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Family-School Connections, Early Learning, and Socioeconomic Inequality in the US

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Family-School Connections, Early Learning, and Socioeconomic Inequality in the US

Robert Crosnoe
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Abstract

Policy interest in parental involvement in the U.S. has rapidly grown, necessitating a deeper understanding of how families and schools can partner to promote learning and reduce performance disparities in this country. Matching multidisciplinary theory with growth curve analyses of American children in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort, this study found that family-school engagement (in which school personnel and parents reached out to each other) and family-school symmetry (in which parents and teachers constructed parallel learning environments) were associated with greater reading gains during the primary grades. Socioeconomically disadvantaged children appeared more at risk from one-sided engagement, and their more advantaged peers appeared to benefit more from symmetry.

Keywords: Family-school connections, parental involvement, socioeconomic disparities, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study.

Parental involvement in education has long been targeted by educational policy in the U.S., with the parental involvement provision of No Child Left Behind a prominent example. This tradition reflects the widely held public value that parents' participation in the educational process is crucial to the academic success of children (Coleman, 1988; Epstein, 2005). Yet, in reality, the payoff of involvement varies considerably by child age and school context (Crosnoe & Huston, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Mattingly et al., 2002; Thurston, 2005). The future prospects of many school reforms, therefore, depend on building a base of evidence about the situations and circumstances in which American parents' involvement matters. This study pursues this agenda. Integrating theoretical developments from psychology and sociology and empirical findings across disciplines, it approaches the education of American children at the intersection of their families and schools. In doing so, it focuses on socioeconomic disparities and views the transition into elementary school as a make or break period in these disparities.

The general aim of this study, therefore, is to identify connections between families and schools that facilitate learning—and buffer against socioeconomic disparities in learning—in the years following the transition into elementary school. This research will be conducted with data on children, families, and schools from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K)*. Matching educational and developmental theory with longitudinal, nationally representative data in this way provides empirical evidence to inform a timely social policy.

Education, Inequality, and Parental Involvement

Public concern about American schools is on the rise (Hess, 2006). From the landmark *A Nation at Risk* report to media coverage of national and international high-stakes tests, this concern centers on the risks that the academic under-performance of American students poses to the future economic and social competitiveness of the U.S. It also touches on the likelihood that growing demographic disparities in academic progress forecast widening societal inequalities (National

Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Schmidt et al., 2001).

Consistently, discussions among parents, school administrators, and policymakers about remedying these problems have highlighted parental involvement in education—the collection of parents’ efforts at home, at school, and in the community to manage their children’s learning (Epstein, 1983; Hill, 2009; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). Certainly, ample evidence suggests that this focus is not misguided. Even controlling for selection and bidirectionality, students appear to do better in school when parents provide opportunities for intellectual and cognitive stimulation (e.g., doing art together), actively guide academic progress (e.g., assisting with course selection), and maintain a visible presence at schools (e.g., volunteering). Overall, rates of parental involvement are lower in historically disadvantaged populations, leading to arguments that facilitating involvement in these populations may reduce achievement gaps (Crosnoe & Huston, 2007; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997; Raver, Gershoff, & Aber, 2007; Hill, 2001; Simpkins, Weiss, McCartney, Kreider, & Dearing, 2006).

The link between this evidence and policy brings up several issues. First, focusing on parents obscures the reality that the degree to which parental involvement “works” depends on how it is received by schools and lines up with school activities. In other words, the connection between families and schools should be the unit of analysis, not just families (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Epstein et al., 2002). Second, parental involvement shows clear trends by child age and school level in both prevalence and impact, with involvement more normative, child trajectories more flexible, and demographic disparities more malleable early in elementary school than in other periods (Entwisle & Alexander, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Lee & Burkham, 2002; Pomerantz et al., 2007). Third, we have much to learn about differential impact. If efforts to facilitate parental involvement in historically disadvantaged populations are to reduce academic disparities, children in these populations would need to derive as much or more benefit from such involvement as their peers. Socioeconomic disadvantage is a good starting point for considering this issue because it severely undermines academic progress, underlies race/ethnic inequalities in education, and qualifies the effectiveness of parents’ institutional behaviors (Dearing, McCartney, Weiss, Kreider, & Simpkins, 2004; Mayer, 1997; McLoyd,

1998). Thus, research can inform policies attempting to leverage parental involvement by situating children's academic progress at the meeting ground of home and school, with special attention to young socioeconomically disadvantaged children.

Theory on Families, Schools, and their Connections

Across disciplines, more interactive conceptions of parental involvement are taking hold (Coleman, 1988). A good example of this theoretical development in sociology is Epstein's articulation of family-school partnerships, which posits that the overlapping contribution of parents and school personnel to child learning needs to be coordinated to ensure that both contributions are maximized (Epstein et al., 2002). Similarly, in developmental psychology, ecological and systems perspectives that emphasize how children develop within a unique set of transactions among the major settings of their lives have been incorporated into models of parental involvement to reflect how its value is in part dependent on the school context (Eccles, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler, 1997). Following these theoretical developments, children are expected to learn more when their family and school contexts work with and in support of each other in stable, regularized ways, and they are expected to have more problems when these contexts are in direct conflict with each other, contradict each other (knowingly or not), or are disconnected. In this view, what matters is not just resources or risks in any one context but also resources and risks in the connections between contexts (Epstein et al., 2002).

This ongoing reconceptualization of parental involvement is also relevant to educational inequality. Social and cultural capital models highlight how qualitative differences in family-school connections across socioeconomic strata drive academic disparities (Coleman, 1988). For example, Lareau has demonstrated that poor (especially poor minority) parents experience more disagreements, misunderstandings, and discontinuities with school personnel about the best ways to manage their children's education. Not only are parents from more advantaged backgrounds more likely to have coordinated,

respectful relations with school personnel, they are better able to capitalize on these relations to get their children ahead because of their greater stock of human capital and higher social standing (Lareau, 2004; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Lareau, 1989). On the other hand, ecological and systems models often view family-school connections as compensatory. In other words, even if children from disadvantaged groups are less likely than their peers to have positive family-school connections, they will benefit more when they do because such connections will facilitate the flow of resources (e.g., inside information) to these children that may be unique for them but redundant for others. For example, the contextual systems perspective posits that an ongoing, respectful dialogue between parents and school personnel will do more to raise the achievement of children from at-risk groups (Christenson & Richardson, 2001; Pianta & Walsh, 1996). Thus, if parental involvement does promote learning overall, it may do so in ways that widen or narrow demographic disparities.

Integrating Viewpoints on Family-School Connections

Taking seriously this theoretical push to understand education at the intersection of home and school, the first goal of this study is two-fold. I will consider the degree to which various kinds of family-school connections predict rates of learning during the early years of elementary school and condition socioeconomic disparities in these rates, above and beyond the individual (e.g., pre-school enrollment), family (e.g., immigration status), school (e.g., sector), and demographic (e.g., race) characteristics that select children into different kinds of family-school connections and different learning trajectories. Two types of connections will be examined.

First, most theories of family-school connections focus on interactions between parents and school personnel, usually in the form of direct communication about goals, values, strategies, and progress that allows for a more informed, coordinated approach to structuring child learning. Such interaction should be a mutual exchange with a positive, collaborative tone (Epstein et al., 2002). In line with this conceptualization of family-school connections, engagement taps the degree of congruence between the attempts of parents to be involved in

activities at their children's schools and attempts of school personnel to keep parents informed and involved. Engagement takes three basic forms. In mutual engagement, each side reaches out to and shares with the other. In mutual disengagement, neither side does. In one-sided engagement, the efforts of one side to reach out to and share with the other are not reciprocated.

Second, social/cultural capital and ecological/systems models also recognize that families and schools connect in less explicitly transactional ways, as when parent-child interactions at home complement and supplement teacher-student interactions at the school to reinforce the formal learning process (Crosnoe, Leventhal, Wirth, Pierce, Pianta, & the NICHD Early Child Care Network, 2009). Such parallel learning environments at home and school are more likely to occur and to work when children are young and the less complex nature of scholastic activities allows parents to more easily understand what is happening at school and provide related cognitive stimulation at home (Lareau, 2004; Pianta & Walsh, 1996). Thus, this study also considers symmetry, which taps the degree to which parent-child learning activities in the home mirror teacher-student learning activities in the classroom. Again, symmetry breaks down into three categories. In positive symmetry, frequent learning activities at home and in school mirror each other. In negative symmetry, enriched learning activities are rare at home and in school. In asymmetry, learning activities are frequent in one context but infrequent in the other.

The guiding hypothesis of this study is that children should learn more when their families and schools have mutually engaged, positively symmetrical connections, which facilitate the flow of academically-relevant information and support between home and school and provide children with multiple arenas for developing the same skills. Conversely, children should post lower rates of learning when their families and schools are mutually disengaged or negatively symmetrical (La Paro, Pianta, & Cox, 2000; Lareau, 1989; Magnuson et al., 2004; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Useem, 1992). The other family-school connection types will fall in between. Yet, asymmetry will likely provide more learning benefits than one-sided engagement because the former entails the potential

protection of an enriched family environment against a poor school environment (and vice versa). The latter, on the other hand, indicates unreciprocated efforts that are likely to engender alienation, frustration, and resentment (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Crosnoe et al., 2009; Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

Moving beyond the “main effects”, both types of family-school connections may be related to socioeconomic disparities in child learning. Recall that, depending on the theory, an argument can be made that family-school connections will matter more in socioeconomically advantaged populations or in disadvantaged ones. Adjudicating between these possibilities is important because the utility of family-school compacts and related policies to reduce disparities in academic outcomes depends in part on socioeconomic differences in the impact of family-school connections, not just in their prevalence. If socioeconomically disadvantaged children derive more, or at least the same, benefit from family-school connections, then efforts to equalize the prevalence of such connections has the potential to reduce socioeconomic disparities in academic outcomes. If, on the other hand, socioeconomically advantaged children derive more benefit, then equalizing the prevalence of such connections may not reduce socioeconomic disparities even if they raise the overall achievement level of socioeconomically disadvantaged children. A goal of this study, therefore, is to test these competing hypotheses.

Exploring these issues with national data builds on an already rich literature (for good overviews, see Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2005; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Pomerantz et al., 2007). By collapsing family and school processes into categories identifying a child’s holistic learning environment, this study allows different combinations of oft-studied family and school variables to be examined, not just their independent effects (see Crosnoe et al., 2009 for another recent example of this approach). At the same time, by focusing on moderating pathways, this study provides an assessment of how much change in socioeconomic disparities might be expected to occur if family-school partnerships were evenly distributed across socioeconomic strata.

Methods

Data and Sample

Studying family-school connections and socioeconomic disparities in a national or cross-state perspective is important. Maximizing diversity (by race/ethnicity, geography, family structure, immigration status, etc.) within socioeconomic strata and increasing the number—and heterogeneity—of schools studied help to guard against the sampling biases and additivity violations (e.g., the potential for results to be inaccurate because of inadequate representation of some group or groups in the sample; see Frank, 2007) that can lead to inaccurate conclusions. Unfortunately, nationally representative data and large-scale community data sets typically do not allow for detailed measurement of family-school connections. ECLS-K is one compromise to these offsetting advantages and disadvantages. It has several limitations in measurement (detailed below), but these limitations are offset, at least in part, by the diversity within and across socioeconomic strata in the sample, the breadth of schools included, and the fact the present study is a preliminary analyses of both sides of family-school connections.

Collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), ECLS-K is a nationally representative study of American kindergartners. It was created through a multi-stage sampling frame—the selection of 100 primary sampling units (typically counties), 1000 public and private schools in these units, and 22,782 students in these schools. All students were in kindergarten at the first collection in the fall of 1998. Subsequent waves occurred in the spring of 1999, fall of 1999 (25% subsample), spring of 2000, spring of 2002, and spring of 2004. Data collection consisted of interviews with parents and school personnel and diagnostic tests for children (NCES, 2002). Given the theoretical focus of this study on the primary grades, ECLS-K data from kindergarten through third grade were used. Thus, the analytical sample consisted of 14,887 children who participated up through third grade. Longitudinal sampling weights were employed to account for differential attrition over time, and multiple imputation techniques were used to retain all cases in the analytical sample regardless of item-level missingness.

Measures

Early learning. As a core subject in the primary grades that is fundamental to learning in other subjects, reading served as the focal domain of early learning (Xue & Meisels, 2004). At each of the four fully sampled data points through third grade (fall of kindergarten and spring of kindergarten, first grade, and third grade), children took individually administered standardized tests that assessed their ability to, among other things, define words in context and evaluate passages of text. They took the first stage of the test and then, based on that performance, the low, medium, or high difficulty stage. Item Response Theory (IRT) allowed NCES to develop proficiency scores across test sequences. All scores were recalculated with the addition of each new wave of data (Reardon & Galindo, 2009). As explained below, these four test scores were modeled into achievement trajectories to serve as the outcomes in multivariate analyses.

Family socioeconomic status. First, parent reports of educational attainment were collapsed into a five point scale (1 = less than a high school degree, 2 = high school degree, 3 = some college experience, 4 = college graduate, 5 = postgraduate degree) after preliminary analyses indicated few differences between coding strategies (e.g., more degree categories, years of schooling). The maximum level in the family served as the measure. Second, parents reported their total annual family income, which was divided by the parent-reported household size to create a measure of per capita income in the family—again, differences were minimal when other strategies (e.g., an income to needs ratio) were employed. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the SES variables as well as all other non-achievement variables in the study. The average child in the sample had a parent with a high school degree and a per capita income in the family of about \$12,600.

Family-school connections. To capture family-school engagement, which refers to the degree of interaction between parents and school personnel, I measured the extent to which parents participated in activities that required contact with school personnel and school personnel made contact with parents about academic issues. The first measure was the mean of six parent-reported items from the spring of kindergarten about whether they engaged in PTA functions, teacher

conferences, school fundraising, school volunteering, open house, or other school events in the past year and, if so, the frequency with which they did ($\alpha = .62$). Parents reported low average participation (Table 1), but the overall distribution was fairly normal. The second measure was the mean of five parent-reported items from the same wave about how well (1 = not well at all, 2 = just OK, 3 = very well) schools provided them information about how their children were doing in school, what was age-appropriate for their children, when they could participate in school activities, the availability of workshops and materials for supporting learning, and the availability of services and programs for children outside the school ($\alpha = .70$). This measure was also fairly normal in distribution, although it was shifted more to the high end of the scale than the first measure.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for study variables (n = 14,887)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%
Focal Family and School Factors			
Parent education	2,96	1,17	---
Family per capita income/100	126,31	130,15	---
Parental participation at school	1,15	0,69	---
School contact with parents	2,45	0,46	---
Family reading activities	2,97	0,91	---
Whole language instruction in school	4,22	0,78	---
Child/Family Controls			
White	---	---	59,8
African-American	---	---	13,17
Latino/a	---	---	17,1
Asian-American	---	---	7,77
Other race/ethnicity	---	---	2,16
Immigrant family	---	---	17,71
Age (years)	6,23	0,37	---
Gender (female)	---	---	49,13
Pre-school enrollment	---	---	31,28
School Controls			
Sector (private)	---	---	22,02
Title I funding	---	---	60,49
Minority representation	34,54	33,5	---
South	---	---	32,93
Northeast	---	---	18,65
Midwest	---	---	25,86
West	---	---	22,56
Central city	---	---	38,81
City fringe	---	---	38,71
Rural/small town	---	---	22,48

Because of the theoretical interest in viewing the meeting point of both sides of family-school connections, the next step was to combine these variables to capture more holistically how cross-setting ecology of the sample children—in other words, knowing how each child was characterized by the meeting point or intersection of family and school processes rather than how he or she was characterized by each process respectively. To do so, I dichotomized each variable into low/high categories based on theoretically meaningful cutpoints. For the parent contact measure, the cutpoint was 2, which represented a parent who engaged in various school activities an average of two times per year, or, in other words, went beyond the minimal effort in the sample. This value was just slightly larger than one standard deviation above the sample mean. For the school contact measure, the cutpoint was 2.8, which represented a school that was viewed by parents as being good on the majority of the five dimensions of contact and information-sharing. This value was just slightly smaller than one standard deviation below the sample mean. These two binary variables were then cross-tabulated to capture all four possible combinations: mutual engagement (high on both variables), family one-sided engagement (high/low), school one-sided engagement (low/high), and mutually disengaged (low/low).

This measurement strategy had several limitations. The two constituent measures captured only the most formal, and perhaps rarest, family-school contact. At the same time, the school measure was based on parent reports. The only school administrator reports on school communication with families, however, were not specific to any one family but to all families of the student body in general. Thus, these measures, together, captured parents' estimates of their involvement at school and their perceptions of schools' outreach to them. Neither measure, however, was available in later data collections, so that trends in the engagement typology are unknown. Yet, both were measured after children took their initial reading test, which meant that the potential for children's cognitive skills and achievement to elicit different kinds of family-school engagement could be at least partially addressed in statistical models.

Finally, combining two measures into mutually exclusive categories raises concerns about loss of scale variation. Importantly, results were

not sensitive to different cutpoints (e.g., standard deviation units) for each of the measures. An alternative would be interactions between the family and school variables, the drawback being that exploring the interplay of family-school connections and family SES would have resulted in three-way interactions that are more unstable and difficult to interpret. Ancillary analyses revealed weaker results when attempting to capture both sides of family-school connections through interactions, suggesting the likelihood of non-linear effects better captured through categorical variables with meaningful cutpoints.

Table 2

Mean family SES by family-school engagement and symmetry

	Family		Parent Education		<i>n</i>
	Per Capita Income				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Family-School Engagement					
Mutual engagement	162.09	169.27	3.34	1.14	1,770
One-sided engagement (family)	164.90	136.33	3.47	1.09	2,561
One-sided engagement (school)	103.84	112.16	2.62	1.12	3,509
Disengagement	114.55	119.58	2.85	1.15	7,047
Family-School Symmetry					
Positive symmetry	126.69	171.77	2.98	1.20	1,398
Asymmetry (family)	123.24	120.18	2.99	1.18	3,693
Asymmetry (school)	126.16	127.76	2.93	1.20	2,366
Negative symmetry	123.05	126.33	2.93	1.15	7,430

The same proxy strategy described above—family and school constructs measured separately and then combined—was followed to create measures of symmetry, which refers to the degree of similarity in learning activities at home and school. Working from basic measurement tenets of theory and following past ECLS-K convention (Crosnoe & Cooper, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Magnuson et al., 2004; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Xue & Meisels, 2004), I created measures for the fall/spring of kindergarten.

The first measure, parents' reading activity at home, was a single parent report in the fall of kindergarten about how often (1 = never, 2 = 1/2 times per week, 3 = 3-6 times per week, 4 = everyday) they read with their children at home. Although a relatively simple measure, reading time has been strongly linked to family SES as well as race/ethnicity (Raikes et al., 2006). Few children (< 5%) had values of

one on this scale, with the remainder spread out roughly evenly across the four other categories. The second measure, teachers' reading activity in the classroom with children, was the mean of 17 teacher reports in the spring of kindergarten about how often (0 = never, 1 = once or month or less, 2 = 2 or 3 times a month, 4 = 1 or 2 times a week, 5 = 3 or 4 times a week, 5 = daily) they engaged in aspects of whole language reading instruction in the classroom, including having the child read aloud, compose stories, practice vocabulary, choose books for reading, and retell read stories ($\alpha = .86$). Univariate statistics indicated a wide range of values in the bottom tertile of the sample (e.g., 1-4), a very tight range of about half a point in the middle tertile, and a slightly wider distribution of a point and a half in the top tertile.

Again, these variables were dichotomized and cross-classified to create a set of dummy variables (see Table 2). The categorization scheme was straightforward for the first measure but more complicated for the second. To pick a meaningful cutpoint for parent-child reading, I separated children whose parents read with them almost every day (3 or 4) from all other children. The nature of the teacher-student scale did not allow for the identification of a meaningful cutpoint, and so the sample was split into low and high groups at one standard deviation above the sample mean. After cross-classification, the resulting set of dummy variables included positive symmetry (high on both family and school variables), asymmetry/family (high/low), asymmetry/school (low/high), and negative symmetry (low on both). The same categories and sensitivity tests discussed for the family-school engagement typology also apply here.

Controls. As already stated, one of the key advantages of ECLS-K for this kind of research is the diversity it offers within socioeconomic strata. To that end, this study also took into account possible social and demographic variability within and across strata that might also related to family-school connections and reading scores. Control measures included gender (1 = female), age (in years), race/ethnicity (dummy variables for White, African-American, Latino/a, Asian-American, Other), immigration status (1 = at least one foreign-born parent), and pre-school enrollment (1 = enrolled in an education-focused child care center in the year before kindergarten, 0 = no such enrollment). Four factors were eventually dropped because they had no impact on the

focal results: 1) family structure (1 = two married biological parents, 0 = other family form), 2) days that elapsed between the date on which the first child in the sample took the reading assessment during that data collection period and the date on which the target child was assessed, 3) days that elapsed between a child's first day of school that year and their reading assessment date, and 4) whether the child changed schools after kindergarten.

To account for variability in the school and community contexts of students and teachers, this study controlled for five school-level factors. Sector (1 = private, 0 = public) and Title I funding (1 = Title I recipient, 0 = non-recipient) were binary measures reported by school administrators. Minority representation (percentage, in whole numbers, of non-White students in school) was a continuous variable reported by administrators. The remaining two were sets of dummy variables based on administrator reports: region (dummy variables for West, Midwest, Northeast, South) and urbanicity (large city, city fringe/small city, small town/rural).

Plan of Analyses

The first step of the analyses was to estimate trajectories of reading achievement from the fall of kindergarten through the spring of third grade with growth curve modeling. Here, the time-specific reading test scores represented Level 1, and the study child, in whom the multiple test scores were nested, represented Level 2. This growth curve could then be characterized by an intercept (the average starting point of the trajectory in the fall of kindergarten) and a slope (the average rate of change through the spring of third grade). The slope was captured by a linear time variable with values corresponding to each semester-grade in between fall of kindergarten (0) and spring of third grade (8), including the semester-grades in which data collection occurred (e.g., spring of first grade) and those in which it did not (e.g., fall of second grade). The growth curve could also be characterized by a quadratic term (the average slowdown/acceleration of the rate of change from time point to time point), which was captured by the square of the linear time variable.

The second step was to gauge the magnitude of socioeconomic disparities in these reading trajectories. To do so, I entered the parent education and family income measures into the growth curve models as predictors, before and after full set of controls. The main effects of the SES measures captured their observed effects on the intercept, and their interactions with the time and time² measures captured their observed effects on the slope and quadratic.

For the third step, the family-school engagement and symmetry dummy variables were added, separately, to the model as main effects and as interactions with the time and time² factors. Results gauged differences in reading trajectories among children with different kinds of family-school connections.

Finally, in the fourth step, interactions between the two family SES indicators (parent education, per capita income) and the two sets of family-school dummy variables (engagement, symmetry) were added to the model—two-way interactions to gauge their relation to the intercept, three-way interactions with time and time² to gauge their relation to the slope and quadratic. This final step estimated the degree to which family SES moderated associations between family-school connections and reading trajectories.

