minutes of Pilas is dedicated to specific family activities. The courses take place in educational facilities. For the fall 2015 Pilas session, both the Springfield and Eugene sessions were held in elementary schools located in working class neighborhoods. In spring 2016, the Eugene

location remained at the same location as the fall 2015 session, whereas the Springfield location shifted to a different elementary school based on client requests because of transportation concerns.

Although the Pilas program has expanded in the previous years to serve approximately 140 families per session, the number of Downtown Languages staff members has remained the same: 3 full-time employees. Therefore, Downtown Languages relies heavily on volunteer services provided by community members. For this reason, Downtown Languages has been unable to evaluate the Pilas program in order to determine how well it is serving the goals of Downtown Languages and the needs of the community, making this research crucial to the future development and funding of Pilas and Downtown Languages as a whole.

The families registered for the spring 2016 Pilas Family Literacy Program are immigrant families primarily from Mexico with parent ages ranging from early-twenties to early-forties, and children's ages ranging from 3-14. Although there are children in the Pilas program as young as a few months old, they will not be included in this research.

Within the Pilas Family Literacy Program, Downtown Languages uses grant funding to implement the Raising a Reader program in conjunction with the existing infrastructure of Pilas classes and events. The Raising a Reader program, based in Redwood City, California, is implemented on a national level through partnering with nonprofits to engage families and instill a love of reading in children across the United States. Based on more than 25 years of early childhood development research, Raising a Reader uses a program of weekly *bolsitos* (little bags) of books to address four specific

goals: foster healthy brain development, develop and enhance early literacy and language skills, promote and strengthen family engagement, and finally, develop, promote, and foster intrinsic reading motivation (Raising a Reader, n.d.). Raising a Reader aims to accomplish these goals by sending children home each week with a little red canvas bag of books, which they return the following week in exchange for a new bag. As a component of Pilas, the Raising a Reader program addresses two important messages: a love of reading in children and the need for continued education at home, which requires the involvement of parents.

According to the Downtown Languages Executive Director, there are approximately 12 Pre-K children participating in Raising a Reader at each location, which is 80-90% of the Pre-K students enrolled in the Pilas program. In surveying the Raising a Reader *bolsitos*, I discovered that roughly 67% of the books surveyed were bilingual, 29% were in Spanish, and only 4% were entirely in English. The Executive Director also noted that they previously received grant funding to support a Raising a Reader orientation with the parents about how to read engagingly and why it is important to read to their kids. This orientation utilizes Raising a Reader materials and research to teach parents the most effective way to use this program. However, the grant funding expired and was never able to be reinstated, thus the Raising a Reader orientation has not been offered in recent years.

Family Literacy Programs

The Pilas program exists within and is influenced by the larger context of family literacy programs. In order to demonstrate the need for this program evaluation, a

description of previous research praising and recommending expansion of family literacy programs is essential. Critiques of various family literacy program models are equally helpful in determining how to remedy specific shortcomings. This information informs this program evaluation with the Pilas Family Literacy Program by situating it within the larger academic and professional conversation on family literacy programs, especially those catering to language-minority families. Through analyzing the academic research, the Pilas Family Literacy Program appears to be operating in the most effective way possible. However, this research aims to explore how the human element of a family literacy program can alter the overall success of a program, despite following all of the recommended protocol.

The term “family literacy program” can be employed to describe a variety of programs: the pursuit of literacy within a family, an interventionist literacy program aimed at supporting youth, or a program working to improve the literacy of multiple family members at once (Casper 2003:1). The Pilas Family Literacy Program falls into the final category, as demonstrated by the program’s Spanish name, *Aprendiendo Juntos*, which translates to “Learning Together.”

In discussing how to evaluate the success of such a program, Mulhern *et al.* (1994) highlight that it is extremely important to gain an understanding of “...parental beliefs about their roles in children's learning, attitudes toward school, and confidence in helping their children succeed in school...” (14). Since parental beliefs about their role in their children’s education deeply affects their participation and feelings of agency, this

program evaluation includes questions to understand how these families see themselves interacting with or alongside the U.S. public school system.

The incorporation of English as a Second Language (ESL) into the family literacy program model requires unique attention in comparison to an entirely English-speaking family literacy program or a typical ESL class. Based on research from previous program evaluations of family literacy programs, when an ESL component is central to the program, there is “focus on the English that adults need to negotiate their lives in the United States and may include the English that they need to assist with their children's schooling” (Mulhern *et al.* 1994: 9). This is a key differentiation from a stand-alone ESL class. As seen in the example of Project FLAME, Family Literacy: *Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando* (Learning, Bettering, Educating), a Chicago-based program that caters to working-class Latino students, “parents are more likely to support their child’s learning when they see themselves as effective learners” (588). Through their discussion of lessons learned from Project FLAME, Shanahan *et al.* (1995) asserted that family literacy programs are especially well-received in the Latino community because,

familia is a central concept in the cultural descriptions of Latino/as; meeting family needs is a great motivation for success in that culture. FLAME places literacy learning in the context of *familia*. Because literacy learning is culturally bound, when there are home-school differences in communication style, views of literacy, or the nature of literacy interactions, children’s literacy achievement is at risk (1995: 587).

Therefore programs like FLAME and Pilas are crucial in acting as a bridge between home and school in these Latino communities. By incorporating instruction on how to

participate in children's education, programs like FLAME and Pilas can reduce parental alienation from children's education.

Criticisms of family literacy programs, fall into four general categories: the Deficit Model, the Research Vacuum, the Silent Gendered Discourse, and the Missing Social-Constructivist Perspective (Casper 2003: 2).

The Deficit Model criticizes family literacy programs for making staunch over-generalizations in assuming that all low-income families are lacking "literacy practices, parenting skills, and knowledge to support effective child learning" and therefore need the support of a family literacy program to raise academically successful children (Casper 2003: 2). Under this critique, any usage of culturally competent materials within the family literacy program is seen as prescriptive. In this instance, the term cultural competent is used to refer to materials that align with the cultural and linguistic identity of the student. For example, a book about a girl preparing for her *quinceañera* would be more culturally competent for Latino immigrant students than a book about a sweet-sixteen celebration. However, as the Deficit Model warns, family literacy programs risk overgeneralizing their participants when providing materials that appeal to very specific cultures. This is important to consider in the Pilas Family Literacy Program by understanding the diverse backgrounds that are represented among the Pilas families.

The Research Vacuum focuses on the research assumption that a program where parents and children are learning together presents more opportunity for tangible improvements than a program dedicated to specifically serving parents or children (Casper 2003: 3). This critique calls for increased documentation and evaluation of family literacy

programs in order to uncover the value of this model. This critique is considered throughout the course of this research and informs the overall research questions as well as the concluding recommendations for this and other family literacy programs.

The Silent Gendered Discourse acknowledges that a majority of family literacy programs are attended by women, a fact held true by the Pilas Family Literacy program, and should therefore work to promote the agency of these women through the program curriculum (Caspé 2003: 3). According to this critique, a program should emphasize the existing skills that participants possess and invite them to incorporate their personal experiences into the process of literacy, in this case ESL training. By acknowledging the skills that participants, who are overwhelmingly female, arrive with, a family literacy program can empower them to combine their existing knowledge with their second language acquisition process. The ideas behind the Silent Gendered Discourse critique influence the identification of opportunities for improvement of the Pilas Family Literacy Program.

The Missing Social-Constructivist Perspective argues that literacy itself is not removed from the larger social and political worlds that participants interact with and therefore should not be treated as. Say what “For literacy to become meaningful it has to be situated and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform, and make sense of the world” (Caspé 2003:3). This critique asserts that literacy needs to be incorporated into real life situations to enhance contextual recognition, perceived importance, and likelihood of program retention. This critique was also fundamentally

important to this program evaluation of the Pilas program, which struggles to maintain attendance levels throughout the session.

Based on the combination of these critical perspectives, synthesized by Caspe (2003), along with research in support of family literacy programs (Mulhern *et al.* 1994, Shanahan *et al.* 1995), some of the successful characteristics of family literacy programs can be determined. These include: addressing parents' personal goals, valuing families' home languages, viewing families from a resource model rather than a deficit model, encouraging parents to feel like successful students, and finally building the foundation for shared literacy experiences in homes rather than imposing a school-like transfer of skills from parent to child.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL LINKAGES

This thesis uses the current academic conversation on family and literacy among Latino immigrant communities to situate the program evaluation and inform the results, as well as any recommendations. Themes include: the role of family, acculturation, language brokering, culturally competent methodology, and human capital within ESL and literacy training in Latino communities. These theoretical linkages are explored in how they confirm or differ from the reality of families in the Pitas Family Literacy Program. In designing and coordinating an effective family literacy program, it is crucial for Downtown Languages to consider the lived experiences of their participants within their families and communities.

The mission of Downtown Languages is to provide culturally informed outreach programs focused on areas such as ESL literacy and professional training, which lead to increased opportunity for economic and social mobility for immigrants in Lane County. Although the relationship between language access and economic and social power can be traced back to scholars like Michel Foucault (1980) and Pierre Bourdieu (1989, 1991, 1998), consideration for how this phenomenon differs with regard to migration and transnationalism has only recently been added to the conversation.

Most academic research into the intersection of literacy and migration has occurred since the turn of the 21st Century. Therefore, the field is relatively new, and there is still a need for case study-centered research that can illuminate individual successes and

weaknesses. According to Lam & Warriner (2012) current research has specifically elaborated on “the relation between communicative practices and the multilayered relationships that migrants develop across geographical borders” (192). The literature review of this thesis situates the methods used and results achieved by Downtown Languages within the larger academic conversation about the intersection of literacy and mobility for immigrant populations.

Bilingualism and Family Dynamics

Bilingualism and biculturalism are guiding principles within the Downtown Languages organization. Their mission, which aims to “increase opportunities for immigrants and build respect and understanding across cultures by providing language, literacy, and other educational programs” emphasizes the centrality of education and language in provided equal access to cultural, social, and economic capital (DTL n.d.). Within the literature, immigrant communities illustrate the role of cultural inclusion as a vital element to the success of second-language literacy acquisition. Looking specifically at Downtown Languages’ emphasis on family inclusion, use of culturally appropriate materials and methods for literacy training, and promotion of biculturalism as an asset, this chapter will demonstrate the theoretical linkages between these practices and Downtown Languages’ goals of cross-cultural understanding through literacy and language programs.

Educational Attainment of Youth

Through the Pilas Family Literacy Program, Downtown Languages is providing an avenue for children and their parents to learn together. According to Jimenez (2000), due to the importance of the family structure within Latino communities, this inclusivity is key to both the achievement and sustainability of literacy. Furthermore, Cummins' (1986) interactive empowerment theory emphasizes the role of family interaction in empowering students in the task of English language literacy acquisition (27). According to these sources, by encouraging parents to participate in literacy training alongside their children, Downtown Languages is setting up students for higher and more sustainable success rates.

Educational attainment of children is a major area of difference between traditional and nontraditional immigrant destinations. Potochnick (2014) compares the academic achievement of immigrant children in traditional and "New Destinations" as affected by support from their families, schools, and neighborhoods. A lack of familial and institutional support in "New Destinations," according to Potochnick (2014), can negatively influence the academic achievement of immigrant children. Specifically, Potochnick (2014) describes that "New Destinations" are "challenged with responding to the needs of a small but rapidly growing immigrant population" (361). In recommending a path to adaptation and integration in "New Destinations," Potochnick (2014) emphasizes the importance of families, neighborhoods, and educators in narrowing the achievement gap between Latino students in traditional destinations and those in "New Destinations".

The findings of Potochnick (2014), Jimenez (2000), and Cummins (1986) seem to support improved success rates in literacy and ESL training through family-oriented activities; however, my experiences with Downtown Languages and Pilas hinted at a different reality. In informal conversations with Downtown Languages staff, one of the most common critiques from parents participating in the Pilas program is that too much time is spent engaging in family activities. The parents frequently request increased ESL or literacy training time rather than weekly family activities. This creates an issue for the staff of Downtown Languages: they want to provide programs that their participants value and benefit from, but a large percentage of the funding for the Pilas program is provided by United Way and is therefore contingent on the “family” aspect of Pilas.

The academic literature praises family-centered literacy programs and boasts higher success rates when these pillars are in place. However, the current academic conversation fails to consider the human element. The majority of Pilas families are low-income and desperate to acquire English-language skills. For them, increased class time improves their chances of English fluency and is therefore prioritized over the family activities, which are conducted entirely in Spanish. This contradiction between the academic conversation and the human experience of this family literacy program is a central paradox in this research.

Kids as Cultural and Linguistic Brokers

Children in immigrant communities often serve as cultural brokers, wielding more social and cultural power than their parents due to their English language abilities.

Menjivar (2002) explored this situation through the lens of Guatemalan immigrant families and discovered that the children “boasted” of their English language abilities by pretending to lack fluency in Spanish (345). In this instance, Menjivar (2002) is demonstrating the social and cultural capital that exists in the English language for immigrant communities: “the parents believe the children manifest their elevated status, which comes with knowledge of English and a better grasp of the new socio-cultural milieu” (345). Based on this evidence, the family-oriented environment of Pils should combat these social and cultural divides between parents and their children by assisting parents in building a social and cultural community, as well as acquiring English language skills.

Parenting is theorized as being more difficult for immigrant families, especially those raising families in “New Destinations.” Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2008 report that families living outside of their home country risk internal conflict due to varying levels of acculturation between children and their parents, which includes varying levels of bilingualism with English and Spanish when discussing Latino immigrant families. The lack of institutional support in “New Destinations” for these non-English speakers can amplify the cultural dichotomy between parents and children. Martínez Jr. *et al.* (2008) acknowledge the lack of research directed at this specific theme of internal familial conflicts due to acculturation, but reveal that initial studies suggest these trends make it more difficult to parent in the United States for immigrant families.

Language brokering, or the act of children translating for their parents in the navigation of daily life, is a frequent occurrence among immigrant families. This thesis

follows the argument posed by some scholars that language brokering should be viewed as a family process rather than an individual phenomenon (Martinez *et al.* 2009). This is crucial in order to determine how the Pilas families are experiencing language brokering in their daily lives. According to research among Latino immigrant families in Oregon,

“those in high language brokering contexts, compared with those in low language brokering contexts, demonstrated higher levels of family stress, lower levels of parenting effectiveness, and poorer adolescent adjustment in terms of academic functioning, socioemotional health, and substance use” (Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2009: 71).

Therefore, the consequences can be dire for families relying on children to translate their lives in the United States.

However, there is evidence that language brokering holds long-term academic and professional benefits for kids. Dorner, Orellana, Li-Grining (2007) document one of the foremost studies illustrating the academic benefits for language brokers, in which they coin the term *para-phrasers* to describe the work these children carry out (453). They found that being an active language broker, in comparison to partial or non-language brokers, is positively correlated with high standardized test scores (467). These results suggest that the practice of language brokering can be useful in the short and long-term academic achievement of children.

These contradictory findings about how language brokering impacts children in the long-run are important to consider in evaluating a program that promotes bilingualism and second language acquisition as a family-centered process. At the conclusion of their publication on language brokering among Latino immigrant families, Martinez *et al.*

2009 stated “Data are needed on behavioral outcomes for immigrants who live in places, like Oregon, where the burden of communication with monolingual English speakers is borne predominantly by immigrants and by their children” (74). This is a gap that this thesis aims to fill by incorporating this theme into the evaluation and future trajectory of the Pilas Family Literacy program.

