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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A CASE STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEXICAN INEA  
(NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS) PROGRAM  
TRAPPED BETWEEN TEXT AND TECHNOLOGY

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Educational Technology

by

Daniel Paquette

November, 2012

Ray Gen, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Daniel Gilbert Paquette

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Ray Gen Ed.D., Chairperson

John F. McManus, Ph.D.

Robert Graeff, Ed.D.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate the success of this study to the most loving and inspirational people in my life. To my mother, Nancy Sweeney, whose unconditional love and support enabled me to persevere; to my sons, Adrian and Nicholas, through whom I derived endless motivation to be an example of success; to my best friend and brother, Ronnie, whose belief in me never wavered, and to Beatriz, my dissertation assistant and beautiful wife, whose encouragement and participation made this project enjoyable. you all hold honored places in my life.

To Dad and sister, Nicole, I await the moment that we may rejoice together. I know that you share in this celebration.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge the support of my Dissertation Chairperson, Dr. Ray Gen, whose counsel, erudition and patience elicited my best effort and work.

I also thank Dr. Jack McManus for his insight into the personal issues that had to be overcome on the road to completion, and Dr. Robert Graff, who has always been an inspiration and mentor who provided the fuel to burn toward brighter academic and professional goals.

## VITA

# Dr. Daniel G. Paquette

## Professional Summary

Seeking to improve education for students at every level and in any realm, as a Doctor of Educational Technology, I will utilize my expertise to create and advance resources for knowledge management and improvement in learning.

## Education

Pepperdine Graduate School of Education and Psychology Graduated May, 2012

- Ed.D; Doctor of Education in Educational Technology

San Diego State University Graduated May, 1995

- M.A; Master of Education in Educational Leadership

Long Beach State University Graduated June, 1991

- B.A; Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies with Concentration in Sociology
  - Minor in Spanish

Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico Attended 1987 to 1989

- Spanish and International Studies

## Experience

International Baccalaureate Spanish Teacher 2007 to present

Lake Elsinore Unified School District

### Responsibilities

Developing speaking, listening, reading and writing ability in Spanish for advanced and beginning level students

Preparing students for success in IB and AP Spanish, as well as Spanish fluency

Principal of Elsinore Elementary 2004 to 2007

Lake Elsinore Unified School District

### Responsibilities

Let school highest API improvement (45 points) in school's history up to 2006 in just two years.

Implemented massive integration of technology in to the student learning environment, Kindergarten through 5th grade

Utilized bilingual Spanish fluency to increase communication amount entire school community

Principal of Pioneer Elementary 2001 to 2004

Escondido Union School District

### Responsibilities

Developed strategic single-site plan for systematic implementation of standards-based education

Led yearly school improvement for student population of 1,075 at Pioneer Elementary School  
Managed one of the largest elementary school budgets in the Escondido Union School District

Assistant Principal of Vista High School 1997 to 2001  
Vista Unified School District

Responsibilities

Supervised and evaluated the departments of Mathematics, Foreign Language, Social Studies, Fine Arts Adult Education/ROP and Jr. ROTC  
Improved attendance accounting procedures as supervisor of the Attendance Department  
Enhanced teaching methodology among teachers in my departments through evaluation and resource assistance  
Maintained the Master Calendar and ensured the smooth integration of all school activities  
Used bilingual skills to assist both English and Spanish speaking parents and students, including being the administrative representative to the English Language Advisory Council.  
Monitored all relevant activities pertaining to a large Division I high school.

Director of the American School of Aguascalientes 1995 to 1997  
American School of Aguascalientes

Responsibilities

Restructured school's policies to promote a positive working/learning environment.  
Managed all aspects of hiring, evaluation, and training of school personnel to ensure a quality staff.  
Promoted the school in the community to increase enrollment and obtain financial support from individuals and businesses.  
Developed new curriculum for all grade levels K-6<sup>th</sup>  
Built a cooperative relationship among a multinational staff.

## Military Service

United States Army 1980 to 1983  
9<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
67N: Utility Helicopter Repair & Flight Operations Specialist  
Awarded Army Commendation Medal.  
Honorable Discharge

## ABSTRACT

The level of success of the Mexican INEA (National Institute for the Education of Adults) academic program implemented in the U.S. has never been examined. INEA developed five goals for its students in the U.S. that supplement the general goals that the program has for all its students in Mexico. The 5 supplementary goals are to provide access to a basic education which will improve the quality of the students' lives, to improve their employment opportunity, to advance their proficiency of Spanish in order to assist them in learning English, to increase their involvement in their children's education and to stimulate self-esteem and pride in the Mexican culture. This single case study assessed, through the perspectives of its students, the extent to which INEA met these goals at its Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria. Assessment of goal success was a stated objective of INEA. Data were collected through responses to student interviews in which the participants offered perspectives to ten questions relating to INEA's supplementary goals, their level of success and their relationship to the students' personal goals. The INEA program in the U.S. is taught in entirely in Spanish with the aim of providing the means for Spanish-speaking adults to receive a Mexican diploma at the primary and secondary academic levels. Mexico provides the curriculum and instruction in Spanish, and entities in the U.S. provide the venues. From the responses of the participants, the researcher coded the data into categorical concepts and developed grounded theories as propositions to explain the relationship between the levels of success regarding INEA's program goals and the students' motivations for involvement in the program. The conceptual hypotheses developed from the data indicated a

limited level of success at meeting the students' educational needs. INEA's curriculum, although well-developed, suffers from logistical hindrances, of which some are self-created, and others that are the result of INEA's lack of understanding of its students' personal motivations for participating in the program. The grounded theories offer propositions for INEA to consider as a means for program improvement.