These models were estimated with the mixed procedure in SAS (see Singer, 1998). This procedure allowed for a third level to be modeled, that of the school, which was necessary given that the ECLS-K sampling frame was nested within schools. In order to avoid the bias introduced by listwise deletion, the MI procedure in SAS was used to estimate values for all missing items. In this procedure, five different plausible fully imputed data sets were created based on information from all available variables, the models were estimated for the five data sets, and then the results from all five analyses were averaged together (Allison, 2001).

Results

Family-School Connections and Socioeconomic Status

Referring back to Table 2, the likelihood that children were in family-school connections high in parental involvement at school—mutual

engagement, one-sided engagement weighted towards the family—tended to rise along with family SES, as defined by parent education and per capita family income. Children with one-sided engagement weighted towards schools were particularly low on the two SES indicators. This pattern reflects the well-documented tendency for high SES parents to be more visible in their children's schools, but it could also indicate the possibility that schools serving high SES populations may need to take less active measures to keep the parents of their students tied into the school (Lareau, 2004, 1989). The SES pattern was similar for family-school symmetry, but only when considering parent education. More educated parents tended to have positively symmetrical connections with their children's schools or at least family-weighted asymmetrical connections. No clear pattern emerged for family income.

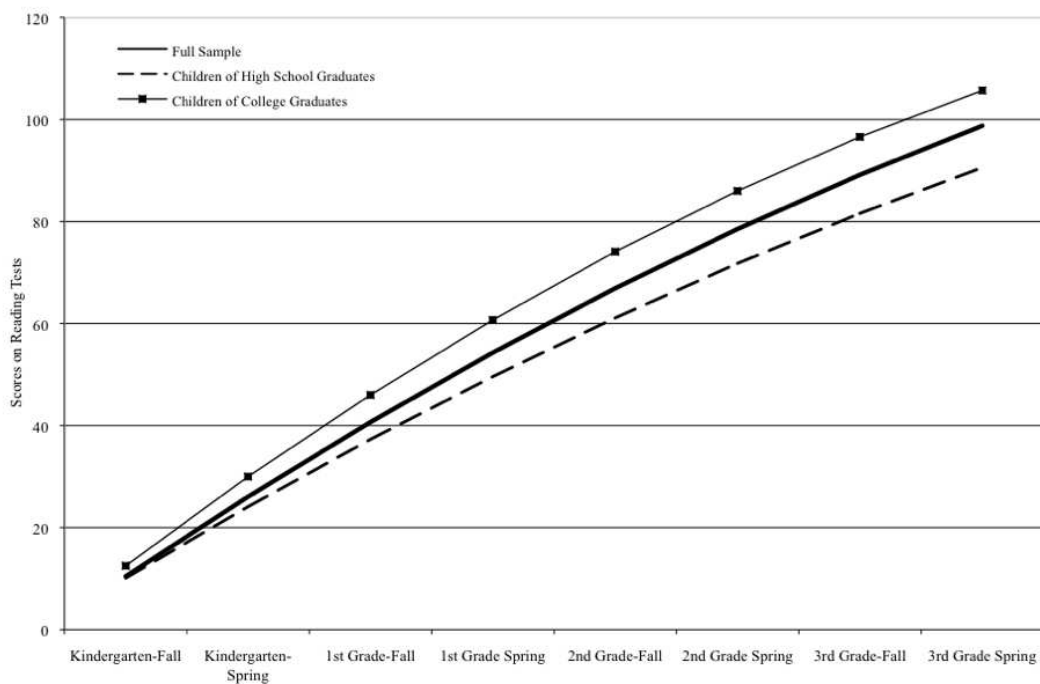
In general, therefore, children from more privileged backgrounds tended to experience more engaged and symmetrical connections between home and school, and, for the most part, they were unlikely to be in situations in which the efforts of their schools were not matched or supported by their parents. How these patterns relate to actual learning and achievement is a question to answer with multivariate analyses.

Socioeconomic Disparities in Reading Trajectories

Results from the unconditional growth curve model (not shown in a table), which included no predictors other than the time variables, revealed the basic shape of the reading trajectory over time in the sample. As expected, children's scores on reading tests increased as they moved through the primary grades. The b coefficients for the intercept (10.44, $p < .001$) and the slope (16.12, $p < .001$) indicated that, on average, children scored fairly low on the reading test in the fall of kindergarten but picked up about 16 points on the test every semester through the end of third grade. This average rate of change from semester to semester, however, declined slightly with each semester, as indicated by the small negative b coefficient for the quadratic (-.50, $p < .001$) in the unconditional model. As an illustration, multiplying the intercept, slope, and quadratic coefficients by each semester-grade value¹ revealed that the estimated average

point increase between the fall and spring of first grade was 13.6 but that the estimated average point increase between the fall and spring of third grade was 9.6. In other words, reading test scores demonstrated diminishing gains over time. This average pattern in the sample is depicted by the solid black line in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Trajectories of Reading Achievement in Primary Grades



The conditional models presented in Table 3 included the SES factors and the child/family and school controls as predictors of the reading growth curve. According to Model 1, parent education was positively associated with the intercept and slope and negatively associated with the quadratic. Per capita family income demonstrated the same pattern, except that the association with the intercept was not statistically significant.

Table 3
Results from growth curve models of reading test scores (n = 14,887)

	<i>B (SE) for Model 1</i>			<i>B (SE) for Model 2</i>		
	I	S	Q	I	S	Q
Growth Curve Parameters						
Intercept	7.44*** (.52)	---	---	-12.28* (4.42)	---	---
Time	---	12.02*** (.25)	---	---	5.14** (1.83)	---
Time ²	---	---	-.23*** (.03)	---	---	-.79*** (.18)
Family SES						
Per capita income/100	.10 (.10)	.38*** (.09)	-.02* (.01)	.30* (.16)	.25* (.10)	-.01 (.01)
Parent education	.84*** (.18)	1.28*** (.10)	-.09*** (.01)	.65*** (.20)	1.17*** (.10)	-.08*** (.01)
Child/Family Controls						
African-American	---	---	---	.37 (.63)	-1.37*** (.32)	.09** (.03)
Latino/a	---	---	---	-2.44*** (.65)	.20 (.31)	-.03 (.03)
Asian-American	---	---	---	2.18 (1.32)	.42 (.70)	-.09 (.07)
Other race/ethnicity	---	---	---	1.71 (1.33)	-2.54*** (.67)	.20** (.07)
Immigrant family	---	---	---	-1.07 (.65)	.41 (.32)	-.04 (.03)
Gender (female)	---	---	---	.20 (.37)	1.40*** (.18)	-.12*** (.02)
Age	---	---	---	3.27*** (.61)	1.15*** (.28)	-.16*** (.03)
Pre-school enrollment	---	---	---	1.19** (.42)	.79*** (.21)	-.08*** (.02)
School Controls						
Sector (private)	---	---	---	1.34 (.68)	.38 (.30)	-.06* (.03)
Title I	---	---	---	-.90 (.53)	-.32 (.23)	.02 (.03)
Minority representation	---	---	---	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Northeast	---	---	---	1.68* (.63)	-1.74*** (.29)	.16*** (.03)
Midwest	---	---	---	.51 (.56)	-1.13*** (.24)	.12*** (.03)
West	---	---	---	-1.47* (.63)	.60* (.28)	-.05 (.03)
City fringe	---	---	---	-.10 (.53)	.35 (.22)	-.04 (.02)
Rural/small town	---	---	---	-.59 (.68)	-.14 (.35)	.00 (.04)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

$\Delta 2\text{ll}$ (Model 2 vs. Model 1) = -1,715.04

Note: Coefficients in slope (S) column represent interactions between covariate and time factor.

Coefficients in quadratic (Q) column represent interactions between covariates and time² factor.

White is reference for race/ethnicity dummy variables (South for region, central city for urbanicity).

As an illustration, Figure 1 also presents the average reading trajectories for two subsets of the full sample: the children of college graduates (line marked by black boxes) and the children of high school graduates (checkered line). The former started off elementary school with slightly higher test scores than the latter and had larger test score gains across the primary years. The general incremental decrease in the magnitude of these gains from semester to semester seen in the full sample, however, was slightly more pronounced for the children of college graduates. The net result was a divergence in reading trajectories by parent education that could have been larger. Differences in reading trajectories by per capita family income looked similar, except that income-related differences in the starting point were quite small.

After adding the full set of control variables in Model 2, the coefficients for parent education were attenuated to some degree, at least for the intercept and slope. Interestingly, the income coefficient for the intercept grew larger and became statistically significant, but the income coefficient for the quadratic decreased and became non-significant. The child/family controls did more to predict the various growth curve parameters than the school controls, with race/ethnicity, gender, age, and pre-school enrollment especially important.

Family-School Connections and Reading Trajectories

To test the general hypothesis about associations between family-school connections and reading achievement, the dummy variables for family-school engagement and family-school symmetry were added, respectively, to the growth curve model (see Table 4). Recall that the family-school dummy variables were measured with information collected primarily after the fall of kindergarten. Consequently, I will focus on the associations of family-school engagement and symmetry with the slope and quadratic of the reading growth curve—in other words, how change in reading test scores after some starting point vary in relation to family-school connections.

Table 4

Family-school engagement and family-school symmetry results from growth curve models of reading test scores (n = 14,887)

	<i>B (SE) for Engagement Model</i>			<i>B (SE) for Symmetry Model</i>		
	I	S	Q	I	S	Q
Growth Curve Parameters						
Intercept	-12.34* (4.29)	---	---	-12.07* (4.19)	---	---
Time	---	5.08** (1.80)	---	---	4.61** (1.75)	---
Time ²	---	---	.80*** (.18)	---	---	-.85*** (.18)
Family-School Engagement						
Mutual engagement	.27 (.93)	.87* (.39)	-.10* (.04)	---	---	---
One-sided (family)	-.56 (.63)	.45 (.32)	-.03 (.03)	---	---	---
One-sided (school)	-.10 (.92)	.18 (.37)	.03 (.04)	---	---	---
Family-School Symmetry						
Positive symmetry	---	---	---	1.09 (.79)	.72* (.32)	-.11* (.04)
Asymmetry (family)	---	---	---	-.31 (.53)	.96*** (.24)	-.12*** (.03)
Asymmetry (school)	---	---	---	-.39 (1.07)	.47 (.51)	-.06 (.06)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

$\Delta 211$ (vs. model with SES and controls) = -22.7 (engagement), -76.3 (symmetry)

Note: Coefficients in slope (S) column represent interactions between covariate and time factor. Coefficients in quadratic (Q) column represent interactions between covariates and time2 factor. All models controlled for parent education, family income, race/ethnicity, immigrant family, gender, age, pre-school enrollment, school factors (sector, Title 1, minority representation), region, and urbanicity. Disengagement was reference for family-school engagement dummy variables (negative symmetry for family-school symmetry dummy variables).

Beginning with family-school engagement, children with mutually engaged family-school connections had higher rates of change than their peers in the mutually disengaged category (the reference) but also larger corrections to the rate of change from semester to semester ($b = .87$, $p < .05$ for slope, $-.10$, $p < .05$ for quadratic). Basically, children with mutually engaged connections posted reading test score gains about one point bigger than children with mutually disengaged connections in the first several semesters of elementary school, but, by the end of the primary grades, the latter group of children were posting slightly larger gains from semester to semester than the former. As a

result, the absolute test score advantage between children with mutually engaged families and schools over children with mutually disengaged families and schools peaked at almost two points in second grade before falling to about one point by the end of third grade. As a reference for assessing the magnitude of effects, the maximum difference between the children of college graduates and high school graduates was over 10 points, and the maximum difference between children with per capita family incomes one standard deviation below the mean and one standard deviation above the mean was 3.5 points.

Re-estimating the model with each category of family-school engagement as the reference revealed the same basic difference between children with mutually engaged families and schools and children with one-sided engagement weighted towards schools. Children with one-sided engagement weighted towards families fell between these two poles.

Turning to family-school symmetry, children with positively symmetrical and family-weighted asymmetrical connections had greater test score gains from semester to semester (slope $b = .72$, $p < .05$ for positive symmetry, $-.96$, $p < .001$ for family-weighted asymmetrical) than children with negatively symmetrical family-school connections (the reference). They also demonstrated more pronounced corrections to these semester-to-semester gains (quadratic $b = -.11$, $p < .05$ for positive symmetry, $-.12$, $p < .001$ for family-weighted asymmetry).

These results were similar to the engagement pattern described above. Children with positively symmetrical and family-weighted asymmetrical connections posted larger test score gains from semester to semester than children with negatively symmetrical family-school connections early in the primary grades, but that the latter group posted larger test score gains from semester to semester than the two former groups at the end of the primary grades. Again, the absolute test score advantage between these two poles peaked in second grade—at about 2.5 points, compared to 2 for engagement, over 10 for parent education, and 3.5 for income—and then declined slightly over the next year. Rotating the reference category indicated a basic split between positive symmetry and family-weighted asymmetry on one hand and school-weighted asymmetry and negative symmetry on the other.

Family-School Connections, SES, and Reading Trajectories

Up to this point, the results have indicated that children who experienced more engaged and symmetrical family-school connections tended to have the most positive reading trajectories in the primary grades. Of the two sides of the family-school connections, however, families appeared more important. These results are relevant to efforts to promote family-school connections in order to enhance learning. Importantly, both family SES and the more positive family-school connections appeared to make the most difference to reading trajectories early in elementary school. They gave an initial boost that faded over time. How these trends relate to each other is an important consideration in the assessment of whether promoting family-school connections may be useful for reducing socioeconomic disparities.

To explore this issue, I added a full set of family SES x family-school connections interactions to both the engagement and symmetry models. Table 5 presents the results for family-school engagement. School-weighted engagement interacted with parent education and the time factor ($b = -.56$, $p < .05$) and time2 factor ($b = .07$, $p < .05$)—essentially, the interaction of this kind of family-school connection and parent education was associated with differences in the slope and quadratic components of the growth curve.

To interpret these interactions, I calculated the predicted test scores at each time point for four groups of children—all possible combinations of school-weighted engagement, mutual disengagement, college-educated parents, and high school graduate parents while holding all other variables in the model to their sample means—and then graphed these values to determine the shape of the average growth curve in each of the four groups. I summarize what these graphs revealed here. Among children with parents who had high school degrees, those with school-weighted engagement started elementary school with slightly lower reading test scores than children with mutually disengaged family-school connections. They then pulled ahead in first and second grade before falling behind again in third grade. They had an initial advantage in semester-to-semester test gains that faded by the end of the primary grades. Among children with parents who had college degrees, however, those with school-

weighted engagement started off elementary school with slightly higher reading test scores than children with mutually disengaged family-school connections but then fell behind fairly quickly and stayed there. Thus, in the absence of parental participation at school, having schools initiate contact with parents only appeared to be positive for children with less educated parents in the first couple of years of school. No significant interactions were found for per capita family income.

Table 5

Selected results from growth curve models of reading test scores, by family-school engagement and parent education (n = 14,887)

	<i>B (SE)</i>		
	I	S	Q
Growth Curve Parameters			
Intercept	-12.67** (4.50)	---	---
Time	---	4.87* (1.86)	---
Time ²	---	---	.83*** (.19)
Family SES			
Parent education	.75** (.25)	1.24*** (.14)	-.09*** (.01)
Family-School Engagement			
Mutual engagement	.42 (3.84)	1.58 (1.51)	.18 (.15)
One-sided (family)	2.61 (1.79)	-.78 (.92)	.09 (.10)
One-sided (school)	-1.29 (1.91)	1.64 (.88)	.21* (.08)
Partnership x SES			
Mutual x parent ed.	-.22 (1.03)	.23 (.44)	.02 (.04)
One-sided (family) x parent ed.	-.95 (.50)	.35 (.25)	-.02 (.03)
One-sided (school) x parent ed.	.47 (.56)	-.56* (.26)	.07* (.03)

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Δ2ll (vs. model with SES, controls, and family-school connections) = -3.57

Note: Coefficients in slope (S) column represent interactions between covariate and time factor. Coefficients in quadratic (Q) column represent interactions between covariates and time2 factor. All models controlled for family income, race/ethnicity, immigrant family, gender, age, pre-school enrollment, school factors (sector, Title 1, minority representation), region, and urbanicity. Disengagement was reference for family-school engagement dummy variables.

Table 6 presents the symmetry results. Family-weighted asymmetry interacted with per capita income and the time factor ($b = .61, p < .05$) and time2 factor ($b = -.06, p < .05$). Again, these three-way interactions can be thought of as indicating differences in the slope and quadratic components of the growth curve according to different combinations of family-school symmetry and family income. For interpretation, I followed the same procedure described above.

Among children from families with incomes one standard deviation below the sample mean, those with family-weighted asymmetrical connections started elementary school with slightly higher reading test scores than children with negatively symmetrical family-school connections but then lost that test score advantage by second grade because they had a lower overall rate of test score gains and a larger correction to these gains. Among children from families with incomes one standard deviation above the mean, those with family-weighted asymmetrical connections started elementary school at about the same level as children with negatively symmetrical connections but then pulled ahead because they had a greater rate of test score gains over time. The absolute test score advantage of the former over the latter peaked in second grade. Thus, in the absence of strong reading activities at school, having parents engage in reading activities at home with children appeared to be positive for children with higher-income parents, especially in the first couple of years of school.

Furthermore, positive symmetry interacted with parent education and time ($b = .54, p < .05$) and time2 ($b = -.06, p < .05$). Among children with parents who had high school degrees, those with positively symmetrical family-school connections started elementary school with slightly higher test scores than children with negatively symmetrical connections and then added to this advantage from semester to semester, with a peak advantage in second grade. This same pattern held, but in a more pronounced form, for children with college-educated parents. Thus, having both parents and teachers engaging in reading activities appeared to be a positive for all children, but especially for those whose parents had higher-level degrees.

Table 6

Selected results from growth curve models of reading test scores, by family-school symmetry and family SES (n = 14,887)

	<i>B (SE) for Model 1</i>			<i>B (SE) for Model 2</i>		
	I	S	Q	I	S	Q
Growth Curve Parameters						
Intercept	-12.00* (4.23)	---	---	-11.73* (4.12)	---	---
Time	---	4.66* (1.77)	---	---	4.88** (1.75)	---
Time ²	---	---	-.85*** (.18)	---	---	.82*** (.18)
Family SES						
Per capita income/100	.24 (.25)	.18 (.13)	.01 (.13)	.30 (.16)	.26* (.10)	-.02 (.01)
Parent education	.69*** (.20)	1.14*** (.10)	-.08*** (.01)	.54 (.31)	1.08*** (.04)	-.07*** (.01)
Family-School Symmetry						
Positive symmetry	.31 (.78)	1.03* (.44)	-.13* (.05)	.73 (1.66)	-.77 (.87)	.06 (.09)
Asymmetry (family)	.10 (.66)	.26 (.35)	-.05 (.03)	-1.83 (1.27)	.84 (.63)	-.09 (.08)
Asymmetry (school)	-.28 (1.35)	.40 (.63)	-.06 (.07)	-.05 (3.14)	.16 (1.65)	-.03 (.17)
Symmetry x SES						
Positive symmetry x income	.67 (.73)	.27 (.42)	.02 (.04)	---	---	---
Asymmetry (family) x income	.34 (.35)	.61* (.26)	-.06* (.02)	---	---	---
Asymmetry (school) x income	.07 (.50)	.06 (.31)	.00 (.04)	---	---	---
Positive symmetry x parent ed.	---	---	---	.14 (.50)	.54* (.27)	-.06* (.03)
Asymmetry (family) x parent ed.	---	---	---	.53 (.41)	.05 (.21)	-.01 (.03)
Asymmetry (school) x parent ed.	---	---	---	-.11 (.79)	.12 (.44)	.01 (.04)

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Δ2ll (vs. model with SES, controls, and family-school connections) = 1.4 (parent education model), 70 (income model)

Note: Coefficients in slope (S) column represent interactions between covariate and time factor. Coefficients in quadratic (Q) column represent interactions between covariates and time² factor. All models control for race/ethnicity, immigrant family, gender, age, pre-school enrollment, school factors (sector, Title 1, minority representation), region, and urbanicity. Negative symmetry was reference for family-school symmetry dummy variables.

Conclusions

In the last decade, three major topics of policy discussion and activity in the U.S. (and elsewhere) have been the role of early education as a critical intervention point (Heckman, 2006), socioeconomic disparities in learning and achievement (Rothstein, 2004), and family-school compacts (Epstein, 2005). This study linked these three topics by drawing on a multidisciplinary body of developmental and educational theory to consider how family-school connections were related to early learning trajectories across socioeconomic strata in the U.S.

Generally, American children posted greater gains in reading over time when their parents were involved at schools in which school personnel actively drew in parents than when neither parents nor school personnel reached out to each other. Similarly, they posted greater gains when parents constructed stimulating environments at home that paralleled classrooms than when they received less stimulation at home or school. These patterns are not altogether surprising. After all, children who have resources in, or experience exchanges of resources across, two settings would be expected to do better than children drawing learning resources from neither setting or who have no exchange of resources between the two. More interesting questions concern what happens to children for whom only one setting is providing or trying to exchange learning resources. Do such children look more like those with two more resourced and transactional settings in their lives or more like those with no such settings? If only one setting has resources or is attempting to exchange resources, which setting is most important?

Providing partial answers to these questions, analyses revealed that children who had engaged parents and/or cognitively stimulating home environments but who did not attend schools with high levels of family contact or classroom reading (the family-weighted categories) looked more like the children with resources at home and school or resource exchanges between the two. On the other hand, children who did not have engaged parents or cognitively stimulating home environments but who did attend schools with high levels of family contact and/or higher-order reading activities in the classroom (the school-weighted categories) looked more like the children without resources at home or school or no exchange between the two.

From both a theoretical and policy perspective, how these main effects of family-school connections relate to family SES is an important consideration. In general, children with more educated, higher-income parents gained reading skills at a higher rate over the primary grades than children with less educated, lower-income parents. The former children also tended to have more mutually engaged and positively symmetrical family-school connections.

SES differences in family-school connections, however, did little to explain the SES differences in reading trajectories. Instead, the story was less about mediation and more about moderation—with some socioeconomic variation detected in the link between family-school connections and children's reading trajectories. First, having schools initiate contact with uninvolved parents (school-weighted engagement) was associated with greater reading gains only for the children of less educated parents. This pattern potentially reflects a buffering process, in which school actions can make up some of the disadvantage faced by children of less educated parents by facilitating the flow of school-related information (about protocols, practices, norms, expectations) to those parents. Second, having parents engage in reading activities at home without higher-order reading instruction at school (family-weighted asymmetry) was associated with lower reading gains for the children of less educated parents and higher reading gains for their peers with more educated parents. Third, having parents engage in reading activities at home in tandem with higher-order reading instruction at school (positive symmetry) was associated with greater reading gains for all children, but especially those with better educated parents. These latter two patterns suggest a process of cumulative advantage, possibly due to the corresponding SES differences in parents' own literacy.