Culturally Competent Literacy

Second language literacy programs, especially those catering to immigrant populations, can benefit from incorporating aspects of the students’ home culture and language into their literacy curriculum. Materials or methods that reflect students’ cultural and linguistic traditions are referred to as “culturally competent.” According to a study conducted with Latino students in a U.S. school, participating students stated that obtaining higher proficiency in literacy “was a much more appealing activity if viewed as supportive of their Latina/o identity, if it fostered their Spanish-language and literacy development” (Jimenez 2000: 995). The importance of incorporating “culturally responsive pedagogy” is articulated by scholars (Fitzgerald *et al.* 2000) as crucial in assessing how they believe “bilingual/ESL programs in literacy” should change over the next millennium (520). This line of research is expanded by Ramirez (2000) in arguing that comprehension is increased when the language-learner can form a mental image of the information being portrayed. An example of this is when students are asked to bring in a traditional recipe, which can then be translated and used as a tool to teach cooking vocabulary in English.

There is a formative relationship between literacy and the negotiation of identity: as students work to develop literacy in their native or a second language, they are also developing ideas of who they are and how they classify themselves within the world (Fitzgerald *et al.* 2000, Jimenez 2000, Luke 2003, Lam & Warriner 2012). Therefore, it may be that in literacy programs, like Pilas, students learn to identify bilingualism and biculturalism as positive qualities rather than hindrances. The creation of a positive multilingual environment is fostered by culturally competent teachers, who not only incorporate aspects of the students' home language into literacy training, but also as Jimenez (2000) points out, they do not “treat their students as linguistic incompetents... but rather as individuals involved in the very natural process of second-language development” (977).

English and Literacy as Human Capital

Downtown Languages advocates for the social and economic mobility of immigrants in Lane County through the tool of literacy. While a majority of these efforts are conducted through English literacy programs, the organization also acknowledges the importance of Spanish literacy classes in order to help “learners to be more successful, not only in learning English, but also in adapting to a new culture” (DTL n.d.). Literacy skills, as discussed by Bourdieu (1991), are a form of human capital, which can be translated into gains within social and economic fields. However, as Luke (2003) points out, gaining literacy as a form of human capital is not enough to guarantee social and economic mobility. Luke (2003) argues that in order for literacy to have an impact on the

social and economic mobility of a person, it must also be combined with institutional and communal support. The Outreach Programs of Downtown Languages address these theoretical concerns by coupling literacy training with professional development, thus giving their participants ample opportunities for application of their newly acquired human capital, English literacy.

Social mobility, with regards to immigrant populations, involves the ability to use human capital as a mechanism to move between various social fields; examples of these social fields include academic, community, and professional institutions. These social fields, as they pertain to immigrant populations, can be further identified as *transnational* social fields. Based on Bourdieusian theory, a transnational social field is a complex, multilingual, multi-scalar environment in which immigrants relate to individuals and institutions (Lam & Warriner 2012: 194). Although these families are not physically moving between the United States and their home country, their relationships and cultural identities transcend the border, thus broadening and complicating the social fields in which they reside. The academic conversation supports the idea of literacy as a method to achieve social mobility in areas such as improved likelihood for academic excellence (Bankston & Zhao 1995) and promotion of social relations across borders (Jimenez 2003, Lam & Warriner 2012). Downtown Languages facilitates the social mobility of their participants by providing them with literacy training, in both English and Spanish, as well as situating them within the multilingual community of Lane County where their bilingualism is regarded as an asset rather than a hindrance.

Alongside training in ESL literacy, Pilas promotes bilingual verbal skills and codeswitching through an environment that frequently, and seamlessly, switches between Spanish and English. These skills are complemented by the economic incentive to obtain ESL proficiency, which is quantified by Allensworth (1997) in her research with Mexican Americans living and working in the United States. Allensworth found,

Men who speak English poorly earn significantly less (\$1,922 *less per year*²) than those who speak well, while those who speak English very well earn significantly more (\$1,441 *more per year*) than those who speak well. Women who speak English very well earn significantly more (\$1,854 *more per year*) than those who speak adequately, but there is no difference in earning between women who speak English poorly and those who speak well, controlling for hours worked and human capital variables (1997: 397-398).

Therefore, according to Allensworth (1997), the ability to speak English well, or very well, is directly correlated with economic earning power. However, when considering literacy, Luke (2003) asserts that in order for this skill to be applied to the full potential, it must be used in combination with other forms of human capital. This is addressed by Downtown Languages through their incorporation of community organizations and resources into the Pilas curriculum. This thesis considered the experiences and opinions of Pilas participants in gaining professional resources or skills through the Pilas program, and investigated how this may or may not have impacted their participation in the Lane County community.

Applying the Literature to Downtown Languages

² Clarifications added by author

The culturally competent nature of Downtown Languages' programs, specifically the Pilas Family Literacy Program, is supported by the literature as contributing to the success rates of students participating in the literacy programs. Specifically, the literature argues that by encouraging the support and even participation of family members, teaching English literacy through culturally appropriate materials, and advocating for bilingualism and biliteracy among students, the Pilas program is providing students with increased opportunity for success. Furthermore, the literature states that through these culturally competent programs participants are granted access to human capital, literacy, which in combination with social networks and professional development programs can be translated into social and economic mobility. However, the efficacy of these theories in practice has yet to be explored with regards to Pilas in its current form. Therefore, in this thesis, I propose to explore the following questions:

- Is the Pilas! Family Literacy Program an appropriate model for immigrant communities in “New Destinations” like Oregon?
- To what extent does the incorporation of family-oriented activities affect the learning outcomes of adult ESL learners and their bilingual children?
- How do the priorities of Pilas participants align with the priorities of Pilas organizers and Downtown Languages staff to create a program that best serves the community and the mission of the organization?

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted through a program evaluation using an ethnographic methodology and situated within the larger academic conversation on “New Destinations.” This chapter will begin by explaining the role of ethnography in understanding and evaluating ESL and family literacy programs. Then the lens of program evaluation will be explained and applied to the Pilas Family Literacy Program. Next, the motivation for implementing an ethnographic methodology for this program evaluation will be explained. Finally, this chapter will describe the research instruments employed for this study along with the potential benefits of this work.

Ethnography

Ethnography is the interactive study of “everyday life as lived by groups of people” in which the researcher is embedded in the culture in hopes of gaining a holistic understanding how this particular group interacts with the larger society (Boellstorff *et al.* 2012: 1). This method allows quantitative and qualitative research to be supplemented by elements of self reflexivity, which contribute to a more nuanced representation of the group in question. Importantly, ethnography is also listed as one of the most common methodologies in the field of program evaluation. Throughout this program evaluation I employed ethnographic methods to form close relationships with program participants and understand how their complex lives are interacting with this particular family literacy program.

Ethnography as a research method has been commonly employed in investigating and documenting ESL programs. The motives for and essentials of this relationship were documented decades ago by Watson-Gegeo (1988). In this foundational publication, Watson-Gegeo praises the use of ethnography for

investigating issues difficult to address through experimental research, such as sociocultural processes in language learning, how institutional and societal pressures are played out in moment-to-moment classroom interaction, and how to gain a more holistic perspective on teacher- student interactions to aid teacher training and improve practice (1988: 575).

This nuanced perspective is vital to evaluating the Pilas Family Literacy program. Due to the nature of this research, elements of self reflexivity contribute a great deal of understanding about who is participating in this program and what they expect to get out of it. As a researcher, I participated in every class with Pilas participants for ten weeks. Although in a classroom structure, these interactions were increasingly defined by social relationships as participants came to trust and even befriend me throughout the course of the research.

Ethnographic methods are also employed in describing the demographic and institutional reality for Latinos living in Lane County. This research uses self reflexivity to include experiences with various nonprofits, advocates, and Latino immigrants throughout Lane County. These insights are crucial to situating the Pilas program at the county and state levels.

Program Evaluation

Michael Scriven, one of the founding fathers of program evaluation, defines the medium as “judging the merit and worth of programs, where merit is an intrinsic judgement of the absolute value of a program in terms of general normative criteria, and worth is a judgement based on success in achieving program objectives” (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013: 10-11). This professional tool can be implemented by an internal or external source to the program and is ~~overtly~~ not intended to be objective. Michael Patton, another important researcher in program evaluation, highlights the necessity for mixed methods and a recognition of the human element in conducting program evaluations through using “professional judgement” (2013: 12). This research interprets Patton’s tenet of professional judgement through an ethnographic lense and weaves the lived experiences of program participants, as well as the researcher, into the fabric of the larger program evaluation.

Program Evaluation, as a discipline, can be implemented at a variety of stages to evaluate different components of a program or policy. Formative program evaluations focus on the implementation of a given program or policy and “assess the extent to which intended program or policy designs are successfully implemented by the organizations that are tasked with doing so” (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013: 8). On the other hand, summative program evaluations focus on the ability of a program to achieve the intended results in order to evaluate the future trajectory of the program (2013:8). This research utilizes a summative program evaluation model with an ethnographic methodology to determine whether the Pilas Family Literacy program is meeting its

intended objectives and additionally, investigate if the program objectives are the same for the program organizers as with program participants.

One of the first steps in conducting a program evaluation is the construction of a logic model, which details the inputs, outputs, and objectives of a given program in a visual summary (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013: 31). An input is any resource, both tangible

FIGURE 1		
<u>Inputs</u>	<u>Outputs</u>	<u>Objectives</u>

Teachers Volunteers Parents Kids Schools Teaching Materials Raffle Prizes Community Partner presenters Raising a Reader Downtown Languages reputation in Lane County Word of mouth for recruitment Grant funding: \$78,000 per year	Improved scores for adults on ESL pre to post tests Improved scores for children on pre and post tests Increased health literacy Heightened social ties within the Latino immigrant community	Increased agency in Lane County Institutional support for isolated community members, word of mouth spread Encouragement for Spanish literacy of children, alongside their English literacy as developed by the U.S. Public school system Celebration of cultural events and traditions Establish Downtown Languages as a starting point for information and advocacy in Lane County Teaching opportunities for community members
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and intangible, that is required to run the program. An output is any activity or measurable product that is produced by the program. Finally, an objective is any intended or unintended product of the program that is usually more difficult to measure than the outputs. The logic model for the Pilas Family Literacy program can be found in Figure 1. Finally, one concrete way to determine the success of this mixed methods approach is by conducting a meta-evaluation. Meta-evaluation is defined as the process of evaluating a program evaluation in order to determine the validity and reliability of the methods and results (Stufflebeam 2011: 100). When using meta-evaluation, special consideration is

necessary for the role of narrative, and ethnographic information. This data can be viewed as an important window into the program evaluator's interactions with program participants, as well as a possible avenue for research in the meta-evaluation process.

In this research meta-evaluation is used to revisit participants' reflections during the program evaluation and inquire about their thoughts on the reliability and validity of the results, along with their opinions of the evaluation process. Meta-evaluation took place primarily during the post-Pilas focus group and invited participants to reflect on the results garnered from their previously collected surveys. This process allows for the human side of program evaluation to play a major role in the conclusions drawn. Meta-evaluation is also utilized in the concluding chapter of this research to reflect on the entire program evaluation process.

Defining the Need: Why Evaluate?

Since its inception in 2004, Downtown Languages has frequently and informally evolved to meet the changing needs of their clients. The same is true for the Pilas Family Literacy Program, which was added to Downtown Languages' repertoire in 2009. During this time Downtown Languages and Pilas have both expanded in size and breadth to meet the needs of a growing Spanish-speaking Latino community in Lane County. However, a lot of community pressure is put on Downtown Languages and its services due to a lack of other similar services in the Lane County community. Since the Downtown Languages was founded in 2004 and the Pilas program was founded in 2009, participant trends have developed, original outputs have evolved, and outcomes have potentially shifted away

from initial intentions. Prior to this research, there have been no formal evaluations conducted for the Pilas Family Literacy Program.

For these reasons it is imperative to the continued growth of Downtown Languages and Pilas that a program evaluation be conducted. This program evaluation will assist Downtown Languages in determining how their services have changed since their original mission, how these changes are impacting their outcomes, where their funding is going, and finally, how well these services and programs are working within their target community. With this knowledge Downtown Languages can increase the efficacy of their programs, improve the data used in future grant applications, and inform the city governments of Eugene and Springfield about the impact of their organization and programs on this growing community.

Research Tools

In order to complete this program evaluation, I gathered data through 10 weeks of participant observations, a 57-question survey in Spanish, and a Spanish-language focus group conducted immediately after the conclusion of the Spring 2016 Pilas program. These methods are discussed in more detail below.

I attended and participated in each session of the spring 2016 Pilas Session, 4 nights per week for 10 weeks in the Springfield and Eugene locations. This allowed me to observe the program from beginning to end, interact with participants, and get to know the diverse components that make up the Pilas program. Due to my Spanish language abilities, I was able to converse with Pilas participants in either Spanish or English.

Over the course of the session I noticed that my ability to speak with participants in Spanish allowed them to comfortably and confidently express their thoughts about the Pilas Family Literacy Program.

The first research tool implemented in this program evaluation was participant observations, which began in the second week of the Pilas session. In consultation with Downtown Languages staff, it was decided to limit the participant observations and in-depth interactions with Pilas participants to the Adult Beginning ESL classroom in Springfield and the Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) classroom in Eugene. It was important to diversify participant observation by including parents and children in order to understand the “family” nature of Pilas and gain perspective from both sides of the family equation. Specific behaviors were recorded in my field notes such as quotes, instances of English versus Spanish use, occurrences of “Spanglish,” any translation or interpretation within families, and quality of interpersonal interactions with special attention to those defined by language choice. By confining the participant observation, I was able to build stronger relationships with the participants in those classrooms and avoid interrupting the Pilas environment by floating from classroom to classroom.

In the seventh week of the session, I distributed a survey, with questions provided in Spanish, for adult Pilas participants to complete. Survey questions are included in Appendix A. Although Downtown Languages currently has a Spanish-language survey in place, this survey focuses on gathering demographic information with only a few evaluative questions about the Pilas program. Furthermore, the Downtown Languages staff admit that due to a lack of resources and time they are unable to organize and

analyze this data in an effective manner. Therefore the survey explicitly targeted participant opinions on the importance of Pilas in Oregon, a non-traditional immigrant destination, as well as their reflections on how their family interacts with ESL training and unequal levels of bilingualism. The survey questions aimed to extract participant ideas about the relevancy of Pilas being a “family” literacy program, information that is useful for future grant applications as well as other ESL programs around the United States. The results from this survey were analyzed using a data visualization software, Tableau. Statistics were formulated based on this software, however no regression analysis was run to determine the significance of these figures.

Prior to beginning this research the Downtown Languages Executive Director pointed out that relying on written surveys could deprive the evaluation of information due to potentially low literacy levels in Spanish as well as English. An attempt was made to remedy this issue by conducting a post-Pilas focus group, in which adult participants who indicated interest on the survey would be invited to verbally reflect on their experience in the program and articulate recommendations for future Pilas programs in Spanish or English. Questions for this focus group are included in Appendix E.

To conclude, Boellstorff *et al.* (2012) highlight in their handbook of ethnographic methods, that the research question is fundamental in situating the trajectory for the entire study. Therefore, for this ethnographic program evaluation, the guiding research question is: How are the priorities of the Downtown Languages’ staff and Pilas participants aligning or not aligning in the design and implementation of the Pilas Family Literacy Program?