One consistent theme that emerged from these results concerned timing. Family-school connections tended to matter most to reading trajectories and socioeconomic disparities in reading trajectories up through second grade. Possibly, these patterns reflect a measurement issue. Recall that family-school engagement could only be measured in kindergarten. Thus, what appeared to be diminishing returns may instead be the result of increasing time lags between predictor and outcome. First grade measures of family-school symmetry were avai-

lable, however, and adding them as controls did not change the overall pattern of symmetry results, a check that boosts confidence that the observed timing effect was not solely due to measurement. Another explanation is that, in general, the normative acceleration of reading trajectories in the sample peaked in second grade, which was also the maximum point of socioeconomic divergence in reading trajectories. Consequently, the kindergarten through second grade period may have been a critical window in which reading trajectories (and disparities in trajectories) were more malleable. Certainly, a great deal of theory and research suggests that early childhood and the transition to elementary school is a time in which human capital investments and educational interventions will bring the greatest long-term returns (Heckman, 2006; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2005). If so, the timing effect for family-school connections observed in this study could indicate that efforts to build family-school connections may bring greater payoff when focused on the earliest stages of schooling.

Of course, when advocating a reconceptualization of parental involvement into family-school connections, the degree of added value is important to assess. Does looking at parental involvement in tandem with school contact/instruction tell us anything different than if parental involvement had been studied alone? Admittedly, the overall differences are not striking. For both kinds of family-school connections, the clearest demarcation was between children who had parents who participated in school and read with them at home and children whose parents did not engage in these behaviors. Still, several important added insights were gained. When looking at family-school engagement, children did better when their parents participated in schools that reached out to their parents than when their parents' participation was not reciprocated by the school. Thus, the connection mattered. At the same time, although one-sided school-weighted engagement did not appear to boost achievement for most children above and beyond having neither parent nor school personnel engaged, it did do so for the children of less educated parents. In this case, school actions provided an observed benefit even in the absence of a strong parental presence at school. Although not large in magnitude, these differences by family-school engagement were similar to income differences.

Overall, the investigation of family-school symmetry did not add much value when compared to looking at parental reading activities alone. Children who read with their parents did better than their peers regardless of what was going on in the classroom. The one exception was low-income children, who had more problematic reading trajectories when their parents were reading with them at home but they were not engaged in higher-order reading activities at school. Perhaps their parents were reading to them more because they were having problems at school or because they did not appreciate what was being taught at school. Alternatively, perhaps these parents had the motivation to read to their children but not the information and knowledge that they needed to make up for what was lacking in school. Again, the connection between home and school mattered more than the family activity.

These conclusions, however, should be viewed as preliminary—as the bases for future research—for several reasons, primarily concerning the limitations of using extant data sources to study direct and indirect transactions between home and school rather than the actions of one or the other. These limitations need to be corrected in order for the preliminary conclusions of this study to be thoroughly vetted.

One concern is measurement, which is often a major disadvantage of national data collections that offsets some of their advantages in generalizability and sampling diversity. Ideally, ECLS-K would have included school reports of school outreach to the study children's families, so that parent reports would not have been used to measure both sides of family-school engagement. At the same time, the interests of this study would have been better served by repeated measures of school activities. Finally, the field needs to develop new ways of capturing school-based parental involvement besides the standard types of items contained in national studies like ECLS-K—need to be considered. Parents can be proactively involved at schools in other ways too, such as by keeping up with lesson plans, accessing school services for children and themselves, or working with Parental Information and Resource Centers, or PIRCs (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). These efforts need to be given more weight in data collection.

Another concern is that, despite the use of terms suggesting otherwise (e.g., effects, risks), this study could not establish causality. Schools and families play off each other, and child traits elicit responses from both (Thurston, 2005). Absent experimental designs, such threats to causal inference cannot be completely resolved. Still, steps can be taken to address this problem. Longitudinal frameworks are a good start. One promising avenue is the identification of school policies that vary somewhat randomly across states (e.g., implementation of PIRCs) and could be attached to ECLS-K for use as an instrumental variable (Gennetian, Magnuson, & Morris, 2008). Another is the coupling of propensity score techniques to rule out observable confounds with robustness indices to quantify the potential impact of unobservable confounds on the causal inference (Frank, 2000). As for other limitations of the study, more needs to be done to tease apart how socioeconomic stratification and racial inequality are intertwined in American education, and more multi-dimensional treatments of learning (e.g., earned grades vs. test scores, reading vs. math) need to be leveraged.

If, once these limitations are corrected and extensions are executed, the findings of this study hold up consistently, then the family-school connections reconceptualization of parental involvement might inform educational policy in the U.S. and other countries in targeted ways. In general, building two-way lines of communication between home and school—through regular meetings, mailings, web technology, and other means—could be an important step for the goal of raising achievement rates overall. Because the observed benefit of such two-way engagement did not differ by family SES but the prevalence of having such engagement did, these efforts might also contribute to the goal of reducing academic disparities. Also for the goal of addressing disparities, having schools amp up their communication strategies for lower SES parents who have not been visible at school might be valuable, and so too would be providing a venue for lower SES but highly home-involved parents to voice their concerns about their children's reading activities at school, request changes in these activities, or gain insights about how to use their home reading time to complement what is going on in school. In all cases, opening up lines of communication is key.

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Notes

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¹ To capture the full shape of the growth curve, a value was given to each semester-grade regardless of whether a test was taken (or data were collected) during that semester-grade; thus, for the slope, or time, 1 = kindergarten-fall, 2 = kindergarten-spring, 3 = first grade-fall, 4 = first grade-spring, 5 = second grade-fall, 6 = second grade-spring, 7 = third grade-fall, 8 = third grade-spring (0, 14, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64 for the quadratic, or time²).

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Participación de las "Otras Mujeres" en las escuelas: superando estereotipos de género y mejorando el aprendizaje

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Overcoming Gender Stereotypes & Improving Learning through the Participation of the "Other Women" in Schools

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Abstract

This article presents the results of research on how the daily participation of the “Other Women” -women without an academic background or from cultural and ethnic minorities- contributes to overcoming sexist stereotypes. The study demonstrates that their participation in instrumental learning activities transforms stereotypical beliefs about the skills of women without academic education, immigrant women, or those from cultural minorities. It can also be observed that their participation in decision-making spaces and in learning activities promotes student learning. In short, this study demonstrates that we need to include the “Other Women” into our diverse schools to progress towards the achievement of gender equity in education and society, and to create more positive learning experiences for all children.

Keywords: Gender, Stereotypes, Family involvement, Other Women, School success.

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Resumen

Este artículo presenta los resultados de la investigación sobre cómo la participación diaria de las "Otras Mujeres" -mujeres que no tienen formación académica o que pertenecen a minorías culturales o étnicas- en las escuelas, contribuye en la superación de los estereotipos sexistas. El estudio muestra que su participación, tanto en actividades relacionadas con el aprendizaje instrumental, como en espacios de toma de decisiones, transforma las creencias estereotipadas sobre las habilidades de las mujeres sin formación académica, las mujeres inmigrantes o las de minorías culturales. Además, esta participación fomenta el aprendizaje del alumnado. Por todo ello, es necesario incluir a las "Otras Mujeres" en nuestras escuelas para avanzar en el logro de la igualdad de género en la educación y en la sociedad y para crear experiencias de aprendizaje más positivas para todas las niñas y niños.

Palabras clave: Género, estereotipos, implicación familiar, "Otras Mujeres", éxito educativo.

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La existencia de estereotipos por motivos de género en la mayoría de las escuelas es una evidencia, como se demuestra en algunos estudios internacionales. Estos estereotipos, como indican Cramer y Skidd (1996), se manifiestan ya desde la edad de preescolar. Colombo (2003) también plantea la presencia de una diferenciación de género, por ejemplo, en las desigualdades existentes en el éxito educativo. Indica que persisten expresiones sexistas, que en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje no se tiene en cuenta la perspectiva de género y que están apareciendo dinámicas diferenciadoras y desigualitarias con relación al género y a la etnia.

Desde una misma perspectiva, Martin y Newcomer (2002), centrándose en las actuaciones del profesorado, indican que en el trato y en las interacciones que este colectivo establece con el alumnado siguen dándose estereotipos de género. También Osetrova (2004), mediante un estudio sobre las percepciones del profesorado, muestra que en este grupo sigue percibiéndose como natural algunas diferencias existentes por cuestiones de género.

Zittleman (2005), en esta línea, realiza un estudio sobre las percepciones del profesorado y alumnado en cuestiones de género. El profesorado percibe que hay un trato de igualdad o que la cuestión de género no es un tema que se trate en sus escuelas. Por el contrario, el alumnado observa la presencia de homofobia, peleas, asedio y agresión sexual. Esta relación existente entre estereotipos de género y violencia se contempla también en el estudio de Boland (1995). Respecto a las causas de esta violencia, Mahlstedt y Welsh (2005) indican que pueden ser debidas a problemas de comunicación (en situaciones concretas) y al poder y a la socialización de género (en situaciones más generales).

Respecto al ámbito familiar, hay estudios, como los de Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) que inciden en los beneficios que produce en la educación de los hijos e hijas, tanto la participación de las familias como la conexión entre familia, escuela y comunidad.

Por otro lado, una de las características que definen a nuestra sociedad y a nuestros centros educativos, es la existencia de pluralidad de culturas, de religiones, de diversidad de opciones, de estilos de vida y de modelos de familia y donde, como plantean Beck y Beck-Gernsheim (1998), es posible y obligatorio elegir qué tipo de vida y de relaciones

deseamos. Sin embargo, las mujeres pertenecientes a algunas culturas minoritarias, además de padecer estereotipos de género, sufren otros contruidos sobre su grupo y sobre su papel como mujeres en su cultura. Esta doble discriminación la encontramos, por ejemplo, en las mujeres gitanas quienes además de padecer desigualdad por ser mujeres también se enfrentan a la discriminación derivada de estereotipos de carácter racista (European Parliament, 2006).

Ante estas situaciones, desde algunas corrientes feministas se está pidiendo que se reconozca la pluralidad de identidades de las mujeres y que todas sus voces sean incluidas en los debates públicos y movimientos de transformación (Puigvert, 2001). Desde este mismo enfoque, también se incide en la necesidad de que las escuelas incorporen y normalicen los cambios que se están produciendo en las relaciones de género y en los modelos de familias, y en una educación que socialice en la prevención de la violencia sexista. En este sentido, es clave en el ámbito educativo la participación de la familia y de la comunidad en el día a día de la escuela como agentes transformadores y partícipes en la coeducación (Gómez, 2004).

Teniendo en cuenta todo lo anterior, este artículo se estructura de la siguiente manera. En primer lugar se presenta el marco teórico que fundamenta la propuesta educativa de la superación de estereotipos de género y culturales. A continuación, se describe la metodología utilizada en el estudio: La participació de les famílies als centres educatius de primària. Una eina de transformació dels estereotips sexistes del Institut Català de les Dones, Generalitat de Catalunya, 2008, que es la principal base tanto teórica como práctica del presente artículo. Este proyecto pertenece al ámbito temático de la transmisión de estereotipos sobre mujeres y hombres en los centros de educación. En tercer lugar, se exponen los resultados procedentes del análisis de las diferentes técnicas de recogida de información, de enfoque comunicativo, realizadas a profesorado, alumnado y familiares. Dentro de este último colectivo se dialoga concretamente con mujeres pertenecientes a minorías étnicas. Para finalizar, se exponen las conclusiones sobre los planteamientos y actuaciones educativas que están logrando la superación de estereotipos de género y culturales.

Marco teórico

El giro dialógico y el feminismo

Nuestra sociedad actual experimenta continuos cambios en los que el diálogo juega un papel clave (Aubert, Flecha, García, Flecha, & Racionero, 2008). A través del diálogo, los autores más relevantes de las ciencias sociales y educativas (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1995; Flecha, 2000; Freire, 2003; Habermas, 1981) cuestionan la monopolización que sobre el discurso han tenido y están teniendo los expertos. Teniendo en cuenta estos enfoques, se observa en los diferentes ámbitos sociales que cada vez se hace más indispensable la participación de las personas en los procesos de toma de decisiones, si se quieren crear propuestas, en este caso concreto educativas, que tengan una utilidad real, que sean de calidad y que generen transformación en el contexto educativo, social y cultural. En este sentido, el movimiento de las “Otras Mujeres”, en el marco del feminismo dialógico (Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert (2003), ha contribuido a la inclusión de las voces de todas las mujeres, tanto en el discurso feminista, como en las universidades, en las investigaciones o en los centros educativos.

Las “Otras Mujeres” (Puigvert, 2001) son aquellas mujeres que tradicionalmente han estado excluidas de las instituciones y de cargos importantes en la sociedad. Las inmigrantes, las pertenecientes a minorías culturales (como la gitana), las mujeres sin formación académica o las mujeres mayores constituyen un colectivo vulnerable en situación de riesgo de pobreza y desigualdad económica, social y educativa (European Commission, 2006).

El feminismo dialógico está luchando para que su voz, tradicionalmente silenciada e ignorada, esté presente en todos los espacios públicos de toma de decisiones. Mediante el diálogo igualitario (Flecha, 2000) entre todas las mujeres, es posible generar un nuevo feminismo que mejore las vidas de todas las mujeres y, a su vez, la sociedad.

Frente a lo que tradicionalmente se ha pensado, la investigación reciente confirma que la participación de “Otras Mujeres” en la toma

de decisiones y en otros espacios de la escuela ayuda en la identificación y en la prevención de situaciones de violencia de género (Oliver, Soler & Flecha, 2009; Oliver & Valls, 2004). A su vez, esta participación incrementa la motivación del alumnado para asistir a clase y para aprender (CREA, 2003-2005) y es una de las fuentes de la transformación personal y social (Puigvert, 2001).

También es importante destacar el importante papel que está teniendo el surgimiento de unas nuevas masculinidades. En diferentes ámbitos sigue predominando y aceptándose un modelo de masculinidad hegemónica, caracterizada por unos roles, valores y actitudes desiguales. Sin embargo, como indican Oliver & Valls (2004), un importante colectivo de hombres se está desmarcando de esta línea, rompiendo con los estereotipos sociales existentes y luchando para que se reconozca esta nueva masculinidad.

Transformaciones sociales y educativas para superar los estereotipos de género

Con el fin de superar los estereotipos sexistas que también tengan un impacto directo en los roles de género, han de tenerse en cuenta las relaciones de género existentes. El hecho de la presencia de más opciones personales y familiares repercute en el concepto de familia (Aubert, Duque, Fisas, & Valls, 2004; Beck, 2002) y esto tiene un impacto directo en la conceptualización de las propias mujeres. Por lo tanto, esta diversidad de tipos de familias, que implica una mayor diversidad de opciones para las mujeres, también debe incluirse en la tarea educativa de superar los estereotipos sexistas. La participación de “Otras Mujeres” en las escuelas es una herramienta clave para trabajar en esta línea.

Por otro lado, la interculturalidad, cada vez más presente en nuestras sociedades, establece nuevos desafíos respecto a la transformación de los estereotipos de género. Las mujeres inmigrantes y de minorías étnicas tienen que hacer frente tanto a las desigualdades de género como a las desigualdades culturales y étnicas. Un ejemplo lo encontramos en las mujeres musulmanas ya que se enfrentan a ambos estereotipos (De Botton, Puigvert, & Taleb, 2004), por ser mujeres y

por tener una opción cultural y religiosa determinada (Macedo & Goudari, 2006). Estos estereotipos sitúan a estas mujeres en unas condiciones de mayor vulnerabilidad y de mayor riesgo de exclusión social.

La transformación de las relaciones de género a través de la participación de las mujeres en las escuelas desde una perspectiva de la pedagogía crítica

En la investigación de CREA (2004-2005) se demuestra que la participación de las familias en las aulas, concretamente en el área instrumental de la lectura, ayuda en la superación de los estereotipos de género que se transmiten normalmente en estos espacios.

Propuestas educativas como el proyecto Comunidades de Aprendizaje¹, donde la participación de la comunidad en el día a día del centro es uno de los puntos calves, también ofrecen datos sobre cómo el incremento de interacciones en el aula y en el resto de espacios escolares, basadas en la participación de todas las familias en un plano de igualdad, contribuyen a la superación del fracaso escolar y a la mejora de la convivencia y de las vidas de muchas niñas y niños. Este proyecto está basado en el concepto de problematización de la pedagogía crítica (Freire, 2003) de la vida de los sujetos. En este caso, dicha problematización sería la realidad sexista en la que muchos niños y niñas crecen. Desde esta perspectiva, es necesario promover la reflexión crítica y dar la oportunidad para la transformación social para que se reduzcan las desigualdades que se dan por motivos de género. Esto implica ir más allá del lenguaje de la crítica con el fin de hacer lo que es posible (Giroux, 1988), la transformación de una realidad con componentes sexistas. Esto se puede conseguir si se realiza mediante un diálogo comprometido entre el profesorado (Freire, 2003) y en base a una visión más amplia de la realidad educativa que incluya aspectos sociales, políticos y económicos (Kincheloe, 2007), que hacen posible la construcción de escuelas más democráticas e igualitarias (Castells, Flecha, Freire, Giroux, Macedo, Willis, 1999).

El aumento de interacciones en el centro educativo propicia la diversidad de tipo de personas con sus respectivos valores, experien-

cias y conocimientos, lo que genera oportunidades continuas para cuestionar y romper con los estereotipos de género y culturales. Para que esto suceda, autores como Gómez (2004) proponen la idea de una filosofía de enseñanza mixta, que aumente el diálogo igualitario entre todos los agentes educativos.

Metodología

Objetivos

El principal objetivo del presente artículo y de la investigación que lo ha guiado es analizar cómo la participación de las “Otras Mujeres” en escuelas de infantil y de primaria, está contribuyendo en la transformación de los estereotipos de género y en la mejora del aprendizaje de las niñas y niños.

Enfoque metodológico

El punto de mira de la participación se corresponde con la de mujeres pertenecientes a minorías culturales y el enfoque del que se parte se basa en la perspectiva del feminismo dialógico (Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert, 2003; Puigvert, 2001) que plantea la necesidad de incluir las voces de todas las mujeres en un plano de igualdad, desde la perspectiva de la pedagogía crítica, en todos los espacios públicos para avanzar hacia la igualdad entre los géneros en la sociedad.

La metodología utilizada en esta investigación es la metodología comunicativa crítica (Gómez, Latorre, Sánchez y Flecha, 2006), implementada en diferentes proyectos del programa Marco de la Comisión Europea y del Plan Nacional I+D+I y basada en las contribuciones de autoras y autores reconocidos por la comunidad científica internacional.

El paradigma comunicativo crítico se mueve en un modelo de teoría social dual, que tiene en cuenta tanto la acción de los sujetos como la de los sistemas o estructuras. Habermas (1981) y Giddens (1984) consideran a los sujetos con capacidad para actuar y transformar la realidad. El primero lo hace a través de la relación entre mundo de la vida-sistema y el segundo mediante la interconexión de agencia humana

y estructura.

Uno de los principios en los que se basa este paradigma es en la inclusión igualitaria de la voz de las personas que participan en la investigación y en el análisis, tanto de las dimensiones que generan desigualdad, como de las dimensiones que la transforman. En este sentido, se parte de la idea de que el conocimiento científico se construye a través de un diálogo igualitario entre las contribuciones de la comunidad científica y las de las personas participantes en la investigación. Así, quienes investigan y quienes participan en la investigación lo hacen en un plano de igualdad, eliminándose el desnivel epistemológico que existe en la investigación social. De esta manera, las personas participan en la investigación como sujetos activos y, mediante un acuerdo intersubjetivo, se produce una desmonopolización del conocimiento experto que lleva hacia una mayor objetividad.

Este enfoque metodológico es idóneo para analizar los estereotipos de género y culturales y las desigualdades que generan. Mediante la metodología comunicativa, que contempla el diálogo igualitario en la elaboración de conocimiento y en el conocimiento de la realidad, se puede evitar el desnivel metodológico. De esta manera se impide que imperen los prejuicios propios del mundo de la vida de quienes investigan y se posibilita la transformación de las situaciones de desigualdad y exclusión. Si se hace un estudio sobre estereotipos de género y se interactúa con las “Otras Mujeres” para elaborar el conocimiento y analizar la realidad, se está posibilitando la superación de desigualdades y discriminaciones que padecen.

Muestra y técnicas de recogida de la información

El trabajo de campo se ha llevado a cabo en dos escuelas de infantil y primaria de Cataluña que cumplen los siguientes criterios: a) tenían un elevado número de alumnado inmigrante y, b) había mujeres de minorías étnicas participando como voluntarias en la escuela. Las dos escuelas también están implementando el proyecto de Comunidades de Aprendizaje, un proyecto para la transformación de las escuelas a través de la participación democrática de toda la comunidad educativa.

Recogida y análisis de la información

En la primera fase del proyecto se lleva a cabo una revisión de la literatura científica internacional (mediante la utilización de las bases de datos de las ciencias sociales más reconocidas como ERIC o SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS) sobre educación y estereotipos de género y culturales.

En la segunda fase de la investigación se ha realizado el trabajo de campo. Las técnicas utilizadas para la recogida de la información han consistido en la realización de: a) 4 entrevistas en profundidad a profesorado de cada uno de los centros, 4 grupos de discusión comunicativos al alumnado y de 12 relatos comunicativos de vida cotidiana (alumnado y familias).

Para el análisis de la información se han tenido en cuenta las dimensiones exclusoras, es decir, aquellas barreras que dificultan la transformación de los estereotipos de género y, también, las dimensiones transformadoras o aquellos componentes que contribuyen a transformar los estereotipos de género y culturales. Estas dimensiones se analizan teniendo siempre en cuenta el papel que tiene la participación de la comunidad educativa. Esta participación se ha analizado en diferentes ámbitos del centro educativo: en los de gestión del centro, en el aula y en la formación de familiares y se contempla también su relación con el aprendizaje y la convivencia.

Resultados

Participación igualitaria de mujeres de diferentes culturas

Las escuelas sobre las que se ha hecho la investigación apuestan por una participación real de las familias y de la comunidad. Participan en las comisiones de trabajo donde se toman decisiones, se crean normas y se organiza el centro, se las escucha y se tienen en cuenta sus aportaciones, como vemos en estas manifestaciones de dos profesoras de uno de los centros donde se ha realizado el trabajo de campo:

-También hay comisiones de trabajo, y son comisiones mixtas donde hay maestros y padres.

-Las familias siempre han participado, y desde que somos Comunidades evidentemente mucho más y con más poder decisorio. No ha sido nunca una escuela cerrada, siempre ha estado abierta a todo lo que la gente de fuera ha querido ofrecer y siempre se les ha escuchado y muchas veces se ha hecho.

En estas escuelas hay una participación en todos los momentos y espacios y está abierta a toda la comunidad educativa. Todo ello favorece que el alumnado interaccione continuamente con personas de diferentes culturas y etnias, como indica una profesora de uno de los centros investigados :

Están acostumbrados a que entre gente a las clases, y sin tener en cuenta si es de etnia gitana es de Marruecos, o es catalán, o con estudios o sin.

Las mujeres enseñan sus conocimientos

Hay una importante participación de mujeres de minorías étnicas e inmigrantes. Esto influye de forma general, tanto en las propias mujeres como en el alumnado con el que interaccionan. Las mujeres asisten asiduamente a espacios académicos, participan en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje en el aula, transmiten sus conocimientos y experiencias. En este proceso participativo, el alumnado ve a sus madres que participan de forma activa como una persona más de la comunidad educativa. Esta idea se ve reflejada en esta aportación de una profesora:

Aquí nos vienen madres marroquí y nos vienen madres gitanas y, claro, sus niños lo están viendo, que su madre está participando activamente como una persona más de la comunidad. Y claro, yo creo que eso influye. O sea, su madre no se queda en casa, o sea sale a la calle, viene a la escuela, está enseñando, bueno está transmitiendo sus conocimientos, está con los niños.

Las mujeres transforman estereotipos de género y culturales

Los principales resultados obtenidos demuestran que la participación de las “Otras Mujeres” en las escuelas es una herramienta eficaz para transformar los estereotipos de género. Su participación directa en actividades de aprendizaje instrumental promueve el aprendizaje de los niños y niñas. A través de su participación en actividades significativas en las escuelas, el imaginario social sobre ellas comienza a cambiar entre los diferentes colectivos: estudiantado, profesorado y familias.

El alumnado cambia sus puntos de vista sobre las habilidades de las mujeres inmigrantes, ya que han experimentado que les ayudan a aprender. Esta idea la expresa un estudiante de una clase a la que asisten mujeres voluntarias: "Me ha pasado cuando llegaron, y, no sé, no parecía que tenían estudios y lo han explicado muy bien".

También es importante destacar cómo la participación de las mujeres pertenecientes a otras minorías culturales repercute tanto en la superación de los estereotipos de género como de los que se derivan de la cultura del grupo al que pertenecen. De esta manera, el alumnado puede aprender y entender otras culturas y religiones. Estas ideas quedan expresadas en la siguiente aportación de una mujer musulmana que es voluntaria en la escuela a la que asisten sus hijos:

Sí porque cuando estaba explicando a los niños (...) he visto que muchos han quedado con la boca abierta. Lo he dicho a mi marido, era como... Como (los niños) tienen una imagen en su cabeza y en ese momento la imagen comenzó a cambiar un poco y los pobres estaban perdidos. Cómo una mujer marroquí con el pañuelo y todo esto, y cómo habla así fácilmente y se explica y...

En el análisis del trabajo de campo, una parte del profesorado refleja que la participación de las mujeres de diferentes orígenes y creencias permite que toda la comunidad educativa conozca y comprenda otras realidades, otras culturas, otros estilos de vida, que también forman parte de la sociedad actual. Un profesor que tiene a una mujer inmigrante de voluntaria en su aula explica cómo el hecho de que estas mujeres expliquen su cultura y su religión a todas las niñas y niños de la clase, posibilita que comprendan ciertos comportamientos culturales y religiosos, y esto reduce el sexismo, como vemos a continuación:

Les explican sus tradiciones y los niños van comprendiendo más por qué lo hacen, de otra manera no comprenden por qué hacen eso, y entonces hay más sexismo, porque no conocen lo que hay en el interior.

Las mujeres mejoran el aprendizaje y la motivación por aprender

La mejora del aprendizaje en todas las niñas y niños es otro resultado importante derivado de la investigación. La participación de “Otras Mujeres” en las aulas y en otros espacios de aprendizaje produce los siguientes efectos: motiva al alumnado a aprender más, incorpora diferentes formas de enseñanza y presenta el contexto del barrio en el aula. Algunas de estas ideas se ven reflejadas en la aportación de un estudiante:

Lo explican diferente porque a veces quieren explicar... No son maestros, ni lo explican cada día y entonces la profe está harta, me parece, de explicar y explicar, entonces las madres (...) lo explican de una manera que entendemos.

Otros de los efectos derivados de la participación de mujeres de minorías étnicas en el aula es que el alumnado está más motivado por estudiar, aprender e ir a la escuela, que su presencia en el aula enriquece a todos y todas y que se transforman las relaciones, como vemos en esta aportación de un profesor:

Están mucho más motivados. Y que entren, la verdad, ya te lo digo, que entren es enriquecedor para unos y para otros. La relación cambia totalmente.

También hay una motivación hacia el aprendizaje instrumental por parte de las propias mujeres que participan de voluntarias en el aula, aspecto que se transmite a los hijos e hijas y que repercute en un aumento del aprendizaje. Esta idea la expone una maestra:

A veces, antes de que le dé la ficha que ha de hacer, me dice: déjamela, que quiero aprender. Dice: es que en casa, después lo repaso. Me la repaso porque no me acuerdo de nada y me va bien porque repaso. ¡Mira, fracciones!

Otra consecuencia de la participación de las “Otras Mujeres” es que en ellas mismas hay un aumento de motivación por aprender nuevos aprendizajes instrumentales, como por ejemplo, el catalán porque creen que es positivo para ellas y para sus hijos e hijas, porque así les pueden ayudar en los estudios. Como indica una mujer inmigrante:

A mí me gusta mucho aprender idiomas y también pienso que es necesario porque, ahora, cuando hacen mis hijos los deberes y todo está en catalán, pienso que también yo tengo que aprender catalán para ayudar a mis niños también. De un lado para aprenderlo y cogerlo como idioma para mí misma, y también para mis hijos para ayudarles con la clase, los deberes y todo eso.

Las mujeres impulsan la solidaridad, la convivencia y el diálogo intercultural

Es importante destacar que una de las dinámicas de aprendizaje que se dan en el aula son los grupos interactivos. En los aprendizajes instrumentales, la clase se organiza en grupos donde, además del profesor o profesora, hay una persona adulta que apoya a cada grupo. Esto fomenta la solidaridad, el aprendizaje, la convivencia, la no discriminación y la superación de estereotipos en el alumnado. Igualmente, el hecho de que las mujeres participen en los grupos interactivos, a través de procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje instrumental, propicia la solidaridad, la convivencia y el diálogo entre ellas. Algunas de estas ideas las vemos expuestas en la aportación de una maestra:

Cuando hacíamos inglés el año pasado, recuerdo que entraba en el aula porque lo hacían en mi aula de inglés, y veía una mujer marroquí, una gitana, una mujer catalana y la mujer inglesa, allí las cuatro haciendo inglés. Claro, y después las ves hablando aquí fuera también O sea, ya no es el trabajo que hacen aquí dentro de la escuela, como en la comisión de trabajo o lo que sea, sino también cuando estás fuera, que ves hablar a una mujer gitana con una mujer marroquí.

Conclusiones

El análisis de la literatura científica revisada sobre educación y género incide en diferentes aspectos relacionados con las diferencias en el rendimiento académico o en el trato dado en función del género, con la superposición de identidades de género con identidades culturales y religiosas, o con la relación entre escuela-familias, entre otros. Se constata que, además de darse una educación que reproduce los estereotipos de género, también hay planteamientos dirigidos a su superación.

En una parte de la literatura científica analizada también se observa que tanto los centros educativo como las familias siguen educando, ya sea de manera involuntaria o inconsciente, en estereotipos sexistas. Pero también hay planteamientos enfocados hacia la superación de estos estereotipos a través, por ejemplo, de las iniciativas que se están proponiendo desde los nuevos modelos de masculinidad.

En términos teóricos, los resultados de la investigación aportan evidencias sobre la importancia de tener en cuenta las voces de las mujeres para avanzar en la lucha por la igualdad de género, para comprender las desigualdades a las que se enfrentan las mujeres en su vida diaria y para crear propuestas más eficientes para la acción. Esto significa que los planteamientos que parten del feminismo dialógico (Beck-Gernsheim et al. 2003) serán más válidos, científicos y eficientes. Así, desde la sociología hay propuestas que enfatizan tanto en la importancia de la democratización de las relaciones de género como en las contribuciones que hace el feminismo dialógico. Las propuestas de esta corriente feminista se orientan hacia la necesidad de cambiar la orientación educativa heredada de la sociedad industrial que, sin olvidar los avances conseguidos, han diseñado el tratamiento de la igualdad de género desde el conocimiento experto de las mujeres académicas profesionales de la educación, ignorando las aportaciones del resto de mujeres. En este sentido, la investigación internacional sobre actuaciones de éxito en educación y género está demostrando que la participación real de la comunidad educativa tiene un impacto positivo en la mejora del aprendizaje, en la calidad educativa y en la superación de todo tipo de desigualdades y discriminación.

La democratización en la educación y en las relaciones de género

aspectos conectados y, por lo tanto, la reflexión sobre la temática de la igualdad de género no compete sólo a un colectivo de profesionales en calidad de expertos. Para su reconstrucción se necesita la inclusión de todas las voces de la comunidad educativa, profesorado, familias y alumnado, entre otras, para poder cambiar los estereotipos excluyentes y los conflictos. En esta línea, existen proyectos de transformación de los centros educativos de carácter global, como Comunidades de Aprendizaje, y actuaciones de éxito, como los grupos interactivos o la formación de familiares que, con la inclusión de la participación real de familiares, están influyendo en la mejora del aprendizaje y en la inclusión y cohesión social. En este sentido, la investigación sobre las prácticas que caminan en esta dirección y su incidencia en la transformación de los estereotipos sexistas permite complementar esta línea de investigación que está emergiendo en nuestro país.

En el intento de superar los estereotipos sexistas, las estrategias educativas realizadas exclusivamente por profesionales de la educación tienden a fracasar, ya que no tienen en cuenta la realidad de muchas mujeres no académicas o incluso porque se basan en una visión estereotipada de las “Otras Mujeres”. Sólo a través de la participación directa e igualitaria de estas mujeres en la escuela, en su gestión, organización y en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, será posible poner fin a esos estereotipos, presentando otras realidades culturales y de género en el aula, en los espacios de recreo y en las diferentes zonas escolares.

La valoración de las habilidades de estas mujeres, así como la evidencia de que, tanto los resultados académicos como la convivencia, mejoran a través de su participación en las escuelas, ya es una de las herramientas más poderosas para transformar las percepciones negativas o desigualitarias que la sociedad tiene con relación a ciertas mujeres. A través de su participación, las escuelas pueden aumentar su potencial como motor de cambio social. Asimismo, este estudio indica que, para superar los estereotipos de género, no es suficiente que sólo debatan sobre esta realidad las y los profesionales. Tanto el profesorado como el alumnado deben interactuar llevando a cabo un diálogo directo con las mujeres que se enfrentan a unas imágenes estereotipadas sobre ellas mismas o sobre su cultura y etnia.

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Notas

¹ Ver: <http://www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net>

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Mentor-Novice Relationships and Learning to Teach in Teacher Induction: A Critical Review of Research

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Mentor-Novice Relationships and Learning to Teach in Teacher Induction: A Critical Review of Research

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Abstract

This review examines the influences of teacher-mentor relationships on novice teachers' learning to teach and the program and school contexts shaping this relationship during teacher induction. It reviews systematically four bodies of empirical literature since 1995. They include the studies on the consequences of what mentors and novices do for novices' learning to teach and their student performances, the role of what mentors and novices brought into their relationship that shapes teacher mentoring relationship, the impacts of mentoring programs on mentor-novice relationships, and the influences of school contexts on mentor-novice relationships. The findings, research methodologies, and future directions for research about teacher mentoring relationship are synthesized and discussed in each section and at the end.

Keywords: Mentoring Relationship, Teacher Induction, and Teacher Learning.

Although good teacher mentoring is presumably important to support beginning teacher retention and professional development during teacher induction (Feiman - Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1998), it is less conceptually clear what the good relationship means, what shapes this relationship, and what are the empirical bases for this assumption if any in the teacher induction literature (Wang & Odell, 2007). The major problem for a clear conception about mentoring relationships is that teacher induction programs are often developed for different purposes. Some are designed to keep beginning teachers in the teaching profession as many quit teaching within five years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Some are developed to socialize beginning teachers into the existing culture of teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992a). Others aim to support beginning teachers to develop professional teaching practices as expected by the professional standards and communities that are assumed to influence the important learning of all kinds of students and different from existing teaching practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). The various goals of mentoring often require different kinds of mentor-novice relationships that again can be constrained and facilitated by different factors and contexts in the schools and districts where these relationships are situated (Wang & Odell, 2002).

Substantial earlier research on teacher mentoring at the induction level has been systematically reviewed and synthesized with a focus on the interpersonal and technical aspects of the mentoring relationship that serves for the purposes of beginning teacher retention (Gold, 1990; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Strong, 2005). A conceptual review has been conducted to help define the role of teacher mentoring in helping beginning teachers develop professional teaching practice (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1998). The research studies on whether teacher mentoring programs and practices in teacher induction can influence beginning teachers' teaching practices has also been reviewed (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008).

These reviews help clarify the theoretical and empirical understandings about the role of teacher mentoring programs in helping retain beginning teachers in teaching and develop a clear understanding of the purpose and reasons for using teacher induction programs to

improve beginning teachers' teaching practice as expected by the profession. However, few systematic reviews have been conducted to synthesize and clarify the empirical literature on the nature and characteristics of mentoring relationships and their role in mediating the influences of induction and mentoring programs and school contexts on beginning teachers' learning to develop teaching practices that are in alignment with the professional knowledge and standards (Wang & Odell, 2007).

We believe that such a review on teacher mentoring relationships is necessary for several reasons. First, any expected results of beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally under the influences of mentoring in induction have to be realized through mentor-novice relationships with certain characteristics (Wang & Odell, 2007). These characteristics may not serve well for all the other purposes of the induction program and thus, it is important to develop an appropriate understanding about these characteristics of teacher mentoring relationships.

Second, these important characteristics of mentoring relationships can be shaped, to an extent, by many factors (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992b; Wang & Odell, 2002), which may include the personal characteristics of the mentor and novice themselves, the relevant induction program policies, implementations, and supports, and the culture and organization of teaching in the school contexts where various mentoring relationships are situated (Carver & Katz, 2004). Thus, it is necessary to understand properly the influences of various personnel, programs, and school factors that can shape the teacher mentoring relationships.

Third, although many empirical studies have been conducted to address the above issues, they are scattered and embedded in different kinds of literature in the fields of teacher education, teacher induction, teacher learning, and various subject education. Thus, it is necessary to develop a clear conception and a systematic synthesis about the body of literature on mentoring relationships that serve for beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally (Wang & Odell, 2007).

This review study conceptualizes and reviews the relevant literature on mentor-novice relationships during induction that influence the outcome and process of novice teachers' learning to teach professional-

ly. We believe that such a review can help clarify and strengthen the necessary knowledge base for policy makers and program developers to develop effective mentoring that supports novice teachers learning to teach professionally and identify the useful and specific directions towards which the teacher mentoring researcher community can further move the field forward.

Review Focuses and Rationales

In this review, we focus on the kind of mentoring relationship with two conceptual boundaries, which guide our search and selection of the literature. First, we focus on the teacher mentoring relationship in the teacher induction period when beginning teachers are in the first two years of their teaching after receiving their initial teacher preparation as typically defined by the literature (Odell & Huling, 2000). In some cases, we include the studies on beginning teachers' yearlong internship within the five-year teacher education programs or in alternative route programs since these teachers are often considered as first year teachers in the literature.

Second, we limit this relationship to the traditionally defined mentoring relationship in which an experienced teacher works with a beginning teacher in the school context (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995). We do not include other forms of mentoring relationships such as on-line mentoring, peer mentoring, and team mentoring, etc.

We structure our review around the following four bodies of literature relevant to the mentor-novice relationships in teacher induction. First, we examine the empirical literature on whether and to what extent what mentors and novices do in their relationships supports beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally as suggested (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Achinstein & Barrett, 2004; Wang, Strong, & Odell, 2004). Here, the term, "teach professionally," indicates the kind of teaching expected by the professional standards and/or developed based on professional knowledge of teaching and learning to influence student learning effectively, which can be different from the kind of teaching in the existing school contexts where the teacher mentoring relationships are situated since two kinds of teaching may or may not share these same characteristics and con-

ceptual bases (Wang & Odell, 2007).

Second, we also explore the empirical literature on what mentors and novices expect of themselves or each other to function in their relationship, how they conceptualize teaching and teacher mentoring, their knowledge and skills for teaching and mentoring, and other personal factors that they each bring into their relationships. We develop this focus for our review because the teacher mentoring relationships are assumed to be shaped by what mentors and novices bring into their relationship based on the analysis of the cases of mentor-novice working with each other in the school settings (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2003) and the research on mentoring relationships conducted in non-school environments (Feldman, 1999).

Third, we also review the literature on the contexts, such as the policies, resources, and implementation of the induction program and the cultures and organizations of teaching in the schools where mentoring relationships are situated. As suggested in the literature (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992b; Flores & Day, 2006), these contexts can work well, compete, or interfere with each other in exerting consistent or inconsistent influences on mentoring relationships and consequently, the different outcomes of novices' learning to teach professionally.

Review Methodology

An integrative approach is used for this review. In such a review, we describe how the issue of our focus is conceptualized within the literature, analyze how research methods and theories have shaped the outcomes in the field, and critique the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant literature as suggested (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005).

The literature for this review came from three sources. First, we searched three databases: ERIC, Education Full Text, and Professional Development Collection using the terms, mentor, novice, and relationship and then using the terms, mentoring and induction. Second, we used our personal collections of articles and book chapters on mentor-novice relationships over the years. Third, we also used those relevant studies cited and referenced in the literature we found

through the above search processes. Together, these three searches produced about 240 references in all, which included research papers, literature reviews, position papers, and book chapters published between 1995 and 2011. We limit our literature review to those publications after 1995 because the research before this time focused on teacher mentoring as a practice to retain beginning teachers rather than their learning to teach professionally for which many reviews have already been conducted (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1998).

For the process of review, we first read each of these studies that we found carefully and eliminated those that did not address any aspects of the mentoring relationship as defined earlier. This elimination led us to about 83 articles and publications with 43 empirical studies for this review. Then, we read and categorized these articles based on our focuses, synthesized, analyzed, and critiqued them within each category, and made connections across different categories. The specific studies including the authors, participants, methodology, and brief findings of each study that we reviewed in each of the above section are listed in Table 1 (annexed at the end of this article). In the following sections of this review, we first present the findings around each of our four review focuses. Then, we synthesize our overall findings and discuss how well we have accomplished our tasks that we intended.

What Do Mentors and Novice Do in Their Relationship and Its Consequences

What mentors and novices do in their relationships should be the central focus in examining the kinds of influences of mentoring relationships during induction on novice teachers' learning to teach professionally (Schwille, 2008; Wang et al., 2008). In this section, we review the studies on what happened in the mentoring relationships with a strong focus on their interactions around teaching (Lee & Feng, 2007; Shank, 2005; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) and the influences of what mentors and novices did in their mentoring relationships on what novice teachers learned through their relationships (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, Parker, & Zeichner, 1993).

Various mentoring relationships and the relationships that mentors and novices prefer

Several studies were developed to explore the kinds of mentoring relationships that exist in induction contexts and what kind of relationship mentor and novice teachers themselves prefer or they think most useful for novice teachers' learning to teach. Emerging from this body of literature are the following kinds of relationships and the kind of mentoring relationship that mentors and novices liked most themselves.

First, three general mentoring relationships are identified by Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, and Erickson (2005) in different periods of mentoring during the induction based on their analysis of interview data from 18 mentors and 26 novices from an induction program. They are (1) *the responsive mentoring relationship*, in which novices set the action agenda through questioning and posing concerns for mentors while mentors serve as an aide, advisor, cheerleader, resource, or guide. (2) *The interactive relationship*, in which mentors and novices would recognize each other as peers, bring to the relationship their own contributions, develop, and adjust the action agenda jointly in response to interests and desires of both. The mentor in this relationship was characterized as a friend, colleague, and trusted advisor. (3) *The directive mentoring relationship*, in which the mentor would take charge, set the action agenda, develop a clear expectation for novice's performance, guide novices toward the expected performance through modeling, and offering feedback and direct suggestion. In this relationship, the mentor assumed a role as a master teacher, guide, and coach.

Second, mentors and novices in different cultural contexts tended to favor *the responsive mentoring relationship* more and see such a relationship as effective because it allowed novice teachers' freedom to pursue their own agenda of learning to teach while offering novices the support that they needed. Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, and O'Brien (1995) interviewed 29 mentors and novices from a state-mandated internship program in the US and found that the novices needed the support from their mentors as fledgling teachers while expecting their mentors to assume flexible roles based on the interns'

personal needs. Both mentors and novices in the study preferred to construct their relationships jointly based on mutual respect and trust. Lofstrom and Eisenschmidt (2009) came to a similar finding based on the analysis of thematic interviews with 16 beginning teachers in the induction program in Estonia. They found that the novices in their study favored the reciprocal mentoring relationship with mutual trust, in which, novices had freedom to pursue their own personal professional development while expecting their mentors to be available for offering feedback and suggestions for their learning to teach. Drawing on the interviews with 12 secondary and elementary beginning teachers in Canada, Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks, and Lai (2009) also found that the novice teachers in their study favored those mentors chosen by themselves based on their own personal needs instead of those mentors assigned by the program. They stressed that their mentors needed to do more than just share their ideas, such as spend more time in socializing them into the teaching profession. Drawing on pre- and post surveys and semi structured interviews with beginning teachers in three schools in England, researchers (Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006) identified beginning teachers' favorite mentoring relationships on their professional development. In this expected relationship, mentors were able to model teaching that novice teachers would like to learn, engage them in discussions, and provide feedback on their teaching while being flexible enough to let novice teachers broaden their own teaching experiences and to recognize the challenges that they were facing.

Third, other researchers confirmed that novice teachers tended to see mentors' professional expertise and local knowledge as less useful when they judged the effectiveness of their mentoring relationships based on their own personal and psychological needs as assumed in the literature (Wang & Odell, 2002). Greiman, Torres, Burris, and Kitchel (2007) surveyed 40 beginning teachers working with mentors in their subject areas but not from their own schools and 40 working with mentors from their school but not in their same subject areas on the psychological support they received from mentors, their compatibleness with their mentors, and their satisfaction with their mentoring relationships. These researchers found that no matter whether beginning teachers were working with mentors with expertise

in subject content or local knowledge about their schools, their preferred relationship with their mentors and the kind of support that they received from their mentors were not statistically different.

Focuses and patterns of mentor-novice interactions around teaching

A few studies explore the focuses and patterns of mentor-novice interactions around teaching and analyze whether and to what extent, these interactions offered and limited the chances for novices to learn to teach professionally. These focuses and patterns showed in three areas.

First, some researchers (Achinstein & Barrett 2004) showed the potential role of effective mentors in supporting novices in improving their teaching practice through looking at teaching events alternatively around teaching. These researchers collected interviews with mentors, observations of novices' teaching, and mentor-novice conversations on novice teachers' teaching from 15 mentor-novice pairs in a U.S. comprehensive induction program over 2 years in the US. They found that the novices in their study often framed the issues related to student learning in their teaching from a managerial perspective while their mentors tended to frame these issues from either human relations or political perspectives, which led to different judgments about student learning. Through mentor-novice conversations around novices' lessons, the effective mentors were often able to engage novices in reexamining student learning from an alternative perspective, diagnosing the challenges, and thus, developing alternative teaching approaches to meet the learning needs of diverse students.