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS

The results from from each method will be presented separately: participant observations, surveys, and focus group. However, the participant observation results will also be weaved into other result sections to confirm, contextualize, or interrogate the information provided in the surveys and focus group in comparison with how families were observed interacting with Pilas.

Participant Observations

Over the 10 weeks of participant observations the following patterns emerged: more mothers participate in Pilas than fathers, there are frequent presentations that interrupt ESL class time, the student-teacher relationships have a great deal of mutual respect and friendship, and finally, there is an atmosphere of gratitude for the program as a whole. The discussion of participant observations at the Spring 2016 Pilas Family Literacy Program will be divided into three categories: “New Destinations”, Bilingualism and Family Dynamics, and Program Quality. Although, these categories are admittedly insufficient in organizing all of the observations. Following the discussion of these three themes, the perspectives of Pilas teachers and the Pilas Coordinator will be included based on information collected during informal interviews with the researcher.

“New Destinations”

As previously determined, accessibility of bilingual resources and educational achievement are two prominent arenas impacting immigrants in “New Destinations” differently than those in traditional immigrant destinations (Dondero & Muller 2012). My observations show that the Pilas program addressed these components both intentionally and unintentionally. These results demonstrate how Pilas connects Latino immigrant families to bilingual resources and encourages the educational achievement of the youth, in both English and Spanish.

In comparison to statistics from 2010 U.S. Census data, which estimate that 62% of Latinos in Oregon speak English “less than very well”, the results from this research

indicate that monolingualism or low-level English skills is a reality for a larger percentage of the population, closer to the 90% prediction of Martinez Jr et a. (2008: 57). This is determined by the level of Beginning and Intermediate students, which is far from conversational English. Furthermore, not all of these non-English speaking immigrants are recent arrivals. Based on conversations with Pilas participants, a vast majority have been living in either Oregon, or at least the United States, for more than 5 years. Some participants reported arriving 20-30 years ago. Therefore, the estimation put forth by Martinez Jr. *et al.* (2008), that a majority of Latino immigrants are unable to speak English, is not discounted but rather expanded to include families who have identified as Oregonians for years. This trend is evidence of the divide between the Latino immigrant community and the English-speaking community in Lane County.

Apart from ESL training, the Pilas program also aims to bridge the divide between English-speaking and non-English-speaking communities by informed Pilas families about the resources available to them. Beginning with connections to bilingual resources, the Pilas program organizes a wide range of presentations and activities that encourage Latino immigrant families to engage in the Eugene and Springfield communities. The theme of the spring 2016 Pilas session was health. Under this umbrella, participants attended presentations from Centro Latino Americano, Lane County Community Health Centers, Public Libraries, Northwest Youth Corps, and Zumba instructors. These presentations offered participants an idea of what resources exist for Spanish-speakers in the Eugene and Springfield community. They were met with varying degrees of interest.

Facilitating a connection between Pilas families and community resources is crucial to the families' engagement and success in Eugene and Springfield. Through informal conversations with participants, I learned that several people were motivated to enroll in the Pilas program and pursue ESL due to difficulty navigating the bus system. One woman in particular, a 70-year-old Salvadoran who only completed the 2nd grade, revealed that her husband recently started a new job thus forcing her to use the bus alone. She was tired of getting lost on the bus and decided to study English. The lack of Spanish-language resources on the bus system threatened to isolate her from transportation options, so she enrolled in the Pilas program to gain better access to this resource.

Furthermore, the existence of the Pilas program in a New Destination community encourages the program to become an avenue for socializing and occupying a shared space. As with other immigrant or Diaspora communities, these families enjoy opportunities to speak their own language and celebrate their cultural traditions. The Pilas program gives these families the unique opportunity to come together, study ESL, support their children's education, socialize with people from similar backgrounds, and learn about community resources all in the safe space of a local elementary school.

Many participants were unaware of other Spanish-language community resources. Despite the existence of Centro Latino Americano since 1972, most participants did not know the wide range of free, bilingual services coordinated through this organization. However, several of the Pre-K kids excitedly talked about how much they love their Head Start school, suggesting that they have other means of academic support outside of Pilas.

The Head Start headquarters is located in the same building as Downtown Languages, thus encouraging families who utilize one organization to be aware of the other.

Spanish is also widely available throughout the Pilas program, enabling families to ask questions in their native language while studying a second language. Along with conducting the weekly family activity and community partner presentations in Spanish, a great deal of the Pilas teachers are native Spanish speakers, from countries like Mexico and Peru. Pilas coordinators encourage all volunteers to speak or be studying Spanish. To accomplish this, the coordinators recruit many volunteers from the University of Oregon due to their enrollment in an upper-level Spanish course titled “*Comunidades Bilingues*” (Bilingual Communities). The nuances of Pilas volunteers will be explored later in this chapter.

Bilingualism and Family Dynamics: “te aprendas mucho mama”

One of the most forthcoming elements of the Pilas program is bilingualism. Whether that involves parents practicing English with their children, parents speaking to their children in Spanish and children responding in English, or parents and teachers conversing in either language, bilingualism is central to this program.

As a researcher deeply involved in this program, professionally, academically, and emotionally, it was interesting to take note of when parents came to trust me and speak to me in Spanish rather than either shying away from conversation or trying to speak to me in English. This dynamic was especially interesting in the Beginning ESL classroom where I volunteered. Throughout the 10 weeks of this program, the most profound moments of trust and friendship most commonly occurred when the students were able to

teach me the Spanish counterpart for a English vocab word. Seeing myself, and the Beginning ESL teacher, as participants in the process of second language acquisition allowed for a relationship of trust and friendship to supplement the teacher-student system of ESL instruction. This relationship also acted as a microcosm for breaking down the larger community divide between English speakers and non-English speakers, which is a key component in “New Destinations.”

During participant observations, I observed cultural and linguistic brokering within families during the ESL class time. Sometimes parents would bring their young children to class with them and the children would act as little teachers: helping their parents with pronunciation, translation, and spelling in English. When the class practiced repeating new words as a group, the children would enthusiastically participate with loud, diligent voices. Their involvement seemed to give the parents more confidence and allowed for an open conversation between parent and child utilizing bilingualism as a mechanism for explanation and language learning.

While working with the Pre-K classroom in Springfield, it was interesting to ask students about their language preferences and observe their language usage when talking with their parents. When asked, a majority, 75%, of the Pre-K students said they prefer English, especially when asked to complete tasks like counting or reciting the alphabet. However, sometimes they appeared unable to differentiate between the two. For example, when giving an assessment, students have the option to complete the test in Spanish or English. Despite responding that they would prefer to complete the assessment in Spanish, the student would either begin right away in English or slowly transition to

English. Even when prompted again to select a preference they chose Spanish but kept speaking English. Moreover, older kids were more likely to choose English.

The Pre-K teacher, a native of Mexico with a Master's in Early Education and several years of teaching experience in Mexico, encouraged the mothers of Pre-K students to practice skills like the Spanish alphabet or tracing their name at home. This teacher explained that she can only do so much with their children in the limited amount of class time; therefore, a large portion of the responsibility falls on parents. This conversation was spurred after a classroom activity of singing the alphabet in English was met with a boisterous chorus, whereas the equivalent in Spanish was hesitant and highly reliant on the teacher's prompting.

An important component of bilingualism is the ability to code-switch and recognize group dynamics in language choice. This skill was encouraged in the Pre-K classroom, which was mostly conducted in Spanish and students were free to switch between the languages at their own volition. For example, one evening during free play time two groups formed organically, one group spoke English, one group spoke Spanish. As kids drifted between the groups they would switch to whatever language was already being spoken in that group. These dynamics were typical in this classroom.

The older children in the classroom, or those with older siblings, were most inclined to speak English. This leads to the question, are children maintaining their bilingual skills as they progress through the English-dominant U.S. public school system? Through the participant observations it was apparent that older kids, beginning in Kindergarten, used English more frequently than the Pre-K kids. Although older kids

were observed speaking Spanish with their parents, almost all peer-to-peer interactions with the older kids were in English. Furthermore, when the 4th-8th grade kids were asked to read a Spanish-language poem in front of the group on Mother's Day, they were embarrassed and had to rely heavily on their papers. This observation could suggest a distance from Spanish-language, or simply suggest that children in the 4th-8th grade age range are more prone to awkwardness than their younger or older counterparts.

The teenagers, interacting with each other and their families, demonstrated an interesting trend of language preference. Although they spoke fluent Spanish with their parents, it was clear that English was the language of socializing with other teenagers. It is unclear whether this choice was due to relationships formed in English-speaking school environments or simply as a way to avoid eavesdropping parents. For example, one night I overheard a few teenagers using profanity and talking about getting in trouble at school in front of their families, but they were speaking in English. It was clear that their parents did not understand what was being discussed, especially in front of younger siblings.

Program Quality

Due to the limited funding available for the Pilas program, ESL classes are divided into two levels: Beginning and Intermediate. Traditionally, the Beginning ESL class has been larger than the Intermediate. However, during this session both locations experienced much larger Intermediate classes than Beginning. The language dynamics in these classrooms were approximately 70% Spanish, 30% English in the Beginning classroom and 90% English, 10% Spanish in the Intermediate.

The balance between ESL class time and community partner presentations is difficult to maintain. In talking with parents and teachers, they explained that they feel frustrated by the frequency with which their class time is interrupted with presentations about resources and organizations in the community³.

The family activity, intended to provide families with either information about community resources or an opportunity to interact together in Spanish, actually showed mixed responses rather than uniformly positive ones. Some parents love this opportunity to learn and spend time with their children while others wish they could use this time for more ESL lessons. In talking with one Pilas teacher, who runs a K-3 grade classroom in Eugene and 4-8 grade classroom in Springfield, most of the children cite the family activity as their favorite part of the program. Following the family activity, a raffle was occasionally drawn and families won prizes like rice, flour, beans, etc. This raffle encourages consistent attendance because every time participants arrive for the Pilas program their number is put on a slip of paper and added to the raffle. Therefore, when it comes time to draw for the raffle, those who have attended the most sessions have the highest likelihood of winning.

Language Acquisition

To organize the ESL classrooms, pre and post tests are used to determine the placement of students in Beginning versus Intermediate and then in evaluating their progress throughout the Pilas program. These tests are identical in order to assess exact skills obtained during the Pilas program. However, by using identical pre and post tests,

³ These presentations are conducted in Spanish and inform parents about a wide variety of services.

teachers are outlining exactly what they plan to teach during the 10-week course. In talking with one Beginning ESL teacher, these goals were particularly difficult to achieve in this session because the class came in with lower ESL skills than typical classes.

Finally, the devotion of Pilas teachers to go above and beyond for their students was frequently observed throughout the 10-week session. The teachers expressed frustration when class time was interrupted for Spanish-language presentations, checked-in with students who returned after missing a class, and made efforts to ensure their students understood the progress they were making. Despite not covering all of the topics addressed on the pre and post tests, within the Beginning ESL class, at least one student improved by 30+ points between pre and post. This information is not required to be shared by teachers with the students; however, at the Springfield location, both ESL teachers made efforts to grade the tests in time to share the results with their students. On the final night of the Pilas program, these teachers were walking among the socializing crowd to seek out their students to share their progress and sentiments of congratulations.

The Role of Volunteers

The Pilas program relies heavily on volunteers and most of those who volunteer with Pilas commit to coming on a consistent basis as this helps build trust and friendship between the volunteers and the Pilas teachers and families. The recruitment of volunteers has changed a lot over time. The current population of volunteers come from diverse educational, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The nuances of volunteer recruitment will be discussed in more detail through the Pilas Coordinator perspective later in this chapter.

As a volunteer in the Beginning ESL classroom, this was evident when, after two weeks of working together, one student walked across the room to seek out my assistance even though there was another volunteer closer to her. Throughout the Pilas session, this student would share photos of her grandchildren, homemade *pupusas*, and even a pack of Mentos with me. This student's trust and reliance demonstrates the importance of continuity and building relationships between students and volunteers. Furthermore, it creates more opportunities for teachers, volunteers, and students to socialize, usually in Spanish, after class. This involves activities like playing with their kids or recommending the best Mexican restaurant in town. This community atmosphere is the foundation of Pilas, which makes the pursuit of ESL approachable and enjoyable for the families involved.

According to the Pilas Coordinator, volunteer coordination has changed a great deal over the past seven years. From the early days of inviting students to show up whenever, today there is much more intentionality. For example, the students from *Comunidades Bilingues* follow specific guidelines on when they can work with the Pilas program: only three students a night from the class, volunteers can only assist during weeks 3-8, and they can only volunteer on Wednesdays and Thursdays to assist with the family activity. Each department or course that supplies volunteers for Pilas has their own specific guidelines. This allows Pilas to maintain a strong network of volunteers from a variety of educational and personal backgrounds, while avoiding a degeneration of the program.

Aside from involvement in a specific course or department, a large percentage of Pilas volunteers are people “who had a positive experience internationally and are looking for a way to be a productive US citizen” (Edwards 2016, interview with author). This community continues to grow through word of mouth from previous or current volunteers who describe the inclusive and enthusiastic atmosphere at the Pilas program. Some volunteers come from households similar to those of the Pilas participants: unequal levels of bilingualism and biculturalism dividing parents and children. One volunteer, the Pilas Coordinator recalls, lamented “I wish this program would have existed for my mom and dad.” Along with highly dedicated volunteers, the Pilas Coordinator reported that all Pilas teachers also have full-time jobs and yet enthusiastically work with this program each session.

Teacher Perspective

By and large, the teachers showed dedication and insight from their unique perspective with emphasis on areas such as: attendance, attrition, variation in ability levels, and engagement. Many of these teachers have worked with Pilas for several years and witnessed the program changing over time. Along with memories of how Pilas has evolved, these teachers provided valuable insights to how the program can and should continue to grow to best serve the families participating.

One of the primary concerns for ESL teachers is attendance. They report that every session attendance begins with approximately 25-30 people in their class. As the weeks go by, attendance begins to diminish. By the end of the session, they report unsurprised, the numbers have dropped by about half. In improving the Pilas program,

the ESL teachers are interested in incorporating incentives for attendance throughout the entire term. This is currently taking place by the aforementioned raffle tickets, but the teachers are interested in expanding this incentive system. Possible motivations for declining attendance will be discussed in the following chapter.

In informal conversations with the teachers, they expressed enthusiasm for ideas such as giving awards to specific families for achievements like best attendance or most improved. Another idea was to hand out gift card incentives for attendance rather than, or in tandem with, the current system of raffling off food items. Furthermore, teachers dislike the amount of interruptions to class time and wish students would complete their homework more often.

There was also a general agreement among teachers that the ESL classes in Eugene were more advanced than those in Springfield. This trend was confirmed by participant observations. In the Eugene Beginning ESL class, English was used as the medium of instruction to explain directions or prompt students to participate. In comparison, the Springfield Beginning ESL class relied heavily on the Spanish skills of the teacher in order to conduct the class and explain the significance of new words or grammatical concepts. Through observations, by the researcher and the ESL teachers, it is clear that the students in the Eugene Beginning ESL class enrolled in the course with a higher level of skills than those in Springfield. The possible reasons for this divide will be explored in the following chapter along with ways in which this difference impacts the Pilas program as a whole.

The Pilas teachers are deeply invested in the success of their students. For example, one Pre-K teacher discussed the importance of incorporating manners into the classroom so that students know how to behave in social and academic settings. She also acted as a liaison between the classroom and children's home lives. When the mothers would pick-up their children at the end of a Pilas evening, this Pre-K teacher encouraged the mothers to practice with their children at home. There was a sense of respect and friendship among the Pilas mothers and this particular teacher, who has a Master's several years of early education teaching experience in Mexico. As a Mexican woman, the Pre-K teacher understood the unique beliefs and concerns of Mexican mothers with young school-age children.