Second, other researchers (Strong & Baron 2004) showed that very few mentors from the same program as the above were able to directly engage their novice teachers in examining their teaching carefully from a more useful yet alternative perspective. They analyzed 64 lesson-based conversations between 16 mentors and their novices and found that most mentors tended to avoid giving direct advice or simply offered indirect suggestions for novices' teaching, of which only one-third produced elaborated responses from their novices in order to sustain their relationship with their novices.

Third, the other study (Wang, Strong, & Odell 2004) showed the focus and patterns of mentor-novice interactions around novices' lessons in different countries were varied, which offered different learning opportunities for novices to learn to teach professionally. Drawing on the observations of novices' lessons and mentor-novice discussions about novice teaching from two U.S. and two Chinese mentor-novice pairs in induction contexts, the study showed that in US mentor-novice conversations, mentors often solicited novices' comments and assessments on their own lessons using frequent questions, seldom offered suggestions and critical comments on their lesson, and focused more on individual student learning and management. Such mentor-novice interactions reflected the U.S. decentralized curriculum control and individualist culture of teaching, in which, teachers did not have to rely on each other in improving their teaching and the direct critique of one's teaching was often seen as an intrusion into an individual teachers' private arena. In Chinese mentor and novice conversations, mentors were more likely to offer direct assessment, suggestions, and comments on novice's lessons and focus on subject content and student understanding related to the lessons and the alternative approaches to teaching. These interaction characteristics were more consistent with the Chinese centralized curriculum control and the contrived teaching organization with subject content as a base, in which teachers with the same subject content backgrounds had to rely on each other in improving their teaching and their teaching practice was public and open for comments and suggestions from each other.

Influences of different mentoring relationships on novices' teaching and student learning

A number of studies explored the influences of different kinds of mentoring relationships on novices' teaching and student learning in novices' classroom. They came to somewhat consistent findings about the influences of mentoring relationships on novice teachers' teaching but the inconsistent findings about the influences of mentoring relationships on student learning in novices' classroom.

First, two studies examined the influences of different kinds of mentoring relationships on novices' conceptions of teaching and teaching practices and found the frequent interaction between mentors and novices about novices' teaching practices shaped novices' professional knowledge and practice of teaching. One study (Stanulis & Floden 2009) pre- and post- assessed 24 beginning teachers in a U.S. induction program on their ideas of classroom atmosphere, instruction and content, management, and student engagement. It compared the scores from those novice teachers who interacted weekly with their mentors who were partially released and had intensive training with those scores from novice teachers who did not have weekly interactions with their mentors who were not released and did not receive intensive training. The researchers found that the scores of beginning teachers in intense and interactive mentoring relationships increased more than those who were not in such mentoring relationships, which suggested that frequent mentor-novice interactions with novices on novices' teaching increased novices' professional knowledge of teaching. A case study (Wang & Paine, 2001) analyzed the interviews, observations, reflections, and documents from a Chinese mentor-novice pair in the induction context. It found that the frequent mentor-novice interactions in which the mentor modeled, analyzed, and reflected with the novice on each other's teaching following a progressive process changed the novice' mathematics teaching substantially toward the professional standards as evidenced by observations of the novice's teaching over a year.

Second, other researchers examined the effects of having or not having mentoring relationships on the student performances in the beginning teachers' classrooms. They came to conflicting findings about the effects of having a mentoring relationship on student performances in novice teachers' classrooms. Fletcher and Barrett (2004) compared the student reading performance data from the classes of 70 beginning teachers who had an intensive relationship with mentors in an induction program in California with those data from the classes of their colleagues with moderate teaching experiences and the classes of their experienced colleagues. They also online surveyed the beginning teachers on the support that they received from their mentors.

The researchers found that the students in the beginning teachers' classrooms had almost equal and slightly higher performance scores than those in the classes of their experienced colleagues although lower than those in the classrooms of their colleagues with moderate teaching experiences. They attributed such performances of beginning teachers' students to the influences of their intensive mentoring relationship because the survey data showed that most beginning teachers thought that their mentors helped them improve their instruction, planning, strategies, and management through their interactions about student learning and assessment data.

However, another study (Huling & Resta, 2010) challenged the above finding using the data from a different U.S. state. It collected the student performance scores in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies on the state level standardized tests from the classes of beginning teachers and their colleagues in 165 elementary, 183 middle and 103 high schools. It calculated the student performance gap between the classes of beginning teachers who interacted frequently with mentors on their teaching and the classes of their experienced colleagues, and the student performance gap between the classes of beginning teachers who did not receive mentoring support and the classes of their more experienced colleagues. Then, they compared the two performance gaps with each other. The study showed that the student performances of beginning teachers with and without mentoring relationships lagged behind those of their experienced colleagues respectively and there was no statistically significant differences between the two gaps. The two findings suggest that the substantial support that beginning teachers received through their mentoring relationships did not transfer to the gains of student performance in the classrooms of these beginning teachers' classrooms.

Third, several studies were developed to examine whether different kinds of mentoring relationships affected student performances in the beginning teachers' classrooms differently. The findings from these studies again demonstrated conflicting results. Fletcher and Strong (2009) compared pre- and post-student performances in mathematics and language arts from the classrooms of 14 fourth and fifth grade beginning teachers who worked with fully released mentors with those from the classrooms of 16 beginning teachers who worked with school-

based mentors in California. They found that students in the classrooms of beginning teachers with full release mentors showed greater gains in their performances than those in the classrooms of beginning teachers with school-based mentors. The researchers concluded that the intense mentoring relationship that beginning teachers with full released mentors experienced played an important role in producing the better student performance gain.

In contrast, a series of studies conducted by researchers at the Mathematica Policy Research, using much larger databases in a three-year stage, came to mixed findings about the effect of intensive mentoring (Glazerman, et al., 2008, 2010; Isenberg et al., 2009). In the first year study, the researchers interviewed and surveyed the elementary beginning teachers and their mentors, observed the beginning teachers' mathematics and reading lessons, and assessed their student performances in mathematics and reading. They compared the data collected from those teachers in 210 schools where the intensive mentoring relationships were implemented with those teachers in 208 schools without intensive mentoring relationships. The researchers found that beginning teachers in the intensive mentoring relationships had more stable mentors and more frequent mentor-novice interactions than those without intensive mentoring relationships but the teaching practices and student performance in mathematics and reading were not statistically different between the two groups.

In the second year study, the researchers interviewed and surveyed those beginning teachers still involved in teacher induction, and assessed their students' performances in mathematics and reading in the two groups of schools. They found that beginning teachers with intensive mentoring relationships still had more stable mentors and more frequent mentor-novice interactions than those without intensive mentoring relationships but they received less support in their second year. Again, the student performances in mathematics and reading were not statistically different between the two groups.

In the third year study, the researchers collected data similar to the second year from the two groups and found that beginning teachers in the intensive mentoring relationships were no longer different from

those without the intensive mentoring relationships in terms of the level of support they received from their mentors. However, their student performances in mathematics and reading in the classrooms of beginning teachers with intense mentoring support were statistically higher than those in the classrooms of beginning teachers without intensive mentoring.

Section Summary

Several findings emerged from our review in this section. First, we identified three kinds of mentoring relationships in the induction period including those of responsive, interactive, and directive. These relationships could occur to a particular mentoring pair interchangeably during the induction. However, beginning teachers and many of their mentors in various cultural and national contexts tended to value the mentoring relationships with responsive characteristics, in which beginning teachers were able to set the agenda for their interactions with mentors based on their individual needs, concerns, and problems and what they offer on an a needed basis.

In this line of research, few studies were developed to analyze the characteristics of the conceptions and practices of teaching that beginning teachers preferred to develop through their mentoring relationship. Even fewer used these characteristics as a basis to examine their perceptions of effective mentoring relationships and the similarities and differences between these characteristics and those of well-conceptualized teaching based on professional knowledge and standards. Without such studies, we cannot be sure whether the mentoring relationships beginning teachers perceived as effective for learning to teach professionally. In addition, the findings about different kinds of mentoring relationships in induction were based on a limited sample from one program, which can prevent its generalization to the boarder contexts.

Second, we also captured several interesting patterns and characteristics of mentor-novice interactions on novices' teaching that might extend or limit novice teachers' chances in learning to teach professionally. Effective mentors in the US were able to engage

novices in the conversation about teaching practice, in which they often challenged their novice teachers' idea and judgment of their teaching practice and pushed their novices to examine issue of teaching and learning from alternative perspectives. Chinese mentors were more likely to offer direct assessment, suggestions, and comments on novices' lessons, on subject content, and relevant student understanding than their US counterparts. The unique contexts of curriculum control and teaching organization in each country could shape the above differences in the focuses and patterns of mentor-novice interactions in each country.

However, few studies in this area were developed to tie these interaction patterns and characteristics to what novice teachers actually learned and how they used what they learned in their classrooms. Again, studies in this area either involved a few cases or used samples from one program, which again prevent a careful examination about the causes of these interaction focuses, patterns, and characteristics and whether or to what extent these focuses, patterns, and characteristics were more likely to occur in the mentoring relationships in broader contexts.

Third, emerging from our review are the examples of how intensive mentor-novice interactions on teaching could contribute to beginning teachers' conceptions and knowledge necessary for teaching professionally and their actual teaching as envisioned by the professional standards. However, studies in this area were few and underdeveloped. The conceptual base for measuring the above relationship is also weak. What are the necessary knowledge and skills for effective teaching and relevant mentoring relationships? What are the characteristics of effective teaching for student learning? These are still questions that are not properly answered and yet these answers play an important role in developing a conceptual base for the above-suggested studies.

Fourth, our review further showed mixed findings about the impacts of intense mentoring on student performance through influencing beginning teachers' teaching practice. Some studies showed that beginning teachers involved in intensive mentoring were able to produce higher student performances than their more experienced colleagues and those who were not involved in such mentoring

relationships while other studies challenged these findings. One reason for these mixed findings can be that the influences of intensive mentoring were based pretty much on whether and how often mentors and novices met and talked about teaching, leaving what they actually talked about and how they talked about teaching unexamined and uncharacterized. Thus, the potential variation in quality of the intensive mentoring might have different influences on novice teaching quality and compromise the results in different studies.

Another reason can be that teaching and student performances can be influenced by many other factors directly and indirectly. Without a clear understanding about these factors and their competing and/or interactive influences and taking these influences into consideration in designing studies, the mixed findings can easily occur. All the existing studies are based on the assumption that teaching is the only direct factor responsible for student performances; however, this assumption is again not well sustained (Kennedy, 2010). If it is, whether teaching can be changed alone by the reform policy and practice, such as structured intensive mentoring relationships, have not been clearly conceptualized and sustained (Cuban, 1993; Sykes, Bird, & Kennedy, 2010).

What Mentors and Novices Bring into Their Relationship and Its Consequences

Research on teacher mentoring before the 90s has been flooded with studies focusing on the characteristics of mentors, their dispositions, and skills necessary for their mentoring work. The underlying assumption of this body of research is that mentors are more powerful and dominant than their novices in developing positive mentoring relationships and bring about positive outcomes for the novice teacher. However, as shown in the analyses of mentoring in the contexts of organization management (Feldman, 1999) and reform-minded teaching (Wang & Odell, 2007), both mentors and novices can contribute to the characteristics and functional or dysfunctional outcomes of their relationships with either consistent or inconsistent expectations, experiences, knowledge, and skills. In this section, we present specific findings from our review in relation to the above

assumptions in teacher induction.

Influences of matching and mismatching expectations between mentors and novices

Several studies explored the influences of matching and mismatching expectations and conceptions between mentors and novices on the effectiveness of mentor and novice communication about teaching. These studies also examined whether such differences in matching could lead, eventually, to different results of beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally.

Drawing on interviews and conferences with the participants and their own logs and documentation about their relationships from a U. S. induction program, researchers (Bullough & Draper, 2004) demonstrated a case study on a triad relationship between a mentor, a university supervisor, and an intern. In the relationship, the incompatible initial positioning of their own role and that of others shaped the negotiation of power and position and the dysfunctional communication on teaching among three parties. This negotiation and communication ultimately interfered with the intern's effective induction into teaching. Another case study (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008) analyzed the data of interviews, observations, and lesson-based conferences from two mentoring relationships in the year-long internship program in US. It found that the compatible initial conceptions of mentoring, expectations for mentor-novice communication, and beliefs about teaching in one pair lead to a more harmonious relationship between the mentor and the novice. The incompatible initial conceptions of mentoring, expectations for mentor and novice communication, and beliefs about teaching in the other pair led to a more contentious relationship between the mentor and novice. Using interview and observation data from two elementary mentoring relationships over a two-year period in US, Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) showed that mentors with effective teaching and mentoring skills could only be effective in supporting their beginning teachers to learn to teach professionally when their beginning teachers developed compatible personal history and dispositions for their role in their relationship with mentors.

Influences of mentor and novice initial recognitions about each other's teaching

Other studies investigated the influences of the initial recognitions that mentors and novices developed about each other's practice and knowledge of teaching on the dispositions that the mentor and novice assumed for their roles in their relationship. They further explored whether and how these dispositions shaped the interaction patterns in their mentoring relationships.

Drawing on survey, observation, interview, and artifact data from six pairs of elementary mentoring relationships in the US, Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, and Pressley (2008) found that in contrast to less effective mentoring relationships, the mentoring relationships that supported beginning teachers' use of effective teaching practices often had the following characteristics. The mentors were more effective teachers while beginning teachers had more accurate self-awareness of their own strengths and challenges related to their mentors' teaching practices in the beginning. Consequently, the mentors were more willing to engage beginning teachers in frequent interaction around instruction while beginning teachers were more open to learn from their mentors. Wang and Odell (2003) analyzed the survey, interview, observation, and document data from two mentoring relationships in one elementary classroom in an alternative route program in the US urban school context. They found that although the two mentors had developed effective writing instruction as envisioned by the professional standards, their interactions with two beginning teachers in their classroom were quite different as shaped by their understanding of what each beginning teacher wanted to learn about writing instruction. Each beginning teacher also positioned themselves differently towards their relationship with the mentors based on their assessment of the mentors' teaching practices and whether such practice was what they wanted to emulate. In another case study with two elementary mentoring relationships in a fifth year internship program in two US schools, Wang (2010) showed that in one relationship, both the mentor and novice recognized that they had compatible conceptions of good mathematics teaching and thus, developed consistent expectations for each other's role in their relation-

ship. These consistencies led to effective and frequent communication in the relationship that focused on moving the beginning teacher towards mathematics teaching as expected by the professional standards. In contrast, the other beginning teacher moved toward mathematics teaching encouraged by the school but discouraged by the standards due to the mentor and novice's inconsistent images of each other's teaching and expectations for their roles in their mentoring relationship.

Influences of novices' thinking and mentors' emotion on their relationship

Two studies explored how the quality of novices' thinking about teaching and how the mentors' emotional needs has an important influence on their mentoring relationships. Bullough, Young, Hall, Draper, and Smith (2008) collected the scores of nine U.S. beginning teachers on the reasoning tests measuring cognitive complexity and the reflections from these beginning teachers and their mentors about their role expectations for mentoring relationships, conceptions of teaching problems, and the use of evidence for justifying their beliefs. By comparing two kinds of data sources, these researchers found that the levels of beginning teachers' cognitive complexity were associated with the different conceptions and expectations that mentors and novices held for their relationships, which might cause different levels of tensions and disappointments in their mentoring relationships. The higher the level of beginning teachers' cognitive complexity, the lower the level of tension and disappointment the mentor and novice teachers would experience and vice versus.

Drawing on individual and group interview data from nine secondary school mentor teachers in a U.S. internship program, Bullough and Draper (2004) explored the emotional aspects of mentoring relationships and their consequences on mentoring relationships. They found that mentors were not only expected to attend to both the emotional and professional needs of their novice but also they often hid from their novices the intensity and complexity of their work and wanted to be liked, respected, and appreciated by their novices and their colleagues. Consequently, their relationships with

novices were under the stress of their complex duties as mentors and their own personal emotional needs, which could shape their focuses and the ways of working with their novices in their mentoring relationships.

Section Summary

Our review in this section sheds some light on several conceptual assumptions in the literature of mentoring about the influences of what mentors and novices brought into their relationships on their relationships and thus, what novices learned about teaching. First, the roles that both mentors and novices expected for themselves and each other to play in their relationships, to an extent, influence the focuses and patterns of mentor and novice interactions in their relationship, which could either support or limit beginning teachers' opportunities to learn to teach professionally. Second, their role expectations for themselves and each other could be influenced by their initial assessment of whether there was matching or mismatching between their conceptions and practices of teaching, existing knowledge and skills for working in their relationship, as well as novices' cognitive complexity and mentors' emotional preparation for their relationship. These findings seem to be useful in helping explain why the results from mentoring relationships from similarly structured induction programs and in similar school contexts can be substantially different from each other (Wang & Odell, 2007).

However, these findings were generated pretty much from limited case studies involving a few pairs of mentoring relationships in one program. Such a limitation in methodology, to an extent, prevents the generalization of these findings to the broader context of teacher induction. Deeper qualitative studies involving different mentoring relationships at different grade levels, in different subject areas, and school contexts and the large scale studies that survey and observe the relationships between what mentors and novices bring into their relationship, what they do in the relationships, and what beginning teachers learn from their relationship are necessary. To conduct these studies, a further and clearer conception of what they bring into, what they did in, and what beginning teachers learn from their relationships

is necessary in guiding the design and interpretation of these studies.

In spite of the above limitation, these findings offer several implications for policy makers and practitioners in teacher induction. First, it is important to select mentors carefully for their mentoring relationships by considering their conceptions and skills of teaching and mentoring necessary for supporting beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally. Second, it is also important to match mentors and novices with compatible personal qualities for the mentoring relationship. More importantly, proper initial training needs to be developed for both mentors and novices in preparing them for their relationships along with on-going support for both mentors and novices in their relationships.

The Influences of Program Contexts on Mentor-Novice Relationships

Most mentoring relationships in teacher induction are structured and supported through various induction programs with multiple components, such as policy mandates, financial and human resources, training, implementations, and evaluations (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Feiman-Nemser et al., 1998; Sweeny & DeBolt, 2000). However, the influences of different components of induction programs on what mentors and novices do in their relationships and the ways in which such influence occur are not well understood.

One popular assumption is that the components of comprehensive induction programs have a strong influence on what mentors and novices do and the results of beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally and effectively (Barnett, Hopkins-Thompson, & Hoke, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). These components include the orientation for mentors and novices, professional development activities for novices, and selecting, training, and guiding mentors to observe, reflect, and formatively assess beginning teacher's teaching (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). In the following, we present our review findings about the influences of various induction program components on the mentoring relationships.

Components of induction program that influence mentor-novice relationships

Several studies examined the induction program components that influence mentor-novice relationships and its outcomes based on perceptions of mentors and novices. Nielsen, Barry, and Addison (2007) analyzed the surveys of 826 elementary, secondary, and special education beginning teachers from a US induction program that structured a formal mentoring relationship as a key component over multiple years. They found that the novices tended to view their chances to have a formal relationship with the mentors who had time to observe and discuss their teaching. They also valued the professional development activities for them during the program. The study (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010) that surveyed and interviewed 27 beginning teachers and 16 of their mentors in a US comprehensive induction program in which mentoring relationships as a main component came to a similar conclusion. Most participants in the study valued their mentoring relationships and team professional development.

Drawing on journals and interviews from 16 elementary and secondary beginning teachers who completed their induction program in England, McCormack, Gore, and Thomas (2006) found that most participants felt the orientation sessions at both the district and school level regarding the policies, regulations, resources and supportive personnel available were the most useful component of their induction program. While the elementary participants welcomed a strong relationship with their mentors from the same grade level, who were able to engage them in professional conversation, offer suggestions based on the observation about their teaching, or even teach with them. The secondary participants placed less value on their mentors who were often not from the same subject areas and were responsible for assessing their qualification officially while placing greater value on their colleagues in the same subject area from other schools as informal mentors to discuss and share their ideas and concerns of teaching.

Influences of program policy implementation on mentor-novice relationships

Several studies examined the influences of induction program policies and implementation on mentoring relationships. They together suggest that the program implementation process is worth a careful exploration as it impacts the mentoring relationship differently even in the same program. These studies showed the combination of influences of program policies and implementations impacted the mentoring relationships from the perspectives of mentors and novices.

Interviewing 374 randomly selected first- and second-year teachers on their experiences of official mentoring in their induction program in three US states, researchers (Kardos & Johnson, 2010) found that although assigned experienced teachers as their mentors, new teachers often had inappropriate mentor-novice matches. Low percentages of them were observed by or had conversations with their mentors about the core activities of teaching, especially in low-income schools or in mathematics, science, and technology areas. Bauer and LeBlanc (2002) examined the beginning teacher perceptions about the impact of mentoring in one US induction program using focus group interviews with 35 groups of beginning teachers as its data base. They revealed that many beginning teachers in the study were not aware of how mentors were assigned with attention to time and location. However, the participants in those effective relationships reported that mentors were able to focus on improving participants' teaching practice, modeling effective practice, and acting as a critical friend.

Other studies examined carefully the influences of induction program policies on the mentoring relationship and its result. Alhija and Fresko (2010) surveyed 118 mentors working in comprehensive induction programs in Israel, where mentoring was a key component and revealed that mentoring policies were significantly correlated to mentoring activities and mentors' attitudes. The satisfied mentoring relationships were often related to the program policy on the recruitment, training, and matching of mentors with beginning teachers. Youngs (2007) interviewed elementary and secondary first- and second-year teachers, their mentors, principals, and district administrators and observed mentor-novice interactions and other

induction activities in two US induction programs and made the following findings. Although the two districts served similar student populations and had similar policies about mentor training and work conditions, their policy differences in mentor selection and assignment allowed the beginning teachers in one district to experience higher quality assistance through their mentoring relationships than their counterparts in the other district in light of acquiring curricular knowledge, planning instruction, and reflecting on practice. A study (Kilburg, 2007; Kilburg & Hancock, 2006) surveyed and interviewed 149 mentoring teams in four US school districts over a 2-year period. They showed that the insufficient time assigned for mentoring work and inappropriate mentor-novice matches based on personality, grade level, and the same school impacted the effects of mentoring relationships the most. These problems were associated with inadequate program policies about mentoring programs and mentoring relationships, assessment, financial commitments, mentor selection, and training for problem solving. They were also associated with the school principal's role and how program coordinators and administrators used their time in implementing the program.

Influences of mentor-training on mentor-novice relationships

The other component of the induction program examined by the research in this area was kinds of mentor training in induction programs and their influences on mentoring relationships and their outcomes. These studies explored several focuses and ways of mentor training and their expected influences.

Koballa, Kittleson, Bradbury, and Dias (2010) collected and analyzed interviews, group discussions, written cases, and postings from 37 secondary mentor teachers who participated in a US science-specific mentor training program. They found that the training program was able to help participants learn to use the discourse of science teaching, classroom observation, and interpersonal mentoring strategies to mediate their thinking about mentoring. These skills and strategies were assumed important to help mentors respond to the challenges and dilemmas that beginning teachers might encounter in

their science teaching. Tang and Choi (2005) examined the influences of the theory-and-practice connection model of mentor training on the mentoring competences of 52 mentors using group interviews in Hong Kong. They found that participants were able to connect the research-based knowledge conveyed in their training course with their structured mentoring practice in the program. Such a connection helped improve their conceptual understanding of mentoring, empathetic understanding of beginning teachers, and their competence in mentoring. However, some participants expressed difficulty in applying what they learned to the actual mentoring in their schools. Researchers (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2008) collected and analyzed the pre- and post- mentor training observations from 40 elementary mentors in a mentor training program on versatile supervisory skills for communication with novice teachers in England. They found that although mentors had acquired seven supervisory skills for communication before receiving any type of training, after receiving training, an increase in the frequency and duration was observed among the mentors in using these supervisory skills for stimulating reflection among beginning teachers. Other researchers (Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005) examined the influences of mentor training that engaged 30 secondary mentors in England in learning how to support novices for using self-evaluation about their learning to teach. They analyzed the audio- and video-taped meetings that the mentors developed with beginning teachers at different points of their training and found that mentors who participated in this project were able to use the “prompts” and adopt different styles in engaging novices in self-reflection about their teaching.

Section Summary

Our review in this section leads us to the following findings about the relationship between various components of comprehensive induction programs and mentor-novice relationships. First, mentors and novices seemed to agree that the formal and properly structured mentoring component in the program could help develop more frequent professional conversations and careful observations of and feedback on beginning teachers’ teaching in their mentoring relationships. This is

the case especially when mentor-novice relationships were matched according to compatible personality and grade level and when mentors did not have the role of assessing the qualifications of their beginning teachers.

However, few studies were devoted to capturing what actually happened in the mentoring relationships and their discussions and its impacts on the specific conceptions and practices of beginning teachers' teaching based on observation. It is even rare that a literature-based conception of effective teaching was used as a base for the analysis about the influences of mentoring components on beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally. Especially, it is rare to see the studies that examine the above influences by comparing those who are exposed to the mentoring component of the program with those who are not or by pre- and post-assessments of those in the mentoring program based on professional standards of teaching (Shavelson & Towne, 2002).

Second, when these induction program policies were not implemented consistently, their influences also varied from substantial to little. Again, few studies in our review assessed the influences of program policies and implementations based on a careful literature-based conception of effective teaching. It is even rare to see that any studies were devoted to examining the relationship between what actually happened in the mentoring relationships and its impacts on the specific conceptions and practices of beginning teachers' teaching under the influences of these program policies and implementations.

Third, our review in this section suggests that the carefully conceptualized and thoughtfully delivered mentoring training could influence various kinds of conceptions, knowledge, and skills necessary for mentoring practices that support beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally. However, whether and to what extent these influences could be sustained and become generative is still a question that has not been well explored.

The existing studies in the field failed to examine the relationship between what actually happened in the mentoring relationship and its impacts on the specific conceptions and practices of beginning teachers' teaching under the particular kinds of influences of mentoring training. It is rare to find studies that examine how well beginning

teachers are prepared and supported through novice training in order to be engaged in mentoring relationships for learning to teach professionally. Such an examination is important since, as we pointed out earlier, mentoring relationships could be shaped by what both the mentor and novice bring into their relationship (Feldman, 1999; Wang & Odell, 2007).

Overall, the studies reviewed in this section are few, either qualitative in nature or using smaller sample sizes from one program. Such a situation prevents the findings in this section from being generalized to broader contexts of teacher induction, on the one hand. On the other hand, it also limits the chances to conduct a reliable meta-analysis about the influences of specific induction program components using accumulated and consistently focused studies.

Influences of School Contexts on Mentoring Relationships and Novices' Teaching

The influences of school contexts on mentor-novice relationships can be reasonably assumed for several reasons. First, beginning teachers' learning to teach is situated in the school where their teaching practices are exposed to the various influences in their school context. These influences include the demographic characteristics of students (Ladson-Billings, 1999), ways in which curriculum, instruction, and assessment are developed and required for teaching (Cohen & Spillane, 1992), how teachers are organized to work, and the cultural traditions of the teaching and social relationships in the school (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Lortie, 1975). These school contexts play an important role in shaping teachers' identities as teachers in their early teaching careers as shown in the longitude documentation of their development (Flores & Day, 2006). Second, mentors themselves are often experienced teachers in the school contexts and their expertise are shaped by the existing school cultures and organizations, which may not reflect or support the kind of teaching that beginning teachers need to develop as expected by the professional knowledge and standards (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Puk & Haines, 1999). Third, the effects of induction programs have to be realized through school organization

and contexts, in which mentors can not avoid the tension and conflicts between various influences in schools, the needs and expectations of the program, and personal characteristics of mentors and novices even if mentors can be selected, trained, and assigned to work with novice externally (Devos, 2010). In this section, we present our review findings about the influences of school contexts on mentoring relationships and beginning teachers' learning to teach professionally.

Influences of school culture, organization, and curriculum on mentor-novice relationship

Some researchers explored the direct influences of school culture, organization, and curriculum assessment systems on how mentors and novices thought about mentoring, their interaction patterns, and behaviors in their relationships. The review results of these studies are presented below.

Drawing on the interview data from 50 second year teachers in Massachusetts, Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001) characterized three types of professional cultures in different schools, each of which influenced mentoring relationships differently. In *veteran-oriented cultures*, veteran teachers determined the norms of interactions with little attention to the needs of beginning teachers. Mentors were assigned to novices to strengthen and transfer the school culture to their novices while novices seldom met their often inaccessible mentors, who either taught in different subjects or grade levels or were uninformed about the instructional issues that novices most wanted to discuss. In *novice-oriented cultures*, the inexperienced teachers determined the norms of professional interaction with little experienced guidance. Schools often had great difficulty providing mentors to beginning teachers and mentor–novice interactions were infrequent with a focus on moment-to-moment crises. In *integrated professional cultures*, beginning teachers received sustained support from colleagues across experience levels. Mentor-novice interactions were regular and frequent, in which both parties shared their thoughts about teaching, and the new approaches of teaching were often discussed and tried through the mentoring relationships.

Wang (2001) analyzed the interviews and weekly logs collected over a year from twenty-three US, UK, and Chinese mentors and novices including some US and all the Chinese mentoring pairs in the induction programs. He found that the decentralized curriculum and teacher-controlled assessment shaped the beliefs of US mentors and novices about the importance for beginning teachers to know individual students and develop their own styles and philosophies of teaching. The responsibility of working with many novices in different school, of which they were outsiders, pushed US mentors to have fewer but longer interactions with their novices focused on general issues of students and teaching. In contrast, the centralized curriculum and assessment influenced the beliefs of Chinese mentors and novices in that novices should learn how to understand the centralized curriculum and textbooks. Furthermore, Chinese mentors taught in the same grade level and subject areas as their novices, and they taught larger classes but fewer lessons each day. These contexts allowed them to develop frequent interactions around the issues of subject-related pedagogy.

Influence of compatible and incompatible program and schools contexts

A few studies examined the influences of the compatible and incompatible situations between school contexts, mentoring programs, and mentor and novice personal characteristics on mentoring relationships. These studies showed to what extent, school contexts, mentoring programs, and mentor and novice's personal characteristics can be compatible with each other often influence greatly the functions of the mentoring relationship in supporting novice teachers' learning to teach.

Drawing on interview data from seven second-year beginning teachers, four department heads in schools, and five mentors in England, Dymoke and Harrison (2006) examined the incompatible situation between the expectations of an induction program and the expectations of the school contexts and its influences on the mentoring relationships. Their analysis indicated that the expectations of a school where students and teachers were not held accountable for their performances did not encourage their beginning teachers to become

self-monitoring or critically reflective practitioners as envisioned by the program. Consequently, the beginning teachers experienced a form of mentoring with a focus on teaching procedures inconsistent with their personal and professional goals. By surveying 243 Israeli beginning teachers in the comprehensive induction programs, Nasser-Abu Alhija and Fresko (2010) found that the compatible expectations and practices between the induction program and school contexts led to the satisfied experiences of mentors and novices about their programs. Their hierarchical regression analysis suggested that these compatible supports included the ecological support from the mentor, help from the principal, assistance from other school colleagues, reasonable workload, and relevant teacher training. Among these compatible supports, mentors and school colleagues had the greatest impact on beginning teachers' socialization into teaching. In another survey study involving 169 Israeli science and technology secondary teachers, the researcher (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2009) came to some challenging findings. The mentoring relationships with a focus on conceptual understanding of teaching were associated with beginning teachers' perceptions of mentoring effectiveness in different kinds of department cultures in different schools. No significant "fit" between any mentoring relationships and particular department cultures in different schools was found related to beginning teachers' perceptions of mentoring.

Section Summary

Our review in this section led us to the following understandings about the influences of school contexts on mentoring relationships in the induction programs and thus, on novice teachers' learning to teach professionally. First, the curriculum and assessment systems used, the ways in which teaching and mentoring were structured, how students are organized for teaching, and the professional culture in the schools could exert powerful and direct influences on the beliefs of mentors and novices about mentoring and their focuses and patterns of interactions in mentoring relationships. However, the consequences of the mentoring relationships shaped by these school contexts on the specific conceptions and practice of beginning teachers' teaching were not captured based on interviews and observations. Thus, whether or to

what extent the influences of school contexts on mentoring relationships can prompt beginning teachers' teaching practices is still a question that deserves further investigation.

Second, the influences of compatibility between the program expectations and requirements and the school contexts on mentoring relationships were not sufficiently sustained with consistent evidence. One reason can be the differences between what mentors and novices perceived as effective mentoring for beginning teachers' learning to teach and what actually happened in their relationships that positively impacted their learning to teach professionally. These differences can lead to compromised results. Few studies in the relevant literature assessed the influences of the compatibility or incompatibility between the program expectations and the school contexts on what mentors and novices did in their relationships and on the specific conceptions and practices of beginning teachers' teaching professionally based on careful observations. Research that compared those who were in the compatible situation with those who were not in capturing the influences of either situation on what novices learned were also rare.

Conclusion

In the beginning, we conceptualized several focuses for this review as suggested in the literature (Carver & Katz, 2004) including: What kinds of mentor relationship are out there? What happens in these relationships? What are the influences of these relationships on novice teachers' learning to teach professionally and student learning? How these relationships are shaped by the combination of competing factors, among which, what mentor and novice bring into their relationship, their program, and school contexts? Our review of the existing empirical research helped us develop a much clearer picture about these focuses and questions

First, through this review, we have developed a better understanding about the kinds of mentoring relationships that mentors and novices preferred and what and how mentors and novices talked about teaching in their mentoring relationships. Our review seems to suggest positive link between what mentors and novices do in their relationship and

their beginning teachers' teaching practice is emerging from the existing literature. However, a possible positive link between an intensive mentoring relationship and student performance in beginning teachers' classrooms is still assumed rather than sustained empirically as argued in the literature (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Second, we have identified substantial evidences for the assumption in the literature (Feldman, 1999; Wang & Odell, 2007) that the expectations, conceptions, knowledge, and skills of teaching and mentoring, and the cognitive and emotional preparation that mentor and novice bring into their relationships could shape their relationships toward functional or dysfunctional directions. However, the link of these expectations, conceptions, knowledge, skills of teaching and mentoring to the quality of novice teachers' learning to teach professionally is still unable to be sustained empirically.

Third, our review also found that the implementation of program policies and training for mentors can be important in influencing the quality of mentoring relationships in the programs as assumed (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992a). However, few studies focused on the program training to prepare novices for their relationship with mentors. Again, we are still not clear whether mentoring relationships under the influences of the program components, implementation, and mentor training has anything to do with what actually novice teachers are able to teach professionally and find their way into the student performances.

Fourth, we have recognized in the relevant empirical literature that the school professional cultures, curriculum and assessment systems and teaching and mentoring organizations can also play an important role in shaping the mentoring relationship situated in these contexts as assumed (Wang et al., 2008). We still have insufficient empirical support for the connection between different kinds of school contexts, induction programs, mentoring relationships, and what novice teachers are able to learn to teach professionally.

In short, our review suggests that the research on mentoring relationships and mentoring practices as influenced by the personal factors of mentors and novices as well as the program and school contexts, and the influences of these relationships and practices on novice teachers' conceptions, knowledge, and skills of teaching profes-

sionally are still fragmented, less well conceptualized, and scattered everywhere. This review is only to draw the attention of the research community to the important issues and directions of research in the field and inspire further conceptions and research. These further conceptions and research studies will help build a more solid knowledge base upon which policy makers and program developers will be able to develop effective mentoring programs that support novice teachers' learning to teach professionally and effectively.

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Table 1: Basic Information of Studies Reviewed in Relation to Teacher Mentoring

Study	Participants	Methods	Major Findings
What Mentors and Novices Do In Their Relationship and Its Consequences			
Roles of Mentors and Novices			
Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Erickson (2005)	18 mentors, 26 novices - induction program	Interview	Three general mentoring relationships – responsive, interactive, directive
Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O'Brien (1995)	29 mentors and interns - state-mandated internship	Interview	Preferred relationships constructed jointly on mutual respect and trust
Lofstrom & Eisenschmidt (2009)	16 beginning teachers - induction program	Thematic interview	Novices prefer reciprocal mentoring relationship with mutual trust
Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks, & Lai (2009)	12 beginning teachers	Interview	Novices prefer relationships established through self-identification of needs rather than a program
Harrison, Dymoke, & Peil (2006)	32 beginning teachers in England	Pre- and post-surveys, semi structured interviews	Novices prefer mentors who are able to model lessons, initiate discussions, provide feedback, broaden experiences, and recognize challenges
Greiman, Torres, Burris, & Kitchel (2007)	40 beginning teachers assigned to mentors in subject area but different school & 40 beginning teachers assigned to mentors not in subject area but in school	Surveys	Mentors' professional expertise or local knowledge are not important in supporting novices' personal and psychological needs

Focuses and Patterns of Interactions			
Strong & Baron (2004)	16 mentors and their novices - induction program	Lesson-based conversations	Mentors provide indirect suggestions, of which 1/3 produce responses, rather than direct advice
Achinstein & Barrett (2004)	15 mentor-novice pairs - induction program	Interview w/ mentor, observations of novices' teaching, mentor-novice conversations	Novices frame issues from a managerial perspective, while mentors frame issues from a human relations or political perspective. Effective mentors engage novices in reexamining issues from alternative perspectives.
Wang, Strong, & Odell (2004)	Two US and two Chinese mentor-novice pairs - induction program	Observation of novices' lessons, mentor-novice conversations	US mentors solicit novices' comments and assessments of their own lessons, seldom offer suggestions or critical comments, and focus on individual students and management. Chinese mentors offer direct assessment and suggestions and focus on subject content and student understanding.
Influences of Different Kinds of Relationships			
Stanulis & Floden (2009)	24 beginning teachers - induction program	Scores from assessment of professional teaching practice	Intense mentoring influences beginning teachers' understanding of what it means to teach professionally
Wang & Paine (2001)	Chinese mentor-novice pair - induction program	Interview, observations, reflections, and documents	Support from a mentor substantially changed a beginning teacher's mathematics instruction towards what it means to teach professionally
Fletcher & Barrett (2004)	70 beginning teachers	Online survey	Higher student performance scores of beginning teachers were associated with support from an intensive mentoring relationship

Huling & Resta (2010)	165 elementary, 183 middle school, 103 high school beginning teachers and their mentors	Interview of novices, survey of mentors, mean scores of students' state level standardized examinations	Student performances of beginning teachers, involved in mentoring or not, lagged behind student performances of experienced teachers
Fletcher & Strong (2009)	14 beginning teachers with fully released mentors & 16 beginning teachers with school-based mentors	Student performance scores in mathematics and language arts	The students of beginning teachers who had fully released mentors versus school-based mentors showed greater gains
Glazerman et al. (2008)	Beginning teachers in 210 schools with intense mentoring & beginning teachers in 208 schools without intense mentoring	Interview, survey, observations of beginning teachers' mathematics and reading lessons, student performance in mathematics and reading	Those involved in intense mentoring had more stable mentors and more regular and frequent mentor-novice interactions; however, teaching practices and student performance were not statistically different
Glazerman et al. (2010)	Beginning teachers in 210 schools with intense mentoring & beginning teachers in 208 schools without intense mentoring	Interview, survey, student performance in mathematics and reading	The relationships between mentors and novices were similar in terms of support provided, but student performance was higher for those who had had intense mentoring
Ilsenberg et al. (2009)	Beginning teachers in 210 schools with intense mentoring & beginning teachers in 208 schools without intense mentoring	Interview, survey, student performance in mathematics and reading	Those involved in intense mentoring had more stable mentors and more regular and frequent mentor-novice interactions, although they received less support in their second year. Student performance was not statistically different

What Do Mentors and Novices Personally Bring Into Their Relationship and Its Consequences			
Expectations and Conceptions			
Bullough & Draper (2004)	9 mentors, 14 secondary education interns	Interview, logs, documentation, conferences	Dysfunctional communication interfered with the intern's effective induction into teaching
Bradbury & Koballa (2008)	2 mentor-novice pairs - internship program	Interviews, observations, lesson-based conferences	Compatible initial conceptions about the mentor-novice relationship, in terms of communication and beliefs, led to a more harmonious relationship
Norman & Feiman-Nemser (2005)	2 mentor-novice pairs - induction program	Interviews, observation	The degree of mentor effectiveness depended on the beginning teacher's development of a compatible personal history and dispositions for their role in the relationship
Initial Recognitions			
Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, & Pressley, 2008)	6 mentor-novice pairs	Survey, observation, interview, artifacts	Mentoring relationships are more effective when beginning teachers are aware of their own strengths and challenges related to their mentors' effective classroom practices.
Wang & Odell (2003)	2 mentor-novice pairs - alternative route program	Survey, interview, observation, documents	The interactions between mentors and novice are shaped by what the beginning teachers want to learn as well as the beginning teachers' assessment of whether they want to emulate their mentor or not. (Wang & Odell, 2003)
Wang (2010)	2 mentor-novice pairs - internship program	Interview, observation, and documents	Compatible conceptions of good mathematics instruction led to consistent expectations of roles within the relationship and effective and frequent communication, which led the beginning teacher to learn and implement practices consistent with professional standards

Emotional and Professional Aspects			
Bullough, Young, Hall, Draper, & Smith (2008)	9 mentor-novice pairs	Reflections	The cognitive complexity of beginning teachers could play a role in difficulties that arise between the conceptions and expectations held by mentors and novices
Bullough & Draper (2004)	9 mentor-novice pairs	Individual and group interviews	The mentor-novice relationship may be shaped by a mentor's personal emotional needs as well as the stress from the complex duties of mentoring
The Influences of Program Context on Mentor-Novice Relationships and Its Consequences			
Components of the Induction Program			
Nielsen, Barry, & Addison (2007)	826 elementary, secondary, and special education beginning teachers - induction program	Survey	Novices valued formal relationships in which the mentors had time to observe and discuss their teaching. They also valued professional development focused on their needs
Bickmore & Bickmore (2010)	27 beginning teachers and 16 mentors - induction program	Survey, interview	Structured mentoring relationships and team professional development were valued by most novice
McCormack, Gore, & Thomas (2006)	16 beginning teachers in England - induction program	Journals, interviews	Orientation sessions regarding policies, regulations, resources, and supportive personnel were useful components. Elementary teachers valued same grade level relationships, but secondary teachers tended to value informal mentoring they received from colleagues in the same subject versus their formal mentors

Induction Program Policies and Implementation			
Kardos & Johnson (2010)	374 first- and second-year teachers - induction program	Interview	Mentors and novices are often matched inappropriately and low percentages of novices had conversations with their mentors about the core activities of teaching
Bauer & LeBlanc (2002)	35 groups of beginning teachers	Focus group interview	Novice are often unsure of how they are matched with a mentor, but found the most effective relationships to be those in which the mentor focused on improving the novice's practice by being a critical friend
Alhija & Fresko (2010)	118 mentors - induction program	Survey	Satisfying mentor-novice relationships often related to program policy on recruitment, training, and matching of mentors with novices
Youngs (2007)	20 first- and second-year teachers from two school districts	Interviews, observations	Policy differences in mentor selection and assignment between two districts led to higher quality assistance in the areas of curricular knowledge, planning instruction, and reflecting on practice for novice
Kilburg, Kilburg, & Hancock (2006)	149 mentor-novice pairs	Survey, interview	The greatest impacts on the mentor-novice relationship included insufficient assigned time for mentoring work and inappropriate matches based on personality, grade level, and school placement
Training focused on Mentoring			
Koballa, Kittleston, Bradbury, & Dias (2010)	37 secondary mentors - mentor training program	Interviews, group discussions, written cases, postings	Participants learned how to use the discourse of science teaching, classroom observation, and interpersonal mentoring strategies to mediate their thinking through training programs

Tang & Choi (2005)	52 mentors	Group interviews	Participants were able to connect research-based knowledge learned in a training with their mentoring practice, which helped improve their conceptual and empathetic understandings as well as their competence
Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Kortagen, & Bergen (2008)	40 elementary mentors - mentor training program	Pre- and post-training observations	While mentors acquired skills on supervision and communication in a training, a shift was observed in the frequency and duration of the use of skills after the training
Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley (2005)	30 secondary mentors - mentor training program	Audio and video tape of meetings with beginning teachers	Mentors who participated in a project on how to engage novices in self-evaluation were able to use the prompts and styles learned to promote the novice's self-reflection
The Influences of School Contexts on Mentoring Relationships and Novices' Teaching			
School Culture, Organization, Curriculum, and Assessment			
Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu (2001)	50 second year teachers	Interview	The orientation of the school culture (veteran, novice, or integrated) influences that determines the norms of interaction and the amount of guidance provided novice teachers. The integrated culture provided beginning teachers sustained support and regular interaction with mentors
Wang (2001)	23 US, UK, and Chinese mentor-novice pairs	Interviews, weekly logs	The decentralized curriculum and teacher-controlled assessments of the US led mentors and novice to focus on individual students and developing their own style and philosophy of teaching; where as the centralized curriculum and assessment of China promoted learning and understanding of the curriculum and textbooks

Compatible and Incompatible Situations			
Dymoke & Harrison (2006)	7 second-year teachers, 4 department heads, & 5 mentors in England	Interview	When the induction program and school held incompatible goals, beginning teachers did not learn to become self-monitoring or critically reflective practitioners
Nasser-Abu, Alhija, & Fresko (2010)	243 Israeli beginning teachers - induction program	Survey	When the induction program and school held compatible goals, mentors and novice felt more satisfied with their experience
Shapira-Lishchinsky (2009)	169 Israeli secondary science and technology teachers	Survey	When mentoring relationships focused on a conceptual understanding of teaching, beginning teachers viewed the mentoring relationship as more effective

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Manifestações culturais em território Kalunga: A festa de nossa senhora de aparecida como elemento de (re)afirmação identitária e reaproximação étnica

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Cultural Manifestation in Kalunga territory: The Feast of Nossa Senhora de Aparecida as Element of Identity (Re)affirmation and ethnic Reapprochement

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Abstract

The Kalunga are quilombolas communities situated in the north of state of Goiás, in Brazil, formed by remaining slaves, freed blacks and fugitives, whose territory was recognized as Historical Site and Cultural Patrimony. The article intends to present the feast of Nossa Senhora de Aparecida of quilombolas Kalunga communities Diadema and Ribeirão, located in the Brazilian city of Teresina de Goiás, making an approach about its ethnic sense and its role in the territorial identity construction of the group and in the collective memory constitution. Moreover, the article discusses the territoriality, the ways of life, the traditional knowledge of these communities and the practices of celebration in honor to the patroness. The research allowed us to understand how the Kalunga maintained and still maintain their cultural practices in shaping of their territory, building their cultural identity under several influences, since they adopted the Catholic religion as the core of their cultural manifestations, resorting at the same time to the knowledge that they brought from their homelands.