Finally, the teachers were interested in spreading the word about Pilas and obtaining funding to support more interested families. Some teachers, like the Beginning ESL teacher in Springfield, also teach ESL at Lane Community College and through this have seen students struggle to attend classes due to family obligations. Therefore, they are aware of the simple yet transformative power of including children in the program. This encourages not only initial interest but increases the chances of retention.

Overall, the Pilas teachers identify the primary concerns of the program as: attrition and engagement. These two categories can be broken down further to include areas such as varied attendance levels in the Beginning versus Intermediate ESL classes, level appropriateness for students placed in each class, interest and involvement with the family activity, and how attrition and engagement can be improved further through conversations with participants. The Pilas teachers were extremely interested in the

results from this evaluation and always willing to offer their opinion and experiences related to this program and the community it supports.

Coordinator Perspective

The Coordinator perspective largely confirmed the teacher perspective in the concern about attendance but also offered a distinctive perspective on the role of volunteers and finances in the implementation of the Pilas Family Literacy Program.

One of the primary tasks for the Pilas Coordinator is to organize the volunteers. As previously mentioned, Downtown Languages only employs three staff members. Therefore, volunteers are essential to the success of this program. Brook revealed that beginning in the fall 2015 session, there has been a waiting list of people interested in volunteering with the Pilas program. A vast majority of these volunteers are recruited from universities in the Eugene and Springfield area.

One of the longest standing volunteer relationships is with an upper-division Spanish class titled *Comunidades Bilingues* through the University of Oregon. Upon enrollment in this class, students are required to complete 4 hours of volunteer work. Along with this requirement, the philosophy and academic focus of this course aligns perfectly with the Pilas program. According to the Department of Romance Languages website, *Comunidades Bilingues* aims to “explore the many linguistic communities where Spanish comes in contact with other languages and cultures” (Romance Languages, n.d.). Thus, the volunteers are arriving at the Pilas program with an already nuanced understanding of the complexities that exist in the realm of bilingualism.

Volunteers are also recruited from the University of Oregon School of Education Educational Foundation Program. Most of these students are in their junior or senior years and completing their practicum credits, which require 32-40 hours of volunteer experience. When there is a need for more volunteers, Pre-Education majors from this department are also recruited. Interestingly these students are acknowledged as the most enthusiastic and participatory of the college-recruited volunteers. The Department of Family and Human Services also provides volunteers for the Pilas program.

Outside of the University of Oregon, volunteers come from Northwest Christian University's English as a Second Language program. Downtown Languages is also pursuing a partnership with Pacific University for future volunteers.

The coordinator reported on the results of a survey conducted with Pilas teachers in 2010 to understand teacher opinions and preferences for dealing with volunteers. This survey asked teachers to explain their experiences with volunteers and identify best and worst practices. The teachers reported a strong dislike for drop-in, inconsistent volunteers. They would have to spend a portion of class each time training a new volunteer and their presence became more of a burden than a blessing. Upon receiving this feedback, the Pilas Coordinator prioritized long-term, scheduled volunteers. A compromise was also created where drop-in or sporadic volunteers sign a waiver stating that they are primarily an observer. If the teacher chooses to involve them in class proceedings then they may interact with students. However, the teacher also has the option to not utilize the volunteer and have them simply observe.

As with most successful community-based programs, there are hopes for future evolution and growth, which depend on securing funding. The Pilas Coordinator identified that in a perfectly funded world, the Pilas program would hire another staff member for childcare, add a third ESL level for more advanced students, implement a Pilas program in the nearby city of Cottage Grove, and hold classes within the 4J school district (the primary Eugene school district).

Finances

Pilas operates in a highly cost-effective manner. As described by Brook, the program serves an average of 500 students per year. These students are divided between the sessions in Eugene and Springfield each spring and fall. Breaking it down, based on the \$78,000 year budget to conduct the Pilas program, it costs approximately \$4 per class, per student. In comparison to the \$200,000 budget per year for the entire Downtown Languages organization, the prominence of this program is evident.

To conclude, the Pilas Coordinator also revealed that there is a *big push* among grant funding opportunities to provide “school readiness” programs. Therefore elements of the Pilas program, such as Raising a Reader⁴, shift to the forefront of grant proposals. The role of Pilas in promoting the “school readiness” of Pre-K students is evident when combined with the fact that 51% of Pilas parents did not complete high school; the median school completion is 9th grade however some students in the Springfield Beginning ESL class revealed only completing 2nd grade. Therefore, Pilas also assists

⁴ As mentioned earlier, the Raising a Reader program is a component of the larger Pilas program. Raising a Reader provides Pre-K children with a *bolsito* (small bag) of books each week to take home and read with their parents. The children return the bag of books a week later and receive a new bag. These books are a combination of English-language, Spanish-language, and bilingual.

with school readiness in helping parents identify as students themselves, and understand the most effective ways to help their children succeed.

Survey Results

The survey used for this research, as described in Chapter 5, is a combination of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. The survey was provided to participants in Spanish. A copy of the survey in Spanish and English can be found in Appendix A. The Likert scale questions address participant ideas about Eugene and Springfield as “New Destinations,” bilingualism and family dynamics, and the overall quality of the Pilas program. The open-ended questions aim to provide participants with the opportunity to supplement the information of the Likert scale questions and therefore address the same themes.

The survey results for this research are divided into two categories: location, either Eugene or Springfield, and level of ESL class, either beginning or intermediate. The number of survey responses does not reflect the usual attendance rates for a Pilas session. This is due the fact that it was most appropriate to distribute evaluative surveys near the conclusion of the Pilas program, when attendance drops below the normal rates experienced during the bulk of the program. The issue of attendance will be discussed in depth in the concluding chapters of this research.

One illustration of how attendance declines throughout the Pilas session is demonstrated in number of surveys completed: in Eugene there were nine surveys completed in the Beginning ESL class and 15 in the Intermediate class for a total of 24

surveys. In Springfield there were six surveys completed in the Beginning ESL class and 13 in the Intermediate class for a total of 19. The overall total number of surveys collected for this research is 43. A data illustration of the total participation in surveys are included in Appendix B. These numbers are not reflective of the original enrollment numbers of the Pilas program, which were closer to 30-40 adults per location.

“New Destinations”: A divide emerges between Eugene and Springfield

Immigrant communities in “New Destinations” are characterized as struggling with barriers such as lack of bilingual resources, lack of community acceptance of multiculturalism, and general isolation from the larger community based on their inability to speak English or adapt to the dominant culture. This section documents the survey results from statements aimed to uncover Pilas participant ideas about these themes in regards to Eugene and Springfield. These results indicate some difference in experience between the cities: participants in Springfield are more likely to encounter Spanish-speakers in their neighborhoods and workplaces than those in Eugene, whereas participants in Eugene were more than twice as likely as those in Springfield to feel that their community adapts to Spanish-speakers and values their language skills. Some similarities between the groups reveal that participants in neither location report feeling embarrassed or fearful about speaking Spanish or English in the community and both locations agreed that they can earn more money if they learn English.

A difference of experience between families residing in Eugene versus those residing in Springfield along the lines of reported interactions with Spanish-speakers. When presented with the statements “many people speak Spanish in my neighborhood”

and “many people speak Spanish at my workplace” Eugene-based participants were much less likely to agree than their Springfield-based counterparts. In Eugene, 60% of participants responded “very little” or “not at all” to these statements. Whereas in Springfield, 55% of participants responded “a lot” or “very much” to these statements. This divide illuminates the different lived experiences that families at each Pilas location are bringing to the table: Eugene-based families are interacting with English-speakers at a much higher rate than their Springfield-based counterparts.

Despite the major difference in frequency of interaction with Spanish-speakers, families in Eugene and Springfield reported similar ideas about language usage in their “New Destination” community. The survey presented the following statements: “I feel pressure to learn English in Eugene and Springfield,” “I am embarrassed to speak Spanish in Eugene and Springfield,” “I am embarrassed to speak English in Eugene and Springfield,” and “I am afraid to speak Spanish in Eugene and Springfield⁵.” Looking first at participant ideas about embarrassment, Springfield and Eugene responses were very similar: 70% in Eugene and 84% in Springfield reported that they do not feel embarrassed at all to speak Spanish in the community. The trend is similar when asked about speaking English: 83% of Eugene participants and 74% of Springfield participants either feel embarrassment “very little” or “not at all.”

This resulting trend remains the same when participants were presented with the statement “I am afraid to speak Spanish in Eugene and Springfield.” The responses to this

⁵ The names of both cities were included in each survey question; this decision was made because the communities of Eugene and Springfield overlap and therefore experiences may be difficult to differentiate along city-lines.

statement -- 86% in Eugene and 89% in Springfield -- noted feeling fearful either “very little” or “not at all,” thus indicating that a majority of Pilas participants do not feel discriminated against for speaking Spanish in Eugene and/or Springfield. These results shine a light on ideas about discrimination based on language use. Which, according to reports from Bussel *et al.* (2008), upwards of 30% of Latinos living in Independence and Salem have experienced. This trend was present but at a much lower rate in the results from this survey data as demonstrated by lack of embarrassment and fear over speaking Spanish.

Another difference that emerged between the two locations was in ideas about community acceptance of Spanish-speakers. These questions, aimed at uncovering the thoughts of Pilas participants about the communities in Eugene and Springfield, were framed in a more positive and less individualized manner. The ability of Eugene and Springfield to adapt to and embrace the needs of Spanish-speakers was revealed through responses to the statement: “Eugene and Springfield adapt to the needs of Spanish-speakers.” 70% of Eugene participants agreed with this statement, whereas only 30% of Springfield participants responded in the same way. The divide between Eugene and Springfield opinions maintained when presented with statements such as “Eugene and Springfield value Spanish” or “I am comfortable celebrating my cultural traditions in Eugene and Springfield.” Participants in Eugene were much more likely to believe that Spanish-language is valued in their community. Furthermore, Eugene participants feel more comfortable celebrating their cultural traditions in the community. The combination of these survey results depicts the different lived experiences of participants in these

neighboring cities, from which information can be gleaned about why these two sessions traditionally have different levels of English proficiency. These results depict an element of the human experience that interacts with the Pilas program: the way that participants interact with the Pilas program is heavily influenced by their experiences in the community. By considering this dimension, the Pilas program can design and implement a program that serves their unique populations in a holistic manner.

Pilas participants confirmed the theory that English is viewed as a method for financial mobility. In responding to the statement “if I learn English, I will earn more money,” 63% of Eugene respondents and 59% of Springfield respondents replied with either “a lot” or “very much.” These results will be discussed in Chapter 7 as they align with the idea of English as human capital.

This section has explored the survey results most directly related to the theme of New Destinations. Ultimately, based on the results of these survey questions, participants in Springfield are much more likely to encounter other Spanish-speakers in their daily lives, both at work and in their neighborhoods. Whereas, Eugene-based participants are more likely to believe that they live in a community that values and supports their linguistic and cultural heritage. Participants at both locations believe they will make more money if they learn English. By gathering data on how participants view themselves and their linguistic community within Eugene and Springfield, Downtown Languages and Pilas coordinators can ensure that this program is catered to their specific vulnerabilities or concerns. Results discussed in the following sections may also overlap with the theme of New Destinations.

Bilingualism and Family Dynamics

This section will review the survey results of statements aimed at uncovering participant ideas about bilingualism and family dynamics, including: beliefs about language, home dynamics, and education. These results demonstrate the nuances of immigrant families participating in the Pilas program in areas such as parent-child language choices, preferences about learning as a family, and ideas about raising children in the United States.

Beliefs about Language

The patterns that emerged around beliefs about language include strong agreement across both locations that it is important for their children to not only speak Spanish and English but to be bilingual. Furthermore the results revealed strong agreement that it is important to learn as a family, however significant portions of participants, especially in the Springfield location, indicated preference for practicing English with strangers. These results are documented in detail below and discussed in the following chapter.

In investigating the family dynamics surrounding bilingualism within an immigrant community, this survey used mirroring questions to uncover parental thoughts about their children's language abilities. Using simple statements, "It is important that my children speak Spanish" and "It is important that my children can read and write in Spanish" with counterparts for English language abilities, the results reveal that 74% of all participants agree "a lot" that it is important for their children to have these skills in

Spanish. When asked about English, the results were slightly higher at 79% agreeing “a lot.” In following these results, 77% of all participants agree “a lot” that “it is important for their children to be bilingual.”

Despite participant observations revealing that parents dislike the family activities, a vast majority (70%) of participants agreed “a lot” with the statements “I enjoy learning as a family” and “it is important to learn as a family.” In order to dive deeper into participant preferences for learning environments, they were also asked to respond to the following statements: “I have more confidence practicing my English with my family” and “I have more confidence practicing my English with strangers.” In both locations, Intermediate ESL participants were most likely to prefer practicing their English with family members, although the response trends were equally distributed on the spectrum.

When asked about a preference for practicing English with strangers, 50% of Springfield respondents, 37% from the Intermediate ESL class, prefer to practice with strangers. Interestingly, 11% of Beginning ESL class participants from Springfield did not respond to this question. In Eugene, responses were more evenly distributed, with approximately 60% responding either “neutral” or below. The divide between Eugene and Springfield, in which Springfield participants were more likely to report preference for practicing with strangers, revealed another difference that should be considered in the design of each individual Pilas session. This interest in practicing with strangers could be incorporated in the Pilas model, by encouraging students to practice with people they encounter in their daily lives (i.e. at the grocery store).

Home Dynamics

With this program evaluation, I intentionally prioritized the human experience as it related to the Pilas program. Thus, it was important to include information about the home lives of Pilas families. The results revealed significant percentages of parents who feel excluded when their children speak English, with those in Springfield indicating higher rates of exclusion as their Eugene counterparts. Moreover, Springfield parents were twice as likely as parents in Eugene to report that their children speak Spanish with their friends, a result which confirms earlier results that Springfield families are more likely to encounter Spanish-speakers in their daily lives. Other results illustrate themes such as positive feelings that parents and children will have a closer relationship if the parents learn English, feelings that it is more difficult to parent in the United States, and reports of children acting as translators. These results add nuances to the language learning process of these families by including their home dynamics in the family literacy program.

37% of Springfield respondents agreed either “a lot” or “very much” that they feel excluded when their children speak English among themselves or with their friends. Interestingly, the highest rate of feeling excluded belonged to parents in the Intermediate ESL class. In Eugene the percentage of parents who agreed with this statement was lower, with only 24% agreeing “a lot” or “very much.” Among the Eugene respondents, the Beginning ESL class participants reported feeling more excluded. These figures can be understood more completely when considered in tandem with participant responses to

the statement “my children speak Spanish with their friends,” which only 24% of parents in Eugene and 43% of parents in Springfield agreed “a lot” or “very much.”

In response to the statement “if I learn English I will have a closer relationship with my children,” 69% of Springfield and 51% of Eugene parents agreed either “a lot” or “very much.” Interestingly, 29% of Eugene parents responded “very little” or “not at all” to this statement, a much higher percentage than the 5% who responded with this level of disagreement in Springfield. These results demonstrate the perception of Pilas parents that their lack of English fluency is negatively affecting their relationship with their children. In evaluating the Pilas Family Literacy Program, this familial divide illustrates the unique challenges faced by immigrant families residing in a “New Destination” community.