Keywords: Quilombolas community, Identity, Traditional Knowledge.

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Manifestações Culturais em território Kalunga: A Festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida como Elemento de (Re)afirmação Identitária e Reaproximação Étnica

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Resumo

Os Kalunga são comunidades quilombolas situadas no norte do estado de Goiás, no Brasil, formadas por remanescentes de escravos, negros alforriados e fugitivos, cujo território foi reconhecido como Sítio Histórico e Patrimônio Cultural. O artigo intenta apresentar a festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida das comunidades quilombolas Kalunga Diadema e Ribeirão, localizadas no município brasileiro de Teresina de Goiás, fazendo uma abordagem sobre seu sentido étnico e seu papel na construção da identidade territorial do grupo e na constituição da memória coletiva. Além disso, o artigo discute a territorialidade, os modos de vida, os saberes tradicionais dessas comunidades e as práticas do festejo em homenagem à padroeira. A pesquisa realizada permitiu compreender como os Kalunga mantiveram e ainda mantêm suas práticas culturais na conformação de seu território, construindo sua identidade cultural sob diversas influências, uma vez que adotaram a religiosidade católica como cerne de suas manifestações culturais, recorrendo ao mesmo tempo a saberes trazidos de suas terras de origem.

Palavras-chave: Comunidade quilombola, Identidade, Saberes tradicionais.

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As práticas culturais, carregadas de sentido religioso, de crenças, mitos e divindades, se constituem como uma ponte que viabiliza a relação do indivíduo e da sociedade com seu passado e sua memória.

Nesse sentido, a festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida nas comunidades Kalunga de Diadema e Riberião, no qual o presente artigo se centra, apresenta-se como um campo aberto de investigações para a História Cultural, seja na construção de identidades territoriais, no surgimento de novas territorialidades vinculadas à festa, no fortalecimento da memória coletiva da comunidade, ou ainda nas relações sociais que se estabelecem: a festa como o “local de encontro”, intenções políticas e comerciais, mobilidade entre as comunidades, entre outros. Além disso, a forma como essas comunidades se organizam no período festivo, no cotidiano e nas vivências está associada à forma como foi construída sua identidade étnico-cultural engendrada pela religiosidade católica.

Por meio dessa pesquisa, pretendeu-se compreender o sentido étnico da festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida e seu papel na construção da identidade territorial do grupo e na constituição da memória coletiva. Para tanto, foi necessário identificar os saberes tradicionais e os ritos vinculados às manifestações culturais e religiosas durante a festa, na tentativa de apreender seus símbolos, significados e sentimentos que a mesma permite acionar. Diante disso, considerou-se essencial discutir, no que tange ao processo histórico, o sentido da apropriação dos elementos culturais da religião católica, presentes e predominantes na festa, e de que forma eles foram incorporados à cultura afrobrasileira, na criação de certos tipos de “códigos culturais” (Souza, 2002).

A primeira etapa da pesquisa consistiu na revisão bibliográfica do tema proposto e na fundamentação teórico-metodológica. Para tal, buscou-se artigos e outras produções, tais como dissertações, com enfoque sócio-antropológico, histórico e geográfico, que exploram festas e religiosidade em territórios afrodescendentes, as comunidades quilombolas Kalunga, sua identidade, seu território e suas práticas socioculturais.

A segunda etapa refere-se às visitas à comunidade, que teve o intuito de absorver o cotidiano de vida das comunidades e as práticas desveladas no festejo, tendo a pesquisa participante sugerida por

Brandão (1988), como abordagem metodológica. Nessas pesquisas de campo ocorreram simultaneamente a observação e a conversa com grupos detentores dos saberes locais - como os foliões, por exemplo - como procedimento para identificar a relação das práticas festivas com a religiosidade e a identidade coletiva. As pesquisas de campo nas comunidades Diadema e Ribeirão ocorreram no mês de maio de 2011, e durante a Festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida, em outubro de 2011.

Os hábitos dessas comunidades, consideradas tradicionais, passaram a apresentar importância para a academia e ao próprio Estado, pois permanece a junção entre a religiosidade católica, os rituais símbolos e práticas ligadas à cultura africana. Essas práticas são relações históricas que foram estabelecidas com o lugar de vivência, e as manifestações culturais são um dos aspectos que permitem que o grupo mantenha sua relação de pertencimento ao lugar. Diante disso, a identidade étnico-cultural e territorial recebe enfoque, uma vez que “ela recorre a uma dimensão histórica, do imaginário social, de modo que o espaço, que serve de referência, ‘condense’ a memória do grupo”. (Haesbaert, 1999, p. 180).

A investigação da festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida no território Kalunga em Teresina de Goiás, portanto, é de fundamental importância para o fortalecimento do saber tradicional junto à academia. A pesquisa permitiu compreender como os Kalunga mantiveram e ainda mantêm suas práticas culturais na conformação de seu território, construindo sua identidade cultural sob diversas influências, uma vez que adotaram a religiosidade católica como cerne de suas manifestações culturais, recorrendo ao mesmo tempo a saberes trazidos de suas terras de origem.

A territorialidade Kalunga: modos de vida e saberes tradicionais

As comunidades denominadas quilombolas são grupos sociais cuja identidade étnica e cultural os distinguem no conjunto da sociedade. Por mais de dois séculos essas comunidades formadas por remanescentes de escravos, negros alforriados e fugitivos, constituídas em quilombos buscam por seus direitos e pela garantia de seus territórios. Com a inclusão do Artigo 68 no Ato das Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias da Constituição Federal de 1988, que

prevê o reconhecimento da propriedade das terras dos remanescentes de quilombos, esses grupos foram finalmente reconhecidos oficialmente pelo Estado e passaram a buscar de maneira mais efetiva seus direitos (Neiva, 2008).

Dentre essas comunidades tradicionais encontram-se, na região norte de Goiás, nos municípios de Cavalcante, Monte Alegre e Teresina de Goiás, os Kalunga. Em termos numéricos e históricos está entre as maiores do país, ocupando uma área de 253,2 mil hectares, com uma população estimada de 3.752 habitantes, segundo Almeida (2010a). Em 1991 esse território foi reconhecido como Sítio Histórico e Patrimônio Cultural Kalunga, pela Lei Complementar do Estado de Goiás, número 11.409-91. As comunidades Kalunga encontram-se entre os Vãos da Serra Geral, parte ocupada pelo vale do Rio Paranã e seus afluentes, às bordas da Chapada dos Veadeiros na qual se situa o Parque Nacional da Chapada dos Veadeiros.

Os estudos sobre comunidades quilombolas em Goiás se aprofundaram a partir da aprovação de leis que reconhecem os Kalunga como remanescentes de quilombolas e que caracterizam seu território como patrimônio cultural e sítio de valor histórico. Discussões acerca do território, modos de vida e saberes tradicionais dessas comunidades contribuíram para o aprendizado e difusão de conhecimentos a acadêmicos e pesquisadores.

Considerar a questão da territorialidade Kalunga é essencial no estudo de suas manifestações culturais, visto que é no espaço vivido que essas manifestações se dão, e no território que se definem as identidades com suas idiosincrasias (Haesbaert, 1999). O território não significa necessariamente propriedade, mas se traduz por um sentido de pertença, que estabelece relações de poder e defesa de uma cultura adquirida ou em construção.

Para Almeida (2010b), o território Kalunga representa substancialmente uma convivialidade, ou seja, uma espécie de relação social, política e simbólica que liga o homem à sua terra enquanto constrói sua identidade cultural. A autora explica que uma identidade cultural é composta por elementos que, juntos, formam um todo integrado e interrelacionado, como a língua, a história, o território, os símbolos, as leis, os valores, as crenças e outros elementos tangíveis.

Em conversas com moradores foi possível constatar que sua identidade se estabelece na relação que os mesmos têm com o lugar e o sentimento de pertencimento dá-se em virtude de ser o lugar onde nasceram e foram criados, como pode ser entendido no seguinte depoimento:

“A pessoa que nasceu e criou aqui dentro, ele tem muito o estilo do lugar, tem vontade de andar, uma hora tá aqui, uma hora tá lá no pé da serra, outra hora pega o anzol e vai pra beira desse rio aí. Então, é tudo divertimento”. (Morador de Diadema)

Ainda conforme Almeida (2010b), o território Kalunga é o local da convivência, das relações sociais, simbólicas e de sua memória. Os Kalunga “reconhecem a herança cultural e o local de vivências com suas características naturais, como definidores de seu grupo social e de sua identidade territorial” (p.43).

Assim, é pelo reconhecimento de sua própria cultura e pela relação com seu espaço de vivência que as comunidades Kalunga nutrem a memória coletiva. A memória é um elemento essencial da identidade. A memória do grupo representa a formação e representação da cultura e identidade de um povo. Nesse sentido, ela atua como um saber, formando tradições e caminhos como canais de comunicação entre dimensões temporais, conforme propõe Diehl (2002, p.116-117):

A memória pode constituir-se de elementos individuais e coletivos, fazendo parte de perspectivas de futuro, de utopias, de consciências do passado e de sofrimentos. [...] Pelo senso comum, a memória está intimamente ligada às tradições familiares, grupos com suas idiossincrasias peculiares. Nesse nível, ela representa possibilidades de aprendizagem e de socialização, expressando assim, continuidade e identidade daquelas tradições.

Observa-se que a identidade Kalunga foi construída a partir da coletividade e do sentimento de pertencimento. A relação da comunidade com a terra e com as representações dos rituais simbólicos são transmitidos, produzindo memórias coletivas.

Apesar das dificuldades que ainda vivenciam, como falta de água encanada em muitas residências, falta de atendimento médico e

odontológico nas comunidades, vias de difícil acesso, transporte escasso com frequência de ida semanal à cidade, muitos moradores das comunidades ainda preferem viver na região porque é o lugar que conhecem, onde se sociabilizam uns com os outros e onde viveram durante toda a vida.

A base da economia Kalunga é a agricultura de subsistência. As famílias geralmente cultivam mandioca, feijão, abóbora, banana, mamão, milho, arroz, além de outras frutas, raízes e ervas utilizadas como remédios. Em Ribeirão e em Diadema foram identificados poucos criadores de gado, sendo que alguns moradores criam o gado solto por não possuírem condições favoráveis para manter pastagens.

Na região também existe uma grande diversidade de frutos do Cerrado, que, geralmente, podem ser encontrados nos quintais dos moradores. Entre eles, mangaba, araticum, pitomba, cagaita, jatobá do campo, pequi, coco, caju, aracá, baru, macaúba e outros. Os Kalunga mostram-se portadores de saberes e revelam profundos conhecimentos sobre espécies vegetais e animais, associam as mudanças de estação, fases lunares e ciclos biogeoquímicos, ecológicos e hidrológicos ao conhecimento dos diferentes tipos de solo, utilizando seus espaços em interação com a natureza do cerrado. De acordo com Almeida (2003, p.78), “isso permite afirmar que a natureza converte-se, assim, em um patrimônio cultural e a biodiversidade deste ecossistema é, na atualidade, parcialmente de domínio destas populações”.

Por muitas dessas descrições aqui contidas, o território Kalunga constitui-se em Sítio Histórico e Patrimônio Cultural. Em entrevistas com os moradores foi possível perceber que a maioria não tem conhecimento ou não compreende o sentido dessa designação ao seu próprio território, considerando muitas vezes apenas a questão da posse das terras. Apesar de “ouvirem falar” denotam uma relativa desvinculação com o passado. Sobre isso, Paula e Avelar (2002) explicam que “assuntos de difícil rememoração como discriminação e o tempo da escravidão vivido pelos pais e avós, oscilam entre o silêncio e o esquecimento” (p. 82). Mesmo assim, ainda manifestam atitudes de resistência e consciência quando seu território é ameaçado, como corrobora o trecho abaixo:

“Aqui tem um negócio que esse povo tava falando que há muitos anos que eles vai por uma barragem aqui, nesse Funil aí. Essa barragem num é de agora não. Aí uns fala que vai por essa barragem, outros fala que num faz, outros fala que faz, outros fala que pra fazer essa barragem tem o povo tem que assinar se não num faz. Outros fala que não, mesmo que num assinar faz. Esse povo aqui é grande, o nome desse povo aqui tá longe. Como é que vai fazer essa barragem com esse povo tudo no Cerrado aí?” (Morador de Diadema).

As políticas afirmativas, necessárias ao processo de reconhecimento de populações remanescentes de quilombos, surgiram nos anos 80, quando grande parte dos países latino-americanos, incluindo o Brasil, adotou em suas constituições a concepção de sociedades e nações pluriétnicas e multiculturais. O multiculturalismo, a partir de então, assume uma grande importância, o que resulta em um processo de reformas constitucionais, por meio das quais essas comunidades passaram a ter a possibilidade de reivindicar seus direitos como remanescentes quilombolas (Araújo & Nazareno, 2010).

Almeida (2010a) explica que a partir da criação e das ações de apoio da Fundação Cultural Palmares, os Kalunga passaram a ter interesse por se identificarem como quilombolas. Por meio de políticas governamentais, os mesmos vêm tomando consciência da importância de suas raízes, de seus saberes e de sua identidade. Conforme o artigo 2º do Decreto 4.887, de 20 de novembro de 2003,

consideram-se os remanescentes das comunidades dos quilombos, os grupos étnico-raciais, segundo critérios de auto-atribuição, com trajetória histórica própria, dotados de relações territoriais específicas, com presunção de ancestralidade negra, relacionada com a resistência à opressão histórica sofrida (Fundação Cultural Palmares, 2008).

É preciso considerar que cada grupo de quilombolas possui singularidades que não podem ser reduzidas a definições históricas ou simples ideias de isolamentos, de fugas e de união entre os grupos. Embora essas comunidades desconheçam o passado que lhes são imputado, “se reconhecem em uma identidade coletiva, consideram-se

depositários desse patrimônio e responsáveis por transmiti-lo para gerações futuras” (Almeida, 2010a, p. 120).

No conjunto das práticas socioculturais, as festas religiosas são fortemente integradas a esse patrimônio cultural Kalunga, pela influência exercida na identidade territorial do grupo. Por isso, uma delas, a festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida, será especificamente analisada nos tópicos subsequentes.

Festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida: as práticas desveladas no festejo

Os Kalunga, de uma maneira geral, se autodenominam católicos, mas por manterem certa autonomia em relação à igreja, pode ser considerado um catolicismo independente, com práticas diferentes das exercidas na liturgia da Igreja. São devotos de vários santos e possuem um calendário festivo em homenagem a eles que se realiza durante todo o ano, em diversas áreas em todo o território, contemplando as seguintes festas: São João, Nossa Senhora das Neves, Nossa Senhora D’Abadia, Nossa Senhora do Livramento, São Sebastião, Santo Antônio, Folia de Reis, Folia do Divino Espírito Santo, São Gonçalo e Nossa Senhora de Aparecida.

As comunidades de Diadema e Ribeirão participam, principalmente, da Festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida nas proximidades da capela de Diadema, no mês de outubro, da Folia de Reis, na comunidade Ema em janeiro, da Festa do Divino Espírito Santo, no Vão de Almas em agosto, e da Romaria de Nossa Senhora d’Abadia na comunidade Engenho II.

Essas festas são consideradas como pontos de encontros. O encontro com amigos e parentes é a principal motivação da frequência às festas todos os anos. É um período muito esperado por todos. As festas, em geral, revelam o misto do sagrado e do profano em expressões de fé e de práticas solidárias.

Segundo Silva Júnior (2008), as festas religiosas dos Kalunga são circulares, demarcando a passagem do tempo e o cultivo da terra, caracterizando-se pela oportunidade de congregarem no mesmo ambiente pessoas de toda a comunidade. Ocorrem manifestações de fé, alegria, política e reencontros entre familiares e amigos, durante vários

dias. Enquanto comungam os preceitos festivos e católicos discutem o futuro e avivam um novo ciclo. De acordo com este autor:

Como toda festa popular, elas são demoradas e marcadas por uma contínua e deliciosa comilança” proclamando a abundância e a perspectiva de um tempo melhor. Durante vários dias uma incessante corrente de novenas, ladainhas, bebidas e fogueiras evocam o poder dos mais velhos, legitimam famílias, abrem espaço para os mais novos e trocam experiências profundas. (Silva Júnior, 2008, p. 4).

A Festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida é uma romaria realizada na comunidade de Diadema no mês de outubro, no qual se comemora no dia 12, a santa padroeira. Essa festa envolve o “giro da folia”, o “arremate da folia” (com levantamento do mastro) e o “Império” (ou “reinado”). A novena é rezada na capela e a cada dia há um noveneiro responsável. Com a ausência do padre em muitas partes da festa, a própria comunidade se organiza, inclusive nos atos litúrgicos. Há oito dias de novena e folia; no último dia (nono), realiza-se o Império. O nono dia completa a novena no dia 12 de outubro, dia de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida. A festa do Império corresponde ao encerramento das celebrações.

Nas noites da festa dança-se o forró em um grande rancho de palha construído próximo à capela e serve-se o “banquete do reinado”. Também próximos à capela são dispostos vários barracos de palha onde se vende bebidas, comidas e guloseimas, geralmente bem simples.

De acordo com Siqueira (2006), é formado um acampamento de barracos onde as famílias se alojam no período das festas. Isso se deve à distância que outras comunidades dos municípios de Monte Alegre e Cavalcante percorrem, por entre as serras, a pé ou a cavalo, para chegarem ao local. Além disso, muitas casas encontram-se a quilômetros de distância uma das outras nas comunidades vizinhas e até mesmo em Diadema. A festa é, portanto, uma oportunidade quase rara da reunião de muitos parentes e amigos, pois moradores que residem longe podem tornar-se vizinhos de barraco. Assim, além de uma ocasião para celebração religiosa, também é um momento de encontrar parentes e amigos que há muito tempo não se vê, tratar sobre

negócios, arranjar casamentos e até de se realizar vinganças.

O giro da folia é um ritual de passagem nas casas, com cantos, para que a santa padroeira abençoe os donos dessas casas, e com o peditório de esmolas para a folia do próximo ano.

Ao chegar em frente às casas os foliões fazem um canto e em seguida são convidados a entrar. Ao entrarem, inicia-se a brincadeira, que segundo Siqueira (2006), compõe a “parte profana” da folia e pode ser representada pela dança da sussa ou pela curraleira. De acordo com a autora, a sussa, a curraleira e o forró compreendem o profano da festa, que complementa o sagrado (a novena, a folia, o império, as rezas e as ladainhas). Após a brincadeira, os donos da casa podem oferecer um lanche do que tiverem disponível em casa. As casas em que os foliões dormem e fazem as principais refeições são denominadas de ‘pouso’. Geralmente são escolhidas antes da folia e os donos estão, com isso, cumprindo promessas.

O encarregado é o responsável por determinar a rota do giro, reunir os foliões, “pôr a folia no giro” e entregar o mastro ao alferes. Esse, por sua vez, é o responsável por toda folia e a quem os foliões devem obediência. O mesmo decide a hora em que a folia deve reunir, a hora de rezar os “Benditos da Mesa”, a hora de fazer o canto e a brincadeira. Leva e se responsabiliza pela bandeira, fazendo a “venda” (tipo de coreografia realizada em cada casa com a bandeira).

A bandeira é muito reverenciada e tida como portadora de poderes sobrenaturais. Nos pousos ela é levada para o interior da casa e é devolvida quando a folia faz o canto dos “Benditos da Mesa” e parte. Os “Benditos da Mesa” são rezas cantadas após as refeições como forma de agradecimento, como se observa no trecho:

“Agora vamos rezar,
Bendito e louvado seja
São palavras de versículo
Na cabeceira da mesa
Vamos rezar o bendito
Pra nossa família inteira
[...]
Nossa Senhora Aparecida
Que por nós há de pagar

Deus lhe pague a bela janta
Com toda sua geração
Dê aumento na lavoura
E renda nisso as criação
Deus lhe pague a vossa mesa
Coberta com esse véu
Nossa Senhora Aparecida
Leve essa mesa no céu.
(Siqueira, 2006, p. 72-74)

O papel dos foliões é exclusivamente masculino, cabendo à mulher a função do preparo da comida e a de promessa. Os giros são feitos durante o dia. A letra dos cantos faz referência à padroeira e, geralmente, é a mesma em todas as casas, podendo variar a forma como são cantados.

“Nossa Senhora Aparecida
Chegou na sua porta
Vem trazer vida e saúde
Pra senhores e senhoras
Oh Nossa Senhora Aparecida
É uma santa virtuosa
E ela reza oferecendo
Rogando a Deus e a Jesus por nós”.
(Siqueira, 2006, p. 72)

Na festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida tem ainda a “folia do Cipó”, que se trata de um pequeno giro simbólico da folia no meio dos barracos do acampamento para convidar a todos para a festa. Além disso, é realizada uma pequena procissão com a bandeira de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida, na qual os participantes levam uma candeia feita com cera de abelha em suas mãos, cujo objetivo também é anunciar o início da festa.

Todos os anos há sorteios que determinam quem assumirá responsabilidades específicas para o ano vindouro. As pessoas sorteadas assumem a responsabilidade na doação de alimentos, bebidas e ornamentos. Nesses sorteios escolhe-se então o festeiro, o rei e a rainha, que receberão o banquete feito com essas doações.

O Império é um ritual da festa que consiste na busca do rei e da rainha pelo alferes e pelo quadro. A rainha veste um longo vestido branco e o rei, terno preto e gravata. Também é escolhido um casal de anjos que acompanha o rei e a rainha.

O quadro é constituído por quatro homens escolhidos que portam uma vara de cerca de dois metros de comprimento. As varas são dispostas no chão formando um quadrado (ou seja, o quadro). O quadro é composto com o alferes levando a bandeira e o “guardião da espada”. A espada (simbolizada por um facão) sai do barracão do rei para buscar a rainha no barracão onde ela se preparou. Quando o rei e a rainha já estão dentro do quadro, o império se destina à capela. Na porta da capela, o alferes faz a venda com a bandeira diante do “guardião da espada” e o mesmo faz a “venda” com a espada para o alferes. Após esses movimentos circulares (da bandeira e da espada) há um movimento de reverência, dobrando-se levemente um dos joelhos.

Após a venda, rei e rainha entram e sentam-se voltados para o público, que não se comporta dentro da pequena capela. Nesse momento são feitas as rezas e os cantos de ladainhas. Em seguida, o rei e a rainha dirigem-se para o local onde está disposto o banquete em uma mesa. Sentam-se a mesa para comerem, os demais participantes formam uma enorme fila para também se servirem. Segundo Siqueira (2006), durante toda a cerimônia, o rei e a rainha recebem privilégios e lugares de destaque que foram adornados e preparados especialmente para eles, incluindo a própria indumentária. Essa posição ressalta a todo o momento a diferenciação social, muito comum aos nobres.

Após a cerimônia e o banquete, a festa perdura por toda a noite, com danças, corridas, atividades recreativas, entre outros.

A partir da proposição da referida festa, sua invenção e forma de organização, é possível afirmar que as práticas religiosas, profundamente ligadas às partes do festejo, revelam a dinâmica social da comunidade, as operações simbólicas nelas contidas também sustentam a produção de seu território.

O território, por sua vez, representa um “espaço social resultado de um processo histórico da relação de um grupo humano com o espaço que o abriga” (Moraes, 2000, p. 16). As práticas sociais e culturais definem as territorialidades dessas comunidades, que persistem na manutenção de alguns rituais festivos e simbólicos.

A festa também implica temporalidades. O ritualismo, presente na duração cíclica do tempo deixa transparecer as constâncias se repetindo, se articulando e apresentando performances e celebrações.

A (re)afirmação da identidade e o sentido étnico da festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida

A análise da Festa de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida pode e deve partir de uma percepção da perspectiva que os kalunga vivenciam a religião, da releitura que os mesmos formularam a partir do catolicismo imposto no passado. Eles buscam nas práticas religiosas cotidianas se fortalecerem, manterem suas crenças e tradições, amenizarem seus problemas e, sobretudo, se afirmarem como comunidade, preservando sua cultura e seus costumes. Os Kalunga representam, ainda, por meio da festa, a experiência do presente com o passado, as tradições e a memória coletiva.

A identidade e a memória do grupo estão intimamente relacionadas à religiosidade manifestada nessas práticas culturais, o que permite o levantamento de algumas hipóteses, visto se tratar de um processo histórico.

Neves (2007) defende que os aspectos religiosos e culturais das comunidades Kalunga se assemelham aos das religiões tradicionais africanas. A cultura africana é substancialmente impregnada de religião, ou seja, a religião não era apenas um traço característico da sociedade, mas a maneira vital dela expressar, de modo coletivo, sua essência.

Segundo a referida autora, os Kalunga manifestam a cultura através da prática religiosa, com as cerimônias e devoções aos santos, sem atribuir valores às questões profanas e sagradas. Para eles, nada é profano, tudo é permitido, pois as partes do festejo ocorrem em função de uma dinâmica religiosa. Eles se declaram católicos, contudo, seu catolicismo está relacionado mais com as figuras dos santos que a de um Deus único. Para Neves (2007), os santos são adorados por representarem de alguma forma o próprio Deus. A autora os insere no catolicismo popular, no qual há o predomínio das imagens, dos símbolos, das festas comunitárias, das folias e das expressões culturais.

Essa semelhança com a forma de celebração dos africanos, simultaneamente à apropriação dos rituais e da fé católica de maneira tão constante e fortalecida ao longo do tempo, pode ser analisada como uma tentativa de reaproximação étnica para construir a própria identidade.

Os negros, no período da colonização, foram retirados de seu espaço, local de vivências e significados, e inseridos em outro espaço, dominado pelos colonizadores, sendo, portanto, destituídos de seu lugar de memória e realocados em outra dimensão espacial desconhecida. De acordo com Souza (2002, p.146),

ao terem que se inserir numa sociedade dominada pelo colonizador cristão, que impunha sua religião, traduziram-na para seus próprios termos, atribuindo aos santos significados inacessíveis àqueles que não partilhavam seus códigos culturais. Dessa forma, os elementos da cultura dominante de origem européia, ao serem incorporados pelas comunidades afrodescendentes, receberam sentidos por elas criados.

Daí também se pode estabelecer uma relação entre os espaços vividos, a apropriação de práticas religiosas reproduzidas sob novas leituras e a construção da identidade étnico-cultural fortalecida por essas práticas.

Del Priore (2000) investigou formas de sociabilidade no Brasil desde o período colonial, buscando identificar fatores e elementos que caracterizam, e de certa forma unificam, as festas na colônia. Trata principalmente das apropriações dos diversos setores da sociedade de aspectos da festa, os seus elementos constitutivos e, por fim, como o Estado e a Igreja tentaram estabelecer um controle efetivo sobre as festividades. Segundo a autora, mesmo afinado com a cultura européia, o espaço da festa também propiciava que os negros aproveitassem para expor tradições africanas. Tais manifestações eram toleradas pelas autoridades por representarem formas de “folgedos honestos”.

Índios, negros, mulatos e brancos manipulam as brechas no ritual da festa e as impregnam de representações de sua cultura específica. Eles transformam as comemorações religiosas em oportunidade para

recriar seus mitos, sua musicalidade, sua dança, sua maneira de vestir-se e aí reproduzir suas hierarquias tribais, aristocráticas e religiosas. [...] o Estado Moderno está, por outro lado, empenhado em modificar os códigos culturais que desabrochavam na Colônia (Del Priore, 2000, p. 89).

A autora também faz alusão ao fenômeno de ‘circularidade cultural’, formulado por Mikhail Bakhtin e retomado por Carlo Ginzburg. A circularidade cultural é entendida como o influxo recíproco entre a cultura subalterna e a cultura hegemônica. Del Priore mostra que a festa põe em contato e em conflito distintas significações políticas, sociais e simbólicas, que envolvem a operação de distintas hermenêuticas, de distintos regimes de leitura operando na vida social. Sobre o aspecto do hibridismo religioso observado, Souza (2002) relata a forma como o catolicismo foi adotado por comunidades afrodescendentes, não simplesmente como uma forma de imposição senhorial, mas considerando também as motivações dessas comunidades, como resultado de um processo de miscigenação cultural, tendo o catolicismo como o elemento dominante. Seu estudo faz emergir importantes questionamentos sobre a recorrência dessas comunidades afrodescendentes aos santos católicos, fortalecendo a ideia de se tratar de uma maneira de imprimir elementos de suas crenças tradicionais. O catolicismo, então, poderia ser pensado como uma espécie de senha para acessar o universo mítico/religioso tradicional que fora negado pela cultura hegemônica.

Segundo relatos de uma moradora, a festa teve início há aproximadamente dez anos, quando uma devota de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida da comunidade fez uma promessa à santa de que, se sua colheita melhorasse, ela “puxaria” a folia em sua homenagem. Como pagamento da promessa, a mesma realizou a folia no mês de maio, após a colheita. Uma mulher religiosa da cidade, comovida com o ocorrido, se comprometeu a pintar a bandeira com a imagem da santa para que a folia continuasse todos os anos. Até 2009 ela ocorria em maio, em uma área próxima ao Ribeirão dos Bois, em propriedade da devota que deu início à folia. Em 2010 o padre determinou que a festa fosse transferida para a data oficial da padroeira, 12 de outubro. Além disso, com a construção da capela em Diadema, a festa passou a ser

realizada em seus arredores, onde, com recursos e sob articulação da prefeitura do município, foram construídas barracas de palha onde são comercializados alimentos, bebidas e outros produtos.

Percebe-se a folia de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida, que fora criada tão recentemente, instituída agora como tradição pela comunidade e recebendo novos elementos e rituais anteriormente inexistentes, como a festa, as representações do Império, o comércio, os sorteios, entre outros.

É plausível admitir a invenção da festa como evidência de um processo de etnogênese. Nesse processo, os grupos se reforçam tentando voltar e reconstituir o que foi ignorado, subalternizado, o que compunha justamente os elementos de tentativa de entrada no universo do “branco”. É impossível recriar o original, o que se faz é reconstituir fragmentos do que foi apreendido. Contudo, é vital que comunidades quilombolas continuem sendo o que sempre foram, sob o risco de desaparecerem. Nesse sentido, essas comunidades buscam reforçar padrões e complexos tradicionais para garantir benefícios políticos e, sobretudo, autonomia territorial. Aonde determinados traços culturais eram negados e até considerados “tabus”, hoje, são retomados porque garantem certa visibilidade e funcionalidade.

De acordo com relatos de outro morador, antigo folião de outras festas que ocorrem no território Kalunga, houve significativa mudança nas festas religiosas das comunidades, principalmente porque a população era menor e as pessoas participavam das missas e ladainhas. Atualmente, poucos participam das cerimônias religiosas, enquanto a maioria se ocupa nos comércios, em rodas de conversas, ao redor de sons automotivos. Ainda de acordo com esse antigo folião, a folia de Nossa Senhora de Aparecida era constituída apenas pelo giro da folia. O festejo tal qual ocorre, se deu em decorrência de uma busca por promover o ajuntamento e assemelhá-lo à festa do Divino Espírito Santo, na comunidade Ema.

Para muitos foliões o fato de a festa concentrar-se no pátio da capela, a folia fica prejudicada, pois muitos se ausentam de suas casas em função dos comércios. Observa-se que o sagrado e o profano ocorrem simultaneamente: ao mesmo tempo se fazem as rezas e os cantos das ladainhas na capela, no pátio, tocam-se músicas em alto volume (forró, sertanejo, funk), as pessoas consomem bebidas alcoho-

alcoólicas e soltam foguetes.

Conforme relatos, nas últimas folias houve uma relativa diminuição dos foliões e uma mudança na forma dos giros, que antes eram feitos a cavalos e agora a pé. Contudo, nota-se o empenho de alguns em dar continuidade à folia na tentativa de manter a tradição. Jovens participam dos giros com a finalidade de que a eles sejam transmitidos os saberes e formas dos rituais que acompanham a folia: os cantos, as rezas, as brincadeiras, os gestos.

Jurkevics (2005) e Neves (2007) explicam que a tradição das festas se constitui num espaço significativo de criação e manutenção da identidade local, pelo sentido de pertencimento que os participantes têm sobre a mesma. Entretanto, a identidade cultural, construída e servida de elementos como as manifestações religiosas, é também passível de mudanças. Isso pode ser evidenciado com a introdução do forró e de outros estilos musicais nas festas, em detrimento das danças tradicionais, como a sussa. Quanto ao expressivo desenvolvimento dos comércios, até mesmo alguns dos mais devotos e antigos moradores assumem que, embora se trate de mudanças nos costumes das festas, os comerciantes podem, assim, contribuir com as esmolas aos santos, permitindo que a festa continue acontecendo nos anos vindouros.

Agier (2001) toma por base a noção introduzida por Evans-Pritchard de que existe certa plasticidade nas “crenças” dos indivíduos em função das diferentes situações. Crenças que não podem ser vistas como um todo, mas como fragmentos. Assim, os indivíduos as escolhem e recorrem às suas práticas à medida que lhes convêm, utilizando-se das mesmas sem dar importância a determinados elementos, podendo em outras situações recorrerem a esses mesmos elementos no intuito de encontrarem uma solução imediata. O autor também enfatiza a importância de se analisar o contexto na construção das identidades. As identidades podem servir-se de tradições que foram criadas, sobretudo, em situações de fortes pressões externas. Sua abordagem se mostra bastante pertinente, uma vez que a festa católica, juntamente com seus rituais e símbolos foram apropriados pelos quilombolas em um contexto específico vivido por eles.

Nesse sentido, observa-se que os Kalunga em todo tempo recriam sua cultura, aderindo a modelos externos, ao mesmo tempo em que manifestam resistência na tentativa de perpetuar a tradição, fortalecen-

do, assim, a memória e a identidade coletiva.

Considerações Finais

As manifestações culturais são, atualmente, objetos de estudo da História Cultural, como foi introduzido nesse artigo, mas não no sentido de serem tradições, restos, indícios ou sinais do passado, e sim por se constituírem construções e invenções práticas e discursivas das temporalidades em que elas ocorreram e foram nomeadas, instituídas e legitimadas.

Albuquerque Júnior (2011), a partir de uma revisão da historiografia sobre as festas, trata das diversas formas com que elas têm sido abordadas pela história e conclui que

Em vez de enfatizar a dimensão identitária e, portanto, a encenação de semelhanças entre passado e presente, entre o ontem e o hoje, esta historiografia aborda o festejar como um momento de instauração de diferenças, de criação e simulação do novo, mesmo a pretexto de encenar o idêntico e o semelhante. Toma-se a festa como aquilo que ela é, uma forma de discurso, uma maneira de significar, uma forma de produzir, distribuir, fazer circular e se apropriar de sentidos. Pensa-se a festa como um texto e um contexto que requer uma dada hermenêutica, uma dada leitura, que convoca e provoca leituras e recepções diversas. (Albuquerque Júnior, 2011, p.146).

Na análise dessas manifestações culturais é fundamental que se ultrapasse a noção simplista de forma, para que as relações reais que nelas se expressam possam de fato ser investigadas. Afinal, deduz-se que qualquer que seja a sua origem e seu simbolismo manifesto, essas manifestações culturais foram adaptadas para um determinado fim. Isso é corroborado por Thompson, ao definir a função da historiografia: “A história é a disciplina do contexto e do processo: todo significado é um significado-no-contexto, e quando as estruturas mudam as formas antigas podem expressar funções novas e as funções antigas podem encontrar sua expressão em formas novas” (Thompson apud Sohiet, 1992, p. 46).

Por meio desse raciocínio pode-se pensar na forma como o catolicismo foi incorporado em uma cultura originalmente africana, num processo de subalternização e ao mesmo tempo de resistência, entendendo que esse fator histórico desencadeou a constituição de formas híbridas de religiosidade. Como meio de resistência/sobrevivência os negros assumiram a religião dos brancos no passado e, posteriormente, aceitaram essa religião como se essa realmente fizesse parte de sua história.

A dominação exercida pelos colonizadores a partir da diáspora africana, sobretudo com relação à religiosidade, certamente teve um papel fundamental no processo de constituição de novas identidades e de novas formas culturais. Contudo, foram os ajustes e escolhas empreendidas pelos afrodescendentes, com recorrência a negociações em diversos níveis, que determinaram as feições dessas novas formas de culturas.

Portanto, deve-se pensar, ainda, na forma como essas práticas religiosas, tais como as festas em devoção aos santos, são retomadas e engendradas numa possível tentativa de reaproximação étnica, pela qual as comunidades podem se reafirmar, fortalecer suas heranças culturais e, até mesmo, garantir certos benefícios.

Percebe-se, então, que as festas religiosas, de maneira geral, receberam e recebem sentidos que variam de acordo com o seu tempo e de acordo com o contexto em que vivem as comunidades que delas participam. Ainda que as formas do catolicismo, os rituais, os símbolos, entre outros, continuem latentes; os significados, as intencionalidades e as relações estabelecidas modificam-se nas diferentes temporalidades.

Analisar as manifestações culturais de comunidades remanescentes de quilombos sob a ótica da interculturalidade contribui significativamente para a superação de visões de ser, estar e poder colonizadoras. Visões que não permitem, omitem ou produzem interpretações sobre a existência temporal e espacial de determinados grupos sociais que, historicamente, não se enquadram em nenhum modelo aceito socialmente.

Nisso consiste a importância de compreender essas manifestações culturais não apenas como “produtos do meio”, mas pensá-las historicamente, como enfatiza Albuquerque Júnior (2011), e também

espacialmente, uma vez que as festas criam e fortalecem as territorialidades no espaço de vivência. Assim, importa concebê-las em seu caráter de discurso, de sentido e de produção que se traduz por um desejo de sobrevivência cultural de comunidades que tentam se recriar nas suas práticas centrais.

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La justicia social en las escuelas: mediación y diversidad cultural en las comunidades educativas

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Reviews (I)

Márquez García, M. J. (2011). *Mediadoras interculturales en centros educativos. Un punto de vista narrativo*. Tesis doctoral defendida en la Universidad de Almería en julio de 2011.

No es frecuente encontrar tesis doctorales que, además de constituir un buen ejemplo de cómo realizar una investigación en un determinado ámbito educativo y el proceso que ha llevado al autor o autora hasta allí, suponga un proceso de intervención con un fuerte compromiso político con una realidad educativa concreta. En estos excepcionales casos, la realización de un trabajo netamente académico, como es el de una tesis doctoral, adquiere todo su sentido, al ser no sólo una gran aportación científica, sino también una gran aportación al mundo educativo real, sus inquietudes, problemas, procesos y situaciones, recopilando datos relevantes para el análisis y la reflexión sobre el mismo. Esta perspectiva crítica es la que marca el procedimiento y el enfoque del trabajo.

En el caso que nos ocupa, la autora parte de la narración de las experiencias de seis mujeres provenientes de diferentes culturas que realizan su trabajo como mediadoras interculturales en centros educativos de primaria y secundaria en Andalucía. Metodológicamente, la apuesta es arriesgada pero muy contundente, puesto que se parte de la construcción y negociación de dichas narraciones de las mediadoras interculturales para, a partir de ahí, intentar entender los procesos de mediación, así como los códigos simbólicos de las familias y el profesorado sobre la situación e implicación de niños y niñas de diferentes culturas en nuestro sistema educativo y cómo se produce y por qué. El estudio no sólo se centra en la situación de niños y niñas

inmigrantes provenientes de otras culturas y países, sino que también aborda la situación de la comunidad gitana en nuestras escuelas.

La mediación escolar es un proceso que está empezando a aparecer en los centros educativos donde hay un número significativo de niños y niñas diversos culturalmente, pero sobre la que no existe aún un consenso ni un estatus sobre su papel y labor y es entendida desde múltiples puntos de vista, como recurso al servicio de la institución, como técnica de resolución de conflictos o desde un punto de vista dialógico en un proceso de construcción de la comunidad educativa. Después de revisar a fondo estas perspectivas, la autora se decanta por la última de ellas como forma de cohesionar las escuelas en procesos de diálogo, aprendizaje y comunicación entre todos los actores de la comunidad educativa y con un papel fundamental de las familias.

Una de las principales aportaciones de este trabajo son los propios relatos de las seis mediadoras interculturales contruidos a dos voces con la investigadora. Son de una riqueza y una profundidad sorprendentes y, como tales, seis muestras de seis realidades escolares de mediación diferentes atravesadas por diferentes circunstancias que funcionan como seis ejemplos no sólo de dichas realidades, sino de cómo esas mujeres mediadoras construyen el trabajo de la mediación y cómo lo entienden los entornos en los que ellas se mueven, fundamentalmente las familias y el profesorado. En este caso, la experiencia vicaria que aportan es fundamental para entender los procesos de mediación en la acción.

A partir de dichos relatos, la autora desbroza los elementos fundamentales de la mediación, entre los que destacan la construcción de la identidad de las mediadoras desde la heterogeneidad y la ruptura de estereotipos sobre su papel como mujeres en sus propias culturas y en su trabajo en el contexto escolar. La dicotomía entre sus vidas públicas y privadas también es un elemento relevante que las lleva a contruirse como mujeres a caballo entre su cultura de origen y su realidad actual. Otro elemento relevante es el referente al papel de la mediación en el contexto del currículum escolar para abordar casos de absentismo, abandono y fracaso de niños y niñas de diferentes culturas. En este caso, el papel de las mediadoras va desde el intentar defender causas perdidas, constituirse en un servicio más de la escuela según lo requiera la dirección o cuestionar la cultura disciplinar que lleva a

dichas situaciones y ser expulsadas del sistema.

Realmente, este trabajo constituye una estimulante reflexión sobre el papel de la mediación en los contextos escolares desde una perspectiva crítica y comprometida, que merece ser leída con detenimiento.

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Verdad, belleza y bondad reformuladas. La enseñanza de las virtudes en el siglo XXI

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Reviews (II)

Gardner, H. (2011). *Verdad, belleza y bondad reformuladas. La enseñanza de las virtudes en el siglo XXI*. Barcelona: Paidós. 299 pp. ISBN: 978-84-493-2604-2.

En esta nueva obra de Howard Gardner, el autor analiza la situación de las virtudes clásicas: verdad, belleza y bondad; así como su enseñanza en el siglo XXI. Según el autor estas virtudes están sufriendo en Occidente una importante presión desde hace varias décadas que básicamente provienen de dos ámbitos: las ideas posmodernas y los medios digitales en expansión. El primer ámbito, las ideas posmodernas, relativizan la valoración de que es bello, bueno o verdadero, situándolo a merced de quien ejerce el poder en cada momento. El segundo ámbito, los medios digitales, generan un caos en cuanto a estas virtudes. En el primer capítulo del libro Gardner relata como estas virtudes han sido la preocupación de la humanidad a lo largo de la historia y argumenta como “toda sociedad que pretenda perdurar debe velar para que estos conceptos y valores se transmitan de forma viable a las siguientes generaciones” (pág.23)

Después de este capítulo más general Gardner ahonda en cada uno de los siguientes capítulos en cada una de las virtudes. El segundo capítulo lo centra en la virtud de LA VERDAD. En él el autor explica como la búsqueda de la verdad es propia de la humanidad y va asociada a la experiencia de los sentidos. Así va reflexionando y argumentando sobre la relación entre verdad y falsedad o sobre la existencia de diferentes verdades. Paralelamente va introduciendo los cuestionamientos que el postmodernismo y los medios digitales le hacen a esta virtud. El tercer capítulo se centra en LA BELLEZA. Gardner plantea como esta virtud está en cuestionamiento en Occidente y cómo sin embargo hay patrones de belleza que se corresponden con culturas muy diversas. La discusión genetista del origen de la bella también está presente en

este capítulo. El autor también compara como la historia de la belleza no ha seguido la misma trayectoria que la de la verdad. LA BONDAD la encontramos en el 4º capítulo donde también se discute la cuestión biológica de la moralidad y defiende su base social, y se analiza cómo grupos sociales diferentes comparten normas morales. En este punto el autor argumenta y defiende la necesidad de crear criterios universales en relación a esta virtud, siendo un inicio de ellos por ejemplo, la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos.

En el 5º capítulo Gardner expone el aprendizaje de las virtudes en las personas y plantea que desde la infancia ya se tienen facultades para tratar sobre los conceptos de belleza y fealdad, verdad y fealdad y lo bueno y lo malo. Considera que es en la infancia cuando estas tres virtudes se desarrollan sin problemas específicos mientras que la entrada en la adolescencia genera oportunidades y tensiones a la hora de enfrentarse a ellas. De esta forma va mostrando como se da el aprendizaje de estas virtudes en diferentes etapas educativas y como los medios digitales influyen en ello. En el capítulo 6º profundiza en cómo este aprendizaje no finaliza en una edad concreta sino que el aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida sigue formando en estas virtudes. Así mismo destaca la importancia de tener referentes de diferente índole pero que simbolizan estas tres virtudes. Finalmente en sus conclusiones Gardner resume las principales aportaciones que hace su obra y se plantea qué futuro aguarda a las 3 virtudes. Desde su postura considera que debemos buscar los universales en las tres virtudes y procurar que nuestras acciones trasciendan nuestros intereses. “De este modo, podemos aportar poderosos modelos que inviten a otros seres humanos a actuar de una manera (cada vez más) responsable” (pág.244)

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