This theme was expanded by results that only half, or 49%, of all parents disagreed with the statement, “it is more difficult to raise children in the United States.” No parents in the Beginning ESL class at either location were among those who selected the highest level of disagreement with this statement. Despite the majority of responses disagreeing with this statement, 30% of parents agreed either “a lot” or “very much” that it is more difficult to raise children in the United States. This sizable minority reveals a struggle that is unique to immigrant families and should be considered within the context of the Pilas program.

These family tensions may be explained by one theme that is integral for many immigrant families living in a “New Destination” setting: the role of children as linguistic

and cultural translators. However, in response to the statement “my children frequently translate for me,” 26% of Springfield parents agreed “a lot” whereas only 16% of Eugene parents felt the same way. Interestingly, the most common response to this statement for Springfield parents in the Beginning ESL class was to not respond at all. 16% declined to respond. The results to this statement were much lower than anticipated, especially in consideration with my participant observations of children casually translating for their parents throughout the Pilas sessions. This was due to either the parents not recognizing casual assistance with English as translation because it is such a common occurrence with their children, or they were embarrassed to report relying on their children as translators.

Finally, it was troubling to uncover Pilas parents perceptions of their children’s fluency in Spanish and how it differs between the two locations. 42% of Springfield parents and 21% of Eugene parents did not believe that their children are fluent in Spanish. When compared to earlier results, in which 74% of parents agree emphatically that it is important for their children to be fluent in Spanish, the true impact of these results can be understood. These results demonstrate the importance of bilingual academic support for Pilas children, with special attention to developing their Spanish literacy.

Education

Education is central to analyzing the interaction of these families with the Pilas Family Literacy Program: the education of the parents, children, and confidence of the parents in participating in their children’s education. The results described in this section

revealed patterns that half of parents do not regularly read to their children in Spanish or English, more Springfield parents feel isolated from their children's schools than Eugene parents, a majority believe they play an important role in their children's education, however only a little more than half of parents feel confident helping their children with their homework. This information is supplemented by the fact that 20% of parents do not feel confident reading or writing in Spanish. The inclusion of education-related opinions is vital in coordinating the Pilas program because it demonstrates participant beliefs and foundations about a central topic to this program.

Reading to children is supported by the research-driven Raising a Reader program as a key element in promoting future academic achievement. Over half of Pilas parents report that they don't read to their children in any language. However, it must also be considered that although the majority of parents agreed that they have confidence in their abilities to read and write in Spanish, 22% disagreed to varying degrees. This data is crucial in understanding the impact of Raising a Reader and the languages of the books provided in the bags: if large percentages of parents are uncomfortable reading to their children, then this reality should be addressed and incorporated into the Pilas structure.

In response to the series of statements about parents' comfort and confidence levels when engaging with their children's education over ¼ or 28%, did not respond to the statement, "my children's school has resources for Spanish-speakers." These results were quite different by location, 50% of Springfield parents whereas only 29% of Eugene parents believed that their children's school had resources for Spanish-speakers. Each city is home to two Spanish-immersion elementary schools, which suggests a certain level of

equality in available resources. In following this vein, the issue would then in the perception of Eugene families about the availability of bilingual resources, rather than their actual existence. This information could be used to inform the curriculum of the Pilas program in each location to assist parents in navigating their children's education.

In expanding on Pilas parents' interaction with their children's education, it was surprising to find that most parents, 58% felt comfortable helping my children with their homework. However, when questioned about their comfort level in making appointments or attending events at their children's school only 42% of Eugene and 46% of Springfield parents felt extremely confident with this process. As with other results from this survey, the most staggering information lies not in the majority of responses but in the presence of a sizable minority, 25% in Eugene and 10% in Springfield, that do not feel confident at all engaging with their children's schools for appointments or events. Thus, significant percentages of Pilas parents feel isolated from they children's school.

Despite feeling uncomfortable interacting with their children's school, large majority, 77%, of parents believe they have an important role in my children's education; however, it is interesting to note that among the Springfield parents, 10% disagreed with this statement, all from the Intermediate ESL class. The statement "I believe the teacher has the most important role in my children's education" was met with more varied responses, with an almost even distribution of 20% agreeing "a lot," "very much," "neutral," "very little," or declining to respond. Parents responded much more enthusiastically about their role in their children's education rather than the teacher's role.

Program Quality

Program quality can be assessed according to several different criteria, due both to the multiple goals of Pilas programming as well as the different priorities of the respondents. The survey inquired about program quality in asking participants if they believe their English improved through the program, which about half agreed with, as well as if their children's Spanish improved, which received less positive feedback. Furthermore, the survey asked parents to respond to statements about participating in the Pilas program again and feelings of improved connections to their children's education, both of which received positive responses. Program quality is a crucial component to a program evaluation, especially when discussed with the nuanced lived experiences and belief systems of program participants.

One of the most obvious ways to evaluate the Pilas Family Literacy Program was to ask participants if they feel their English and their children's Spanish has improved due to the program. However, due to the integral nature of community partner presentations throughout the program, it was also crucial to assess if parents felt more knowledgeable about community resources after completing the Pilas program. When asked about the improvement of their English skills during the Pilas program, 57% of Springfield reported improvement and 32% did not. In Eugene half of the respondent agreed that their English improved during the Pilas session, none of the participants responded "not at all" to this statement but 25% reported improving very little. Although the majority of participants reported improvement, it is important for future Pilas sessions to consider the percentages of students who did not see improvement. These perceptions may have

resulted from lack of understanding about the long-term nature of second language acquisition, which could be remedied by a conversation with participants about expectations.

Parents were also asked to weigh in on their children's linguistic and academic improvement as a result of the Pilas program. Unfortunately the most common response to the statement "my children's Spanish is improved after the Pilas program" was declining to answer, at 31%. This could be the result of the survey length and design, a fact which will be discussed in Chapter 9 of this research. Of the participants who did respond to this statement, 45% agreed that their children's Spanish improved due to the Pilas program. Finally, in asking if participants felt that the Pilas program provided them with the resources necessary to be more involved in their children's education, 56% of parents emphatically agreed. However, this data was unable to uncover exactly what resources parents valued in assisting with their children's education.

The incorporation of Spanish-language family activities and academic support for the children is a defining element of the Pilas Family Literacy Program. The centrality of Spanish is illustrated in the fact that 63% of Eugene-based and 74% of Springfield-based participants agreed that Spanish is important to their cultural identity. This information is a strong indicator that the current methodology of Pilas, which encourages bilingualism and strong academic Spanish for the children, is aligned with the personal priorities and beliefs of the parents.

A more global indicator of overall program quality is revealed by participant plans to participate in the Pilas program again and their willingness to recommend the Pilas program to other people. In combining participant responses to these statements, 88% would participate again and recommend the program to others. These results signaled a general satisfaction and desire to continue involvement with the Pilas program. It is interesting to note, however, that 16% of Eugene respondents (8% Intermediate and 8% Beginning) stated that they do not plan to participate in Pilas again. Those at the Intermediate level could have improved past the curriculum of the Pilas program, however those at the Beginning level are most likely discouraged and discontinuing their second language acquisition process.

Following the Likert Scale survey questions, there was a brief collection of open-end or short answer questions. These questions asked about all three major research themes: New Destinations, bilingualism and family dynamics, and program quality. To gain more information about Eugene and Springfield as “New Destinations”, these questions asked about locations, other than Downtown Languages, where participants felt comfortable celebrating their cultural traditions, motivation for moving to Eugene or Springfield, and other organizations in the community that offer Spanish-language resources.

In researching bilingualism and family dynamics, a few questions were included to inquire if participants spoke an indigenous language, and, if so, when they learned Spanish. Along these lines, a stark difference between the Eugene and Springfield Pilas populations is revealed: One-third of the 24 responding participants in Eugene, indicated

that they speak an indigenous language. The indigenous languages represented were Mixteco, spoken by three participants, and Zapoteco, spoken by five participants. It was common for participants to misspell these language names, as “Sapoteco” or “Misteco” in their responses. These participants indicated learning Spanish in elementary school or “in my childhood.” In Springfield, none of the participants reported speaking an indigenous language. The ramifications of this difference will be explored in the following chapter.

This section also provided participants with an opportunity to circle the most valuable English skill for them: speaking, writing, listening, or reading. Of the 43 surveys collected, 12 indicated a prioritization of speaking. The second most common response was to circle all of the skills, even though the directions asked participants to select one skill. This suggests a feeling of desperation in gaining English-Language skills. Finally, in determining participant ideas about the program quality, open-ended questions were included to uncover constructive criticism, why participants decided to enroll in the Pilas program, and how they believe the program has impacted their life in Eugene or Springfield.

The responses to these open-ended questions, which require respondents to write rather than mark on a scale, were sparse and characterized mostly by positive feedback. However, only three participants did not answer these questions at all. The low quality of information gathered from this section was not surprising because the Executive Director of Downtown Languages informed me that people are hesitant to provide written

feedback, especially criticism. Furthermore, these questions were included at the end of the survey, thus undermining the amount of attention they received.

Focus Group Results

Despite receiving confirmation from 12 families about interest in attending the post-Pilas focus group, as well as calling these families the day before the focus group as a reminder, only one family actually participated in the focus group. Therefore, the results of that conversation will be included and analyzed as an in-depth interview with one specific family rather than an open dialogue among families. The results of this conversation tended to confirm and even add nuances to the general information gained from participant observations and surveys.

In this family the mother, Maria⁶, and her kindergarten-age daughter both participated in the 2016 spring session of Pilas. Maria's husband did not participate in the Pilas session because he already speaks English fluently. However, his mother participated in a previous session of the Pilas program and subsequently encouraged his wife and daughter to enroll.

Maria, a student in the Intermediate ESL class in Eugene, has been living in the United States for twelve years. Upon revealing this length of time, she admitted that she is embarrassed that her English is not better. When questioned about why she decided to enroll in the Pilas program, she responded with one word: *independencia*. She lives in Eugene. Everyone in her neighborhood and workplace speaks English. Her workplace is unique because she goes door-to-door selling a nutrition product. Throughout our

⁶ Pseudonym

conversation, she described various aspects of her life in Oregon that are made more difficult due to her lack of fluency in English, along with provided reflections on various aspects of the Pilas program.

When asked about her favorite parts of the Pilas program, Maria responded immediately that she really enjoyed the social atmosphere and the opportunity to meet other Latinas in the community. She also talked about the patience and kindness of her Intermediate ESL teacher and how that made her feel comfortable and confident in the course. Other details she discussed as being valuable within the Pilas program were the presence of childcare and school help for her kindergarten-age daughter, as well as the fact that all of the services are provided free of cost.

In discussing the most beneficial activities used in her ESL class, Maria said she benefited the most from going to the whiteboard to write out new sentences and repeat them as a class. She identified speaking and writing as the most important components of English language for her. Maria also offered an interesting suggestion for improving the retention of topics of discussed in class: voice recording. She described difficulty with pronunciation due to the various accents of volunteers in the ESL classroom and thinks that the use of voice recording could remedy this situation. She described that it would also enhance her ability to practice at home. Another suggestion offered by Maria was to conduct some of the family activities in English. She expressed that this would be a great opportunity to practice her English listening and speaking skills in a real-world setting.

As far as the community partner presentations⁷, she enjoyed the presentation from NorthWest Youth Corps the most.. During the NorthWest Youth Corps presentation Pilas families were exposed to a variety of plants native to Oregon and given explanations about common uses for the plants or which ones to avoid, such as poison oak. She was interested in the uses and descriptions of various plants. Furthermore, she reported that there was a lot of information provided by organizations that she was unaware of, which she believes is because she does not own or watch television. She highlighted the information about the potential earthquake as particularly beneficial because she did not know anything about possible earthquakes or how to protect herself. Finally, the nutrition information was beneficial because she works for a nutrition company and enjoys learning about this topic.

Maria plans to participate in the Pilas program during the upcoming Fall 2016 session. She is interested in continuing her ESL through Pilas and at Lane Community College⁸. She would also be interested in adding a third, more advanced, class to the Pilas curriculum, if possible. Her goal is to speak and write in English in order to be more effective in her job, therefore she is enthusiastic about any opportunities for growth.

When questioned about why she believes attendance rates fluctuate and diminish throughout the term, she explained jovially that this was a wonderful question. She believes it is because many people enter the Pilas program expecting to learn *rapidísimo*

⁷ Presentations were also provided by resources such as Centro Latino Americano, Community Health Centers of Lane County, FOOD for Lane County, and local Zumba instructors

⁸ This was a question the Pilas teachers and coordinator requested that I include, because Downtown Languages is considering expanding the Pilas program to ferry advanced students into the ESL program at Lane Community College.

and when they realize this is not the case, they become discouraged and stop coming. They are not accustomed to being disciplined in studying another language. For her, she was not interested in learning English until she recently began working with English-speakers for her job. She stuck with the Pilas program because she has a distinct motivation for wanting to learn English. For others, she believes, they do not have this plan and when they are unable to understand or learn quickly, they drop out of the class. For example, her sister was also a part of the 2016 spring Pilas program but dropped out after a few weeks because she did not understand what was going on in class. Despite Maria encouraging her to ask questions, she was too embarrassed and stopped coming to class.

When asked about why Pilas is primarily attended by mothers, Maria laughed and replied that most Latina mothers are “stay-home” and therefore unable to learn English on their own through interactions in the community. Furthermore, she described, these women also have limited opportunities for socializing and view Pilas as a place to meet friends and connect with the larger Spanish-speaking community in Eugene and Springfield. Although some women are interested in seeking work outside of the home, Maria explained, their lack of language fluency is a major barrier. The men are working and since the women cannot speak English they feel isolated. Other barriers include lack of prior work experience, immigration documents, and overall autonomy in their lives as Oregonians. Maria explained, when you ask these women “what do you do?” they respond “*nada.*”

The survey portion of this research asked participants if their children translated for them, however, it failed to inquire if their children help them learn English. When asked about this, Maria replied emphatically, yes. Her kindergarten-age daughter helps her “syllable by syllable” with English. Maria says her daughter is so intent on helping her learn English that she will commonly say “look at my mouth” when teaching her mother proper pronunciation. Maria lamented this mother-child dynamic with love and pride for her daughter’s bilingualism. She boasted about her daughter’s helpfulness and fluency in English.

Near the end of the conversation, Maria’s husband added that he studied English in school but really learned the language at work and *en la calle* (in the street). He described, in a mixture of Spanish and English, the Pilas program as a wonderful support system for the Latino community and he hopes that the program can continue to grow and evolve with the changing needs of the community. Both he and Maria believe that a major benefit of the Pilas program is that it does not require any proof of immigration status.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The Pilas Family Literacy Program exists in two neighboring cities that are struggling to accommodate and embrace newly arriving Latino immigrant families. Although there have been linguistic and cultural improvements in the previous years, as determined by this research, these resources are not yet adequate in serving this unique population of Oregonians. By conducting this program evaluation in conjunction with demographic information about Oregon's transformation over the previous two decades,

the role of this program is situated within the larger context of the state. The inclusion of academic research surrounding themes such as the potential consequences facing Latino families in New Destinations, the role of bilingualism within families, and the design and implementation of family literacy program, allows this program evaluation to be considered in New Destinations communities on a national level.

The potential benefits of this research are twofold: micro and macro.

The micro benefits of this research are in evaluating the Pilas program in its current form. Through this process I assisted Downtown Languages, which is identified by the Executive Director as underfunded and understaffed, with valuable information about the strengths of their program, as well as opportunities for improvement. These insights were gleaned from the program participants themselves, thus allowing participant agency in the construction of future Pilas program. Furthermore, by providing Downtown Languages with qualitative and quantitative documentation about the strengths of their program, I can help in future grant applications or other fundraising endeavors. There are no direct benefits to research participants. However, indirectly this research could benefit them by improving the quality of the Pilas program by incorporating their experiences and opinions.

The macro benefits of this research result from viewing the Pilas program as a case study within the larger academic and professional conversation about ESL training across the United States. This case study is especially valuable right now because of increasing literature and research into the experiences of immigrants, specifically Latino immigrants, in non-traditional destinations; this literature is commonly categorized as

“New Destinations” research. Therefore, this research adds another dimension to the growing field of “New Destinations” research by providing a case study of a family-oriented ESL program in Oregon.

The combination of participant observations, surveys, and family interview provide a comprehensive portrait of the strengths and weaknesses of Pilas, and serve as the foundation for a discussion of issues as well as the basis for recommendations. This discussion is divided into three categories: New Destinations, Bilingualism and Family Dynamics, and Program Quality. The results will be considered within the current academic conversation surrounding these themes in order to determine the significance of this evaluation for other family-oriented literacy programs. Following this discussion, a series of recommendations will be presented for the Pilas Family Literacy Program, as well as programs operating in New Destinations communities worldwide.

New Destinations

The New Destinations-related results from this program evaluation revealed a difference in lived experience between Latino immigrant families in Springfield and those in Eugene. As discussed in Chapter 2, accessibility of bilingual resources is one of the most important lenses with which to consider the unique experience of New Destination communities. Despite being geographic neighbors, Springfield and Eugene present Latino immigrant families with drastically different levels of institutional bilingualism as well as populations of Spanish-speakers.

The difference between “New Destinations” and traditional destinations is defined along the lines of availability of bilingual resources, whether in the nonprofit sector or in city institutions, and in the overall presence of multicultural, immigrant populations within a given city. A city like Los Angeles, a traditional immigrant destination for Latinos, has a wide variety of bilingual businesses, resources, and advocates, as well as a large population of Spanish speakers. This allows new immigrants to easily adapt and integrate into the community. By contrast, “New Destinations” communities may possess substantial populations of immigrants, but their presence has not been able to influence the availability of bilingual or bicultural resources. In these communities, immigrants reside outside of traditional institutions and are characterized as feeling unsupported and isolated from the mainstream community. Therefore, although Springfield respondents report frequent interactions with Spanish-speakers in their neighborhoods and workplaces, this does not mean they feel included in the wider community. Rather, it could be reflective of more intense fracturing in Springfield, where small populations of Latino immigrants purposefully live and work in the same areas to shield themselves from the wider, English-dominant community.

The first major difference that emerged between these neighboring communities was the participants’ perception that *many* people speak Spanish in their neighborhood or workplace in Springfield but not in Eugene. According to the survey data, the majority of participants in Eugene strongly disagreed with this statement, whereas the majority of Springfield-based participants strongly agreed. This simple detail reveals a great deal about the different lived experiences of these two groups. Especially when combined with

the divide in responding to the statement “Eugene and Springfield adapt to the needs of Spanish-speakers” where 70% of Eugene and only 30% of Springfield participants agreed.

Intuitively it might seem that living in a neighborhood with a large population of Spanish-speakers would lead to a stronger sense of community for Latino immigrant families. However, when combined with the low percentage of Springfield participants who believe their city is linguistically accommodating, a different reality emerges. This reality is common within New Destinations and one of the major barriers to civic and social engagement that Pitas aims to address: isolation from the English speakers in the community. Looking specifically at the Springfield population, which is more blue-collar than its neighbor, it appears that these Latino immigrant families are residing in very intentional areas that allow them to interact frequently with other Spanish-speakers. This linguistic and cultural segregation could also be a contributing factor to the lower level of English skills that Springfield parents possess in comparison with their Eugene counterparts.

Another divide emerged in the presence of Indigenous language speakers in Eugene but not in Springfield: eight of 24 Eugene participants revealed speaking an Indigenous language as their first language, in comparison to none of the Springfield participants. I propose that the explanation for the more advanced nature of the Eugene ESL classes is because a significant portion of the students have experience as a second-language learner. Furthermore, the students in Eugene do not report frequently interacting with Spanish-speakers in their neighborhood or workplace, and therefore must use

English in their daily lives, whereas Springfield families report more opportunities to speak Spanish.

Despite differences in Eugene and Springfield demographics, Eugene and Springfield respondents agreed about a variety of realities in their New Destinations communities. The trends at both locations revealed that only 42-46% of Pitas parents feel confident making appointments or attending events at their children's schools. When probed further about the availability of Spanish-language resources at their children's schools, only 50% of Springfield and 29% of Eugene parents agreed. These results reveal a divide between children, who attend school in English all day, and their parents, who do not feel comfortable interacting with the schools in their native language.

Finally, the reality of life in a New Destination for Latino families gains another dimension through the results that 42% of parents do not believe that their children are fluent in Spanish. Furthermore, only 24% of parents in Eugene and 43% in Springfield believe that their children frequently speak Spanish with their friends.

In addressing the gap in research, outlined in Chapter 4, the data collected in this thesis suggests that the behavioral outcomes for immigrants residing in New Destinations are threatened by isolation along linguistic and cultural lines. This isolation seeps into various arenas like educational institutions, opportunities for employment, general participation in the community, and relationships between parents and their children. This trend is explored further in the following section.

Despite the centrality of New Destinations literature in this research, after concluding this project as well as subsequent nonprofit work with the Latino immigrant

community, the categorization of Eugene and Springfield as New Destinations should be called into question. Although there are several aspects that support this categorization, such as the recent arrival of many Latino immigrant families, the lack of widespread, institutional Spanish-language resources, and a general ignorance and ambivalence towards this growing community, there are many people and organizations working to bring the needs of this community to light.

Bilingualism and Family Dynamics

The discussion of how ideas about bilingualism impact family dynamics is considered with the previous exploration of New Destinations. Themes like exclusion and mixed levels of acculturation are combined with data suggesting a preference for learning as a family and a belief that learning English will allow parents to have a closer relationship with their children.

My results support the contention that language brokering dynamics between children and their parents should be considered as a family, rather than an individual process (Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2009), and in particular reveal a certain tendency among parents to deny the extent to which children are actually translating for them. While this research suggests negative effects of children translating for their parents (Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2009), other scholars have explored the potential impact of this phenomenon on children's academic success and found a positive correlation (Dorner, Orellana, Li-Grining 2007). Although most Pitas parents disagreed on the survey that their children frequently translate for them, information collected during participant observations and

the focus group suggest otherwise. This contradiction could be the result of embarrassment for relying on their children as translators, or rather indicative that children as translators has become so normal that the parents do not notice anymore.

There is a significant portion of Pimas families who fall into the high language brokering category. According to the survey, only 26% of Springfield and 16% of Eugene parents agree that their children frequently translate for them. Therefore, 1/4 of Springfield and slightly less than 1/5 of Eugene families exist in a “high language brokering context,” which as Martinez Jr. *et al.* 2009 suggested, could present negative ramifications for the socioemotional health, parenting effectiveness, and academic functioning of these families. However, the evidence from this research aligns more closely with the contradictory findings of Dorner, Orellana, Li-Grining (2007), which argued children who frequently act as translators could also reap academic benefits. These children, through participant observations, appeared to be proud of their ability to help their parents. Furthermore they were able to complete grade-appropriate tasks, like math homework, in both English and Spanish; thus demonstrating the continuity of their bilingualism over the course of their education.

One possibility for the apparent under-reporting of children translating for parents is that the reliance on children’s bilingualism is not considered as translation. Although Maria did not describe instances where her daughter translates for her, she did talk lovingly about her dedication to helping her mother learn English. This relationship, where mother and daughter knowingly share in the language learning process, is

recognition of their different levels of bilingualism and a commitment to work together. This is a positive interpretation of unequal bilingualism between parent and child.

However, there is evidence that varying bilingualism causes familial tension among Pilas participants, particularly in children using their English proficiency to undermine their parents' authority. This dynamic was especially apparent among teenagers and discussed in the participant observations when teenagers were overheard cursing and talking about getting in trouble at school right next to their unsuspecting parents. These results align with evidence from Menjivar (2002), which outlines how parents believe that their children use their fluency in English to “manifest their elevated status, which comes with knowledge of English and a better grasp of the new socio-cultural milieu” (345). The survey results support the claim by Menjivar (2002) that lack of English proficiency can undermine parent-child relationships.

Survey results demonstrate that parents are aware, either consciously or subconsciously, that unequal bilingualism impacts their relationship with their children. When 69% and 51% of Springfield and Eugene parents, respectively, respond that they believe they can have closer relationships with children if they learn English, they emphasize the social and cultural capital inherent in learning English. This trend is continued in discussing the difficulty of parenting in the United States. The role of varying bilingualism on family dynamics is also evident in the results that a significant portion, almost 1/3, of Pilas parents believe it is more difficult to raise children in the United States. While they may be referring to other kinds of difficulties, it is possible that language is one of those. The combination of these results provide insight into the

complex dynamics that these families navigate as parents and children exist in parallel linguistic and cultural realities.

Program Quality

In assessing participant opinions about English-Language improvement through the Pilas program, the results revealed lower rates of agreement than anticipated: 57% and 50% in Springfield and Eugene, respectively. Therefore, approximately half of Pilas participants could not confidently report that their English improved through this 10-week session. This trend persisted when questioned about the improvement of children's Spanish through the Pilas program, with only 45% of all parents agreeing. In combination with participant observations, which suggest a deep commitment to language learning among the parents and overall enthusiasm among the children, these results could be reflective of other factors.

I suggest that the lower-than-expected satisfaction rate of parents in the Pilas program is a product of two possible factors: not understanding the long-term nature of second language acquisition or lack of specific motivation for enrolling in the program. This conclusion is supported by the interview with Maria, who reported that participants stop coming to the program because they feel discouraged with their slow progress or are unable to articulate exactly why they are studying English. Furthermore, when provided with a confidential opportunity to offer critiques or suggestions for the Pilas program, a vast majority of students still reported complete satisfaction and even gratitude for the

current Pilas design. Recommendations for this obstacle to success will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

RECOMMENDATIONS

My findings and analysis provide the basis for a number of recommendation for how to expand upon successful components of the program, pursue opportunities for growth, and incorporate the perspectives of participants in the design of this program. These recommendations will first focus on the Pilas program in expanding the successes, addressing opportunities for improvement, and incorporating participant perspectives. Then the recommendations will expand in application to similar family literacy programs in “New Destinations” across the United States.

Expand on Successes

In its current form the Pilas program is successful in providing a safe, social space for Latino immigrant families to come together and learn. This program manages to build a social community in an otherwise isolating New Destinations area. By maintaining, and even being more intentional about the social nature of this program, Pilas could expand further on this success, which all three methodologies highlight as important to current participants. In considering the expansion of current successes, I recommend:

- Language partners in the ESL classrooms
- Expansion of pre and post tests to assist in contextualization
- Asking participants to identify the skill most valuable to them and catering the class to focus more on this skill (i.e. reading, writing, speaking)
- Addition of a third, more advanced ESL level

Language partners can be utilized to address a wide variety of problems that may be festering in individual students throughout the Pilas program: discouragement, embarrassment, lack of transportation, confusion, and isolation. These partners would exchange contact information at the beginning of the Pilas session and hold each other accountable for attendance, homework completion, and general support during the difficult language-learning process. These partners would allow people to get to know each other on a deeper level in combination with the organically social Pilas program.

Lack of context was highlighted by Maria, in our interview, as a motivator for poor attendance through the Pilas session. I recommend expanding on the usage of pre and post tests, which currently track participant levels upon entry and evaluate their

improvement following the Pilas program, to provide a larger context for students upon beginning the ESL course. By using the pre test to open a conversation with students about what they should expect to cover of the next 10 weeks, overall confusion or discouragement could be avoided.

Designing the class to cater specifically to student interests could also increase engagement and attendance. Through the opening paperwork or the pre test, I recommend that Downtown Languages inquire about which language skill students find most valuable: speaking, writing, reading, listening. Although some students may select all of the skills, suggesting their desperation to learn any English skills, these results could alter the design of Pilas ESL coursework. This method would allow Pilas to provide students with the skills they deem most valuable, thus increasing their satisfaction with the program.

Finally, as discussed as one of the hopes for the Pilas program, I recommend that a third, more advanced ESL class would be beneficial for participants. As revealed by the Pilas Coordinator, many students have participated in Pilas for years and therefore their English skills are too advanced for the Intermediate level. The necessity for this class could be argued using the data from pre- and post-tests, as well as including the length of time that certain students have continued to enroll and participate in the Pilas program. As funding is discussed as the primary obstacle for this third level of ESL, one recommendation would be to work with connections at Northwest Christian University to have a student from the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Practicum course internship as an Advanced ESL teacher. Another option would be to create this

internship through the Second Language Acquisition and Training (SLAT) program at the University of Oregon, which has a practicum requirement as well. This would provide the aspiring teacher with valuable experience and open more opportunities for ESL proficiency among the Pilas families.

Pursue Opportunities for Improvement

The Pilas program, in order to evolve, must embrace opportunities for improvement and overcome current or potential barriers. To facilitate this, I recommend:

- Decrease the amount of class time interruptions by either prioritizing community partner presentations based on participant opinions or incorporating these presentations, in English, into class time activities
- Connect the Raising a Reader program with the ESL class structure to promote family-centered learning at home
- Be upfront about the long-term nature of second language acquisition and check-in with students frequently to prevent discouragement and dropping-out

One of the most commonly discussed opportunities for improvement is the level of class time interruptions that occur due to community partner presentations. Although this information is very valuable in connecting families to resources available throughout the community, it risks compromising the overall ESL engagement and retention. I recommend addressing this balance by inviting a large group of community partners attend Pilas in the first two weeks to host a fair. This would involve a collection of community partner tables that advertise their resources to the Pilas families. Families

would be given a survey upon attending this fair, in which they would indicate the community partners they are most interested in learning more about. Through this Pilas families are directly involved in choosing what resources they learn about, and the amount of presentations can be contained to the weekly family activity, rather than replacing class time. This recommendation could also be expanded to include having community partners present during the ESL class time, in English, with a focus on providing students with vocabulary and phrases for navigating community resources.

The Raising a Reader program also holds potential in increasing language and literacy engagement with children and parents pursuing ESL. I recommend opening a dialogue between the Pre-K teachers and the parents with children enrolled in Raising a Reader to encourage parents to use these books as a resource for their own education. By reminding parents that practicing with children's books is a valuable way to continue learning English, as well as spend quality time with their children, participation in Raising a Reader could expand to benefit the ESL classes along with the school readiness of Pre-K students. This recommendation could replace the vacancy of a Raising a Reader orientation.

As determined by the Pilas teachers, a crucial area for improvement is retention and attendance. One recommendation to improve attendance rates, which is supported by the interview with one Intermediate ESL student, is to be more transparent about the process of language learning and check-in on student comfort with material and context of lessons throughout the session. As Maria revealed in the interview, participants may feel embarrassed to ask questions or disappointed in the slow improvements that come

with second-language acquisition. The Pilas program could address these concerns and use the dialogue between teachers and their students to prevent participants from losing hope and dropping out of the classes. In discussing the second language acquisition process, teachers should prepare students for feelings of progress to wax and wane throughout the term. To address students feeling a lack of progress, homework assignments, such as field exercises could be implemented. This assignments would ask students to interact with English-speakers in their community to ask a certain question, as it aligns with the coursework, and record the subsequent conversation. Not only could this boost student confidence in their improving ability, but also promote class engagement, homework completion, and interaction in the community.

Incorporate perspectives

The Pilas Family Literacy Program, over the 10-week session, promotes qualities of trust and openness between coordinators, teachers, volunteers, and students. However, in order to utilize these relationships, the program must intentionally seek out student perspectives in continuing to shape the design and goals of this program. To incorporate participant perspectives, I recommend:

- Performing informal evaluations on an ongoing basis rather than one large evaluation at the conclusion of the session
- Encouraging students to bring their knowledge and interests into the classroom
- Implement a focus group at the conclusion of each session in the final week to allow all of the participants to discuss and evaluate the program

It is important to incorporate the participant perspectives and cultural identities on an ongoing basis rather than just through sporadic evaluations into the design and implementation of the Pilas Family Literacy Program. This recommendation is supported by Jimenez (2000), in that Latino students are more likely to retain language-related information if it is “viewed as supportive of their Latina/o identity” (995). This can be incorporated into the Pilas program by allowing students to involve their personal or cultural interests in their language learning process. For example, in the Intermediate ESL class, a potential homework assignment could be to translate their favorite recipe, song, poem, etc. The current materials used in class are excerpts from textbooks or individual worksheets. Through this, students can share about themselves in English and feel a deeper connection to the language. This is also an opportunity for students to gain real-life skills in English at an early stage of their bilingualism.

Due to the inclination of students to avoid articulating criticisms in written form, I recommend that Downtown Languages prioritize hosting a post-Pilas focus group to gather perspectives. The focus group format would prevent the lack of information provided through written surveys, as the current system exists, and allow students to decompress and evaluate their experience with each other. Through events like a post-Pilas focus group, valuable information and recommendations can come to light. One example of this was in the post-Pilas interview for this research, which revealed the suggestion of using voice recorders to support continued practice and language retention outside of the classroom.

Recommendations for “New Destinations”

The significance of these results lies in the ability to dissect the activities of the Pilas program, as well as to give a narrative to the experience of two unique groups of Latino immigrant families in Oregon. While this evaluation is focused on one specific program, its results can be applied to New Destinations communities across the United States. These recommendations are:

- Prioritize a social atmosphere, but encourage English usage
- Incorporate cultural events and holidays
- Be overt about the second-language acquisition process
- Debrief with participants at the conclusion of each session

In conducting a family literacy program for Latino immigrant families in New Destinations, this research has revealed that prioritizing a social atmosphere can build confidence among program participants, expand their sense of community, and provide an opportunity to speak their language with people from similar backgrounds. The combination of these benefits remedies the common feelings of isolation and exclusion associated with Latino immigrants in New Destinations and encourages families to support one another. This can be expanded from the current Pilas model, which hosts family activities in Spanish, to include family activities in English. By conducting these activities in English, programs encourage participants to socialize, ask questions, learn about community resources, and complete an activity with their family all in English.

This is also a method for encouraging participants to practice speaking without fears of making mistakes.

The sense of community, which is important in Latino immigrant communities, extends to celebrating cultural events and holidays. Throughout the Pilas program there were celebrations for Dia de los Ninos (Children's Day) and Mother's Day, both of which fell during the 10 week session. On these evenings there was a potluck and a looser schedule that allowed for organic socializing and the exchanging of cards within families. As was observed in the Beginning ESL class in Springfield, parents loved learning how to say phrases like "I love you" and "enjoy your childhood" and wrote them on cards for their children on Dia de los Ninos. This connection crossed linguistic lines but within the familiar frame of a cultural celebration. Thus the activity was meaningful for the entire family.

Another important recommendation from this research, is the need for explicit information about the second language acquisition process. This openness is crucial in both informing students that second-language acquisition is a long-term commitment, unlike what they observed with their children picking it up quickly at school, and having an open dialogue with participants about what they want and need to learn in order to be effective citizens in the community. Transparency in these areas prevents isolation within the ESL class and hesitancy to continue because a student feels personally incapable of learning ESL. The transparency of topics also promotes efficiency of the program by focusing on the information and skills that participants value most in their daily lives.

Finally, I recommend hosting a focus group or debrief conversation with participants following the conclusion of each ten-week family literacy program. This conversation can identify specific strengths, weaknesses, miscommunications, and sentiments about the larger community, which can then be incorporated into the program. By maintaining an open conversation with program participants, they have agency in the program design and the program is able to meet their specific needs.

CHAPTER IX

EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS

This research process revealed pivotal issues in designing and conducting a program evaluation: trust and openness, language skills, a need for communication between the evaluator and sponsoring organization, and meta-evaluation of the actual program evaluation. These themes are capable of either supporting or deteriorating the conclusions produced by the evaluation, and should thus be considered in line with the results. The medium of program evaluation encourages recognition and analysis of the

human experience in order to represent a holistic view of the program. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the human elements of this evaluation process and conclude with reflections on how these factors contributed to the evaluation outcomes in either positive or negative ways.

As a non-Latino researcher, I began this program evaluation with uncertainty and hints of a divide between myself and the program participants. However, as the weeks passed and my presence was proven to be consistent and respectful, participants began to trust and even befriend me. The performance of this evaluation was impacted by a variety of factors including its existence within a New Destination and the communications with Pilas staff.

As a researcher working with a program and an immigrant population in a New Destination, Spanish-language skills were crucial in forming relationships. Due to the fact that many parents are developing their bilingualism, our conversations and relationships were built around Spanish. An interesting component of this was that as a researcher I began this program evaluation with less than fluent Spanish. Through the course of these 10 weeks, my Spanish improved by practicing with Pilas families. The recognition of myself as a language learner assisted in relating with program participants on a linguistic level. When they witnessed me struggle to conjugate verbs or mispronounce words, it humanized the process of second-language acquisition. Although I would have preferred to have a more in-depth fluency in Spanish at the onset of the Pilas program, I believe my developing bilingualism allowed me to be vulnerable with the families and in turn gain their trust.

Furthermore, as an employee for another local nonprofit, Centro Latino Americano, my interactions with Pilas families were also a way to inform them of other valuable community resources. By approaching these families from a position of friendship and trust, they were willing to embrace my advice on how to interact with the larger community and utilize resources outside Pilas and Downtown Languages. Despite this positive side effect of the socialization between myself and the Pilas families, it was difficult at times for me to separate these interactions from my larger research questions. This was a barrier to consistent and comprehensive field notes because I would forget my role as a program evaluator in lieu of befriending Pilas families.

In conducting this program evaluation, one of the main positives was the level of communication and support I received from the staff of Downtown Languages and the Pilas teachers. In determining the need for assessment of this program, I was able to meet several times with the Executive Director of Downtown Languages to discuss how Pilas has changed over time and the role this program plays in the larger mission of the organization. These meetings established the legitimacy of this program evaluation and paved the way for open communication and transparency between myself, as a program evaluator, and the organization. Also, the teachers and coordinator of Pilas were welcoming and enthusiastic about providing insight or giving me access to Pilas classrooms in support of this evaluation. Their acknowledgment of how important it was to consider the participants' perspectives and lived experiences was inspiring and motivating throughout this entire process.

Through this evaluation, it was apparent that all of Downtown Languages is intricately involved in the evolution of the Pilas program. Throughout the spring 2016 session, board members from the organization attended Pilas events. The board members mingled with volunteers to express their gratitude and observed classes. In informal conversation with one board member, the hopes and aspirations for the Pilas program were discussed passionately about how this program will progress in the coming years. The Pilas teachers also meet with the Executive Director during the 10-week session to discuss progress, concerns, and opportunities for expansion. One prominent topic from spring 2016 was how to bridge the higher level students into the ESL program at Lane Community College.

One negative from this program evaluation experience was the poor attendance for the post-Pilas focus group. Despite having families volunteer interest and provide their contact information, only one family attended the focus group. This downfall was the fault of the design. In order to encourage focus group attendance, the event should have been held in direct relation with a Pilas evening. By hosting the event on a weekend after the conclusion of the program, most families either forgot about the event or did not arrange adequate transportation to attend. This mistake could be remedied in future sessions by dedicating one of the final Pilas evening to an open conversation about the quality of the program.

Evaluating the Evaluation

The results from the program evaluation are valuable in that they demonstrate the nuances of the target population for the Pilas and other similar family literacy programs

across “New Destinations.” This information is important in the composition of grants and future evolution of the family literacy program. However, certain factors had a negative impact on the amount of constructive criticism provided by program participants, thus decreasing the insights into how participants believe this program can be improved. These factors include: the failure to respond rate, especially with the focus group, an inadequacy of the surveys to gather complete information, and an inability to gain parent perspectives at specific grade levels to identify different struggles at each level. Recommendations for future evaluations can be informed with a discussion of these shortcomings.

Failure to respond, either to surveys or in attending the focus group, was a downfall for this program evaluation. I believe this negative aspect was the result of the human element in this program. Due to logistics of hosting a focus group, the event was organized at a separate location in the week following the conclusion of the spring 2016 Pilas session. Although participants were provided with event information upon distribution of the Pilas survey, the gap of time between the original invitation and the occurrence of the actual event seemed to negate any interest in participating. When calling participants the day before the focus group as a reminder, many were heard speaking over screaming kids and were apologetically unable to attend. Acknowledgement that program participants lead busy lives is crucial for ensuring participation in important events like focus groups. To remedy this issue, the focus group should have been incorporated into the existing infrastructure of the Pilas program during the last week of the session.

The failure to respond to certain survey questions, I believe, was the result of inadequate surveys. In order to make the most of a research opportunity, the surveys were designed with a wide range of question topics and 57 either Likert or open-ended questions. The length of this survey injured the quality of participant responses. The most commonly skipped question was #36 “my children’s Spanish has improved through the Pilas program,” which was skipped by 30% of participants. Information about percentage of questions skipped can be found in Appendix C in the “0” response column. The prevalence of skipping this question could be explained by its location near the end of a lengthy survey. However, it could also be indicative of a larger belief among parents that this program is not in place to improve their children’s Spanish, therefore deeming the question as inapplicable.

Finally, a shortcoming of this program evaluation was in its inability to gain specific information from parents based on the age and grade of their children. This information would be valuable in determining the change over time of parent-child dynamics as they relate to linguistic and cultural shifts. I recommend consideration of this in future evaluations either of this program or other family literacy programs in “New Destinations.”

This ethnographic evaluation aimed to highlight the nuances within the categorically similar populations participating in the Pilas program. Although these populations are overtly different in location, Springfield or Eugene, and ESL level, Beginning or Intermediate, this research was designed to amplify the awareness of Downtown Languages to less obvious nuances. By focusing on themes such as “New

Destinations,” beliefs about bilingualism, and family dynamics, this research revealed that a family literacy program does not exist independently from the lives of its participants. Rather, the family literacy program interacts with the intricate lives and believes of participants; thus through consideration for these nuances, family literacy programs can increase engagement, attendance, and confidence of their families and therefore implement a more holistically effective program.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS, SPANISH

	Mucho	Bastante	Neutral	Un Poco	Nada/Nunca
1. Siento presión a aprender inglés en Eugene y Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
2. Eugene y Springfield se adaptan a los hispanohablantes	1	2	3	4	5
3. Eugene y Springfield valoran el idioma de español	1	2	3	4	5
4. Estoy cómodo/a celebrando mis					

tradiciones culturales en Eugene y Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
5. Tengo miedo de hablar español en Eugene y Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
6. Estoy avergonzado/a de hablar español en Eugene y Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
7. Estoy avergonzado/a de hablar inglés en Eugene y Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
8. Eugene y Springfield tienen comunidades con culturas diferentes	1	2	3	4	5
9. El español es muy importante para mi identidad cultural	1	2	3	4	5
10. Si aprendo inglés, ganaré más ingresos	1	2	3	4	5
11. Es importante que mis hijos hablen español	1	2	3	4	5
12. Es importante que mis hijos hablen inglés	1	2	3	4	5
13. Es importante que mis hijos lean y escriban en español	1	2	3	4	5
14. Es importante que mis hijos lean y escriban en inglés	1	2	3	4	5
15. Es importante que mis hijos sean bilingües	1	2	3	4	5
16. Tengo confianza en mis habilidades de leer y escribir en español	1	2	3	4	5
17. Disfruto aprender inglés con mi familia	1	2	3	4	5
18. Mis hijos prefieren hablar inglés	1	2	3	4	5
19. Mis hijos prefieren hablar español	1	2	3	4	5
20. Yo animo mis hijos a que hablen inglés en casa	1	2	3	4	5
21. Yo animo mis hijos a que hablen español en casa	1	2	3	4	5
22. Le leo a mis hijos en inglés frecuentemente	1	2	3	4	5
23. Le leo a mis hijos en español frecuentemente	1	2	3	4	5
24. Mis hijos hablan español con fluidez	1	2	3	4	5
25. Mis hijos hablan español con sus amigos	1	2	3	4	5
26. Me siento excluido/a cuando mis hijos hablan inglés entre ellos o con sus amigos	1	2	3	4	5
27. Mis hijos traducen frecuentemente para mí	1	2	3	4	5
28. Tengo más confianza a practicar inglés con mi familia	1	2	3	4	5
29. Tengo más confianza a practicar inglés con desconocidos	1	2	3	4	5

30. Es más difícil criar a hijos en los Estados Unidos	1	2	3	4	5
31. Si aprendo inglés, puedo tener una relación más cercana con mis hijos	1	2	3	4	5
32. Es importante aprender como una familia	1	2	3	4	5
33. Mucha gente habla español en mi barrio	1	2	3	4	5
34. Mucha gente habla español en mi trabajo	1	2	3	4	5
35. Mi inglés es mejor después de Pilas	1	2	3	4	5
36. El español de mis hijos es mejor después de Pilas	1	2	3	4	5
37. Creo que tengo un papel importante en la aprendizaje de mis hijos	1	2	3	4	5
38. La maestra tiene el papel más importante en la aprendizaje de mis hijos	1	2	3	4	5
39. Me siento cómodo/a ayudándole a mis hijos con su tarea	1	2	3	4	5
40. Me siento cómodo/a sacando citas y asistiendo eventos con la escuela de mis hijos	1	2	3	4	5
41. Pilas me provee con los recursos para estar más conectado/a con la aprendizaje de mis hijos	1	2	3	4	5
42. La escuela de mis hijos tiene recursos para los hispanohablantes	1	2	3	4	5
43. Tengo previsto participar en Pilas una otra vez	1	2	3	4	5
44. Le recomiendo el programa de Pilas a otras	1	2	3	4	5
45. ¿Usted tiene interés en una entrevista del grupo sobre el programa de Pilas?					

La entrevista estará a Science Factory en Eugene en el 5 de junio (domingo) entre 2-4 por la tarde. Sus niños pueden disfrutar el museo, por gratis, mientras usted participa en la entrevista del grupo.

Si tiene interés, por favor escribe su nombre, número de teléfono, y cuántos hijos vendrán:

Nombre: _____

Numero de Telefono: _____

¿Cuántos hijos vendrán? _____

¿Cuáles son los recursos en españoles más prominentes en Eugene y Springfield _____

¿Dónde usted celebra sus tradiciones culturales en Eugene y Springfield? _____

¿Por qué usted escogió vivir en Eugene o Springfield? _____

¿Por qué usted escogió solicitar y completar el programa de Pilas? _____

¿Cuáles son los componentes más útiles del programa de Pilas? _____

¿Y los más inútiles? _____

¿De qué forma su vida ha sido afectada por el programa de Pilas en Eugene y Springfield? _____

Por favor, circule la habilidad más importante que usted quiere obtener al aprender inglés:

Leer

Escribir

Escuchar

Hablar

¿Usted habla una lengua indígena? _____ ¿Cual lengua? _____

¿Cuándo usted aprendió español? _____

¿Usted tiene otras cosas que quiere decir sobre el programa de Pilas o la comunidad en Eugene y Springfield? Por favor, explique aquí: _____

SURVEY QUESTIONS, ENGLISH

A lot Very much Neutral Very little Not at all

	A lot	Very much	Neutral	Very little	Not at all
1. I feel pressure to learn English in Eugene and Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
2. Eugene and Springfield adapt to Spanish-speakers	1	2	3	4	5
3. Eugene and Springfield value Spanish language	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am comfortable celebrating my cultural traditions in Eugene and Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am afraid to speak Spanish in					

Eugene and Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am embarrassed to speak Spanish in Eugene and Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am embarrassed to speak English in Eugene and Springfield	1	2	3	4	5
8. Eugene y Springfield have multicultural communities	1	2	3	4	5
9. Spanish language is important to my cultural identity	1	2	3	4	5
10. If I learn English I can earn more money	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is important that my children speak Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
12. It is important that my children speak English	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is important that my children can read and write in Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
14. It is important that my children can read and write in English	1	2	3	4	5
15. It is important that my children are bilingual	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am confident in my abilities to read and write in Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
17. I enjoy learning English as a family	1	2	3	4	5
18. My children prefer to speak English	1	2	3	4	5
19. My children prefer to speak Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
20. I encourage my children to speak English at home	1	2	3	4	5
21. I encourage my children to speak Spanish at home	1	2	3	4	5
22. I read to my children in English frequently	1	2	3	4	5
23. I read to my children in Spanish frequently	1	2	3	4	5
24. My children are fluent in Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
25. My children speak Spanish with their friends	1	2	3	4	5
26. I feel excluded when my children speak English with each other or their friends	1	2	3	4	5
27. My children translate for me frequently	1	2	3	4	5
28. I am more confident practicing English with my family	1	2	3	4	5
29. I am more confident practicing English with strangers	1	2	3	4	5

30. It is more difficult to raise children in the United States	1	2	3	4	5
31. If I learn English I will be closer with my children	1	2	3	4	5
32. It is important to learn as a family	1	2	3	4	5
33. A lot of people speak Spanish in my neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
34. A lot of people speak Spanish at my job	1	2	3	4	5
35. My English has improved through the Pilas program	1	2	3	4	5
36. My children's Spanish has improved through the Pilas program	1	2	3	4	5
37. I believe I have an important role in my children's education	1	2	3	4	5
38. The teacher has the most important role in my children's education	1	2	3	4	5
39. I feel comfortable helping my children with their homework	1	2	3	4	5
40. I feel comfortable setting meetings and attending events at my children's school	1	2	3	4	5
41. Pilas provides me with the resources to be more involved in my children's education	1	2	3	4	5
42. My children's school has resources for Spanish-speakers	1	2	3	4	5
43. I plan to participate in the Pilas program again	1	2	3	4	5
44. I recommend the Pilas program to other people	1	2	3	4	5
45. Are you interested in participating in a group interview about the Pilas program?					

The interview will be at the Eugene Science Factory on Sunday June 5th from 2-4 pm. Your children can enjoy the museum for free, while you participate in the interview. If you are interested, please write your name, phone number, and how many children will attend:

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Children: _____

What are the most prominent Spanish-language resources in Eugene and Springfield? _____

Where do you celebrate your cultural traditions in Eugene and Springfield? _____

Why did you decide to move to Eugene or Springfield? _____

Why did you decide to enroll in and complete the Pilas program? _____

What are the most valuable parts of the Pilas program? _____

The least valuable? _____

How has the Pilas program affected your life in Eugene and Springfield? _____

Please circle the most valuable skill for you in English:

Reading

Writing

Listening

Speaking

Do you speak an Indigenous language? _____ If yes, which language? _____

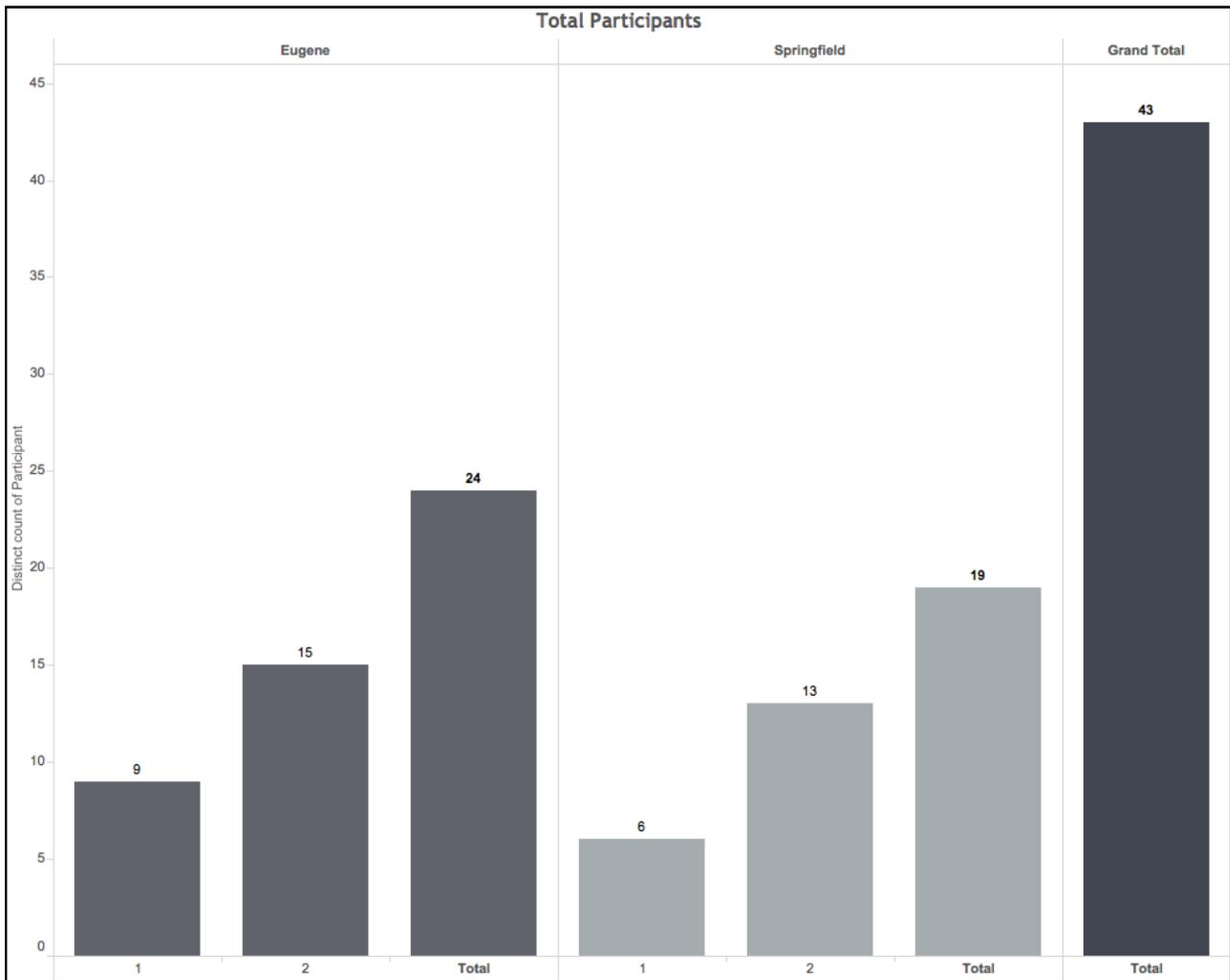
If yes, when did you learn Spanish? _____

If you have other things you would like to say about the Pilas program or the communities of Eugene and Springfield, please explain here: _____

APPENDIX B

TOTAL PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX C



BREAKDOWN OF ANSWERS PER QUESTION, TOTAL POPULATION.

- 0: did not answer
- 1: highest level of agreement
- 5: highest level of disagreement

Question	Answers					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	2.33%	6.98%	11.63%	13.95%	34.88%	30.23%
2	4.65%	20.93%	30.23%	16.28%	25.58%	2.33%

3	6.98%	18.60%	25.58%	27.91%	16.28%	4.65%
4	2.33%	18.60%	32.56%	16.28%	23.26%	6.98%
5	2.33%		2.33%	6.98%	25.58%	62.79%
6	2.33%	2.33%		9.30%	9.30%	76.74%
7	4.65%	2.33%	4.65%	9.30%	37.21%	41.86%
8	4.65%	13.95%	11.63%	18.60%	37.21%	13.95%
9	2.33%	41.86%	23.26%	13.95%	11.63%	6.98%
10	6.98%	32.56%	27.91%	18.60%	11.63%	2.33%
11	6.98%	69.77%	20.93%	2.33%		
12	4.65%	79.07%	13.95%	2.33%		
13	4.65%	69.77%	20.93%	2.33%	2.33%	
14	4.65%	69.77%	23.26%		2.33%	
15	9.30%	76.74%	13.95%			
16		51.16%	27.91%	9.30%	6.98%	4.65%
17	4.65%	58.14%	23.26%	4.65%	9.30%	
18	9.30%	18.60%	25.58%	23.26%	23.26%	
19	6.98%	16.28%	23.26%	27.91%	23.26%	2.33%
20	6.98%	16.28%	6.98%	13.95%	39.53%	16.28%
21	6.98%	48.84%	23.26%	9.30%	9.30%	2.33%
22	6.98%	2.33%	11.63%	20.93%	44.19%	13.95%
23	4.65%	23.26%	30.23%	13.95%	20.93%	6.98%
24	6.98%	27.91%	25.58%	9.30%	20.93%	9.30%

25	6.98%	18.60%	13.95%	23.26%	27.91%	9.30%
26	6.98%	13.95%	16.28%	16.28%	27.91%	18.60%
27	13.95%	20.93%	6.98%	9.30%	30.23%	18.60%
28	4.65%	23.26%	23.26%	23.26%	18.60%	6.98%
29	13.95%	16.28%	6.98%	18.60%	27.91%	16.28%
30	6.98%	16.28%	13.95%	13.95%	32.56%	16.28%
31	6.98%	41.86%	16.28%	16.28%	6.98%	11.63%
32	4.65%	58.14%	25.58%	9.30%		2.33%
33	2.33%	18.60%	20.93%	6.98%	39.53%	11.63%
34	11.63%	20.93%	18.60%	6.98%	20.93%	20.93%
35	9.30%	34.88%	18.60%	9.30%	25.58%	2.33%
36	30.23%	16.28%	27.91%	18.60%	6.98%	
37	18.60%	51.16%	25.58%		2.33%	2.33%
38	20.93%	25.58%	18.60%	16.28%	18.60%	
39	18.60%	41.86%	16.28%	6.98%	9.30%	6.98%
40	18.60%	20.93%	23.26%	18.60%	13.95%	4.65%
41	20.93%	25.58%	30.23%	11.63%	11.63%	
42	27.91%	16.28%	23.26%	11.63%	13.95%	6.98%
43	11.63%	58.14%	16.28%	4.65%	9.30%	
44	11.63%	67.44%	13.95%	4.65%	2.33%	
45	72.09%	27.91%				

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP ANNOUNCEMENT

¿Usted tiene interés en una entrevista del grupo sobre el programa de Pilas?

La entrevista estará a Science Factory en Eugene en el 5 de junio (domingo) entre 2-4 por la tarde. Sus niños pueden disfrutar el museo, por gratis, mientras usted participa en la entrevista del grupo con refrescos.

Si tiene interés, por favor escribe su nombre, número de teléfono, y cuántos hijos vendrán:

Nombre: _____

Numero de Telefono: _____

¿Cuántos hijos vendrán? _____

Si no quiere escribir su información pero quiere participar, por favor hable conmigo después de la clase o me llame por teléfono a (541) 206-2517

Are you interested in participating in a group interview about the Pilas program?

The interview will be at the Eugene Science Factory on Sunday June 5th from 2-4 pm. Your children can enjoy the museum for free, while you participate in the interview.

If you are interested, please write your name, phone number, and how many children will attend:

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Children: _____

If you do not want to write your information but would like to participate, please talk with after class or call me at (541) 206-2517

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS, SPANISH

- Cuales fueron sus partes favoritos del Pilas?

- Cuales tipos de actividades estaban lo mas beneficios para ustedes en las clases de ingles?
- En que manera pueden las maestras cambiar las clases para estar mas beneficio?
- Tiene interés en incorporando una clase de ingles nivel tres?
- Cuales son sus opinions sobres las actividades familiares?
- Cuales presentaciones estaban lo mas mejor para ustedes?
- Como podemos mejorar las actividades familiares y las presentaciones de Pilas?
- Usted tiene interés en continuando su aprendizaje de ingles a LCC?
- Cuales con los obstáculos para asistir clases en LCC?
- Por que piensa que hay mas mujeres quien participan en Pilas?
- Por que piensa que la asistencia disminuye durante la session de Pilas?
- Que piensan sus hijos sobre Pilas?
- Sus hijos le ayudan con ingles? con traducciones en la vida diaria? puede hablar sobre esto?
- Tiene previsto a participar en Pilas una otra vez? por que si o no?
- Downtown Languages tiene interés en como podemos ayudarles y proveerles con un programa mas beneficio a ustedes. Por favor, dígame algo mas que es importante o esta afectando su vida en Eugene/Springfield. Este programa es para ustedes.
- Usted piensa que las ciudades de Eugene y Springfield están serviciales a los inmigrantes quien no hablan ingles? Por que si o no?
- Como importante para usted esta que sus niño(s) aprende(n) su lengua nativa? y ingles?
- Que significa para usted el ambiente familiar de Pilas en sus habilidades para aprender ingles?
- Por favor, usted puede compartir un cuento sobre una situación cuando sus niño(s) tenía(n) que traducir o interpretar el ingles a su lengua nativa para usted? Como usted siente sobre esta situación?
- Como usted piensa que su falta de ingles afecta su habilidad a criar sus niño(s) en los Estados Unidos?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS, ENGLISH

- What were your favorite parts of the Pilas program?
- What types activities did you find most engaging in class?
- How do you think the teachers can make the classes more engaging?

- Do you think it would be beneficial to add a third level of ESL classes?
- What do you think about the family activity?
- What were the most useful presentations for you?
- How can it be improved?
- Would you be interested in continuing your ESL classes at LCC?
- If so, what would make this transition easier for you?
- Why do you think more women participate in Pilas than men?
- Why do you think attendance decreases throughout the Pilas term?
- What do your kids think about Pilas?
- Do your kids help you with English? translate for you?
- Do you plan to participate in Pilas again?
- Downtown Languages is interested in how they can help you and provide you with the most beneficial program. Please talk about how this program has impacted your life in Eugene and Springfield, or an important part of the program for you.
- Do you think there are resources available in Eugene and Springfield for non-English speakers? Why or why not?
- How important is it for your children to learn your native language? English?
- What does it mean for you that Pilas is a family-oriented ESL program?
- Could you please share a story in which your children translated or interpreted for you? How did you feel about this situation?
- How do you think your lack of English fluency impacts your ability to raise children in the United States?

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