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

The number of Hispanics entering the United States has increased greatly over the past few decades. As of 2007, they were still the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States, and continued to be the largest minority group at 45.4 million, with 64 percent being of Mexican origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The increase in the Hispanic population has led to a concurrent rise in Spanish speakers as a percentage of the U.S. population, many who are Spanish-only speakers.

For so many of these adult Spanish speakers, their low educational level and lack of ability to speak English are impediments to their achievement in occupational status (Toussaint-Comeau, Smith & Comeau, 2005) and are barriers to obtaining better economic opportunities and social/cultural integration within the United States. That INEA (National Institute for the Education of Adults), a Mexican adult educational program, is implemented in 34 states and the District of Columbia in the U.S., according to CONEVyT (Mexican National Council for Education for Life and Work (CONEVyT, 2010) demonstrates that both Mexico and the U.S. recognize such barriers exist and must be overcome if these adults are to achieve a higher level of success and be better able to support themselves, their families and the industries in which they find employment in the U.S.

The education and employment of Hispanic immigrants involves language, culture, politics, economics and ethnicity. Currently, according to the Pew Hispanic Center (Toussaint-Comeau et al., 2005), a self-described nonpartisan research organization that chronicles Hispanics' growing impact on the U.S.,



most of these immigrants find employment in nonprofessional and service occupations such as domestic household service, landscaping, building cleaning, food preparation and serving, and farming. These non-technical occupations rank low on several measures such as wages, educational requirements, and on a quantitative indicator of socioeconomic status. The focus of this case study is on the Hispanic adult students studying within the INEA program at Palomar College, California. It aims to analyze their perceptions in regard to whether or not the INEA program is succeeding with its five stated goals for its students in the U.S., which center on providing an educational base, improving their employment opportunities, improving their native-language skill for the benefit of learning English, strengthening the educational support that parents provide to their children and to stimulate pride in their culture of origin. This study will analyze how well INEA is meeting the goals from the perspective of its students.

### **INEA Overview**

INEA is a departmental organization and program within the Mexican federal public educational system and is overseen by its Secretary of Public Education (SEP). The program has the objective of preserving the national unity of the basic levels of education for adults, and it accredits and certifies a basic level of education for all students successfully completing its various levels of the program. It has both legal and cultural purposes with the goals of promoting, organizing and imparting education to adults in the areas of literacy, primary, secondary and preparatory adult education and to perform research within the same. Moreover, INEA develops and distributes didactic material for adult education and accredits instruction and curriculum in accordance with the SEP.

Until 2008, this was accomplished through providing textbooks transported from Mexico to all the INEA centers in the U.S through which its program was being imparted. Beginning in 2008, the INEA stipulated to its educational centers in the U.S., called Plazas Comunitarias, that they were to begin imparting instruction exclusively online through INEA's Internet portal. Previously the program was imparted exclusively through traditional techniques, such as teachers, texts and classrooms for lecture. Although INEA began to move forward with online implementation of the program, the transition is still not completely implemented due to myriad issues relating to communication, technology availability and politics, which will be described more extensively in Chapter 3.

According to Jorge Alberto Diaz Stringel (personal communication, 2006), Sub-director of INEA and Director of all INEA operations in the U.S., INEA also works in conjunction and supports other Mexican governmental programs and institutions with similar services that complement its goals, such as its parent entity, CONEVyT and its various programs. As the parent organization of INEA, CONEVyT encompasses even broader educational themes in the areas of Adult Education, Occupational/Technical degrees, Domestic Education and Health Education. Both CONEVyT and INEA are implemented under the supervisory umbrella of the SEP, and their support also reaches across Mexico's northern border into the U.S.

The Mexican government is attempting to address the need for Spanish-speaking adults, in particular Mexican nationals, to improve their life situations by offering the opportunity to begin or continue their formal education, especially through literacy in their primary language, even in the U.S. Toward that aim, the

Mexican government proposed to the U.S. government the development and implementation of INEA in the U.S. It is similar to educational programs Mexico has implemented in other countries where Mexican citizens reside, but it is largest in the U.S. The proposal was to offer the means through which Spanish-speaking adults, of any nationality, could take classes to obtain the Mexican equivalent of an elementary (primaria), middle (secundaria) or high school (preparatoria) diploma accredited by the SEP.

The permission and promotion of such a program is allowed through a binational educational and cultural accord between the U.S. and Mexico. Last renewed in 2010, the agreement is named the Accord between the Government of the United States of Mexico and the Government of the United States of America for the Establishment of the United States-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange, commonly known as COMEXUS (COMEXUS, 2011). The exchange is supported directly and indirectly with resources, which are not always financial, by both governments and through private sources. The same accord affords the opportunity for international teacher exchanges between the two countries.

The Mexican INEA program in the U.S. is implemented at Plazas Comunitarias or Community Plazas with the aim of offering educational opportunity to any adult Spanish-speaker 15 years of age or older, regardless of his or her country of origin. The Plazas Comunitarias are any type of venue, such as schools, churches and community outreach centers where students receive academic instruction. Most important to the program now, with the mandate to transition completely to online education, is that each plaza have access to the

Internet and CONEVyT's Internet portal where students may log on to INEA's curriculum, instruction and evaluation. Such access is essential to the INEA education in the U.S., as Mexico is attempting to no longer provide its diploma programs through traditional means, such as with basal texts in a non-computer mediated environment. The online mandate is occurring even though venues with online capacity cannot be assured. Such a situation presents equality of access issues that will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

The Plaza Comunitaria system is essentially a hub-and-spoke design in which the pedagogical training of teachers and curricular materials are centralized at one specific location, which is the principal Plaza Comunitaria (the hub), and imparted out to the other learning plazas. From the hub, such as at Palomar College, where this case study is to occur, the program supervisors impart the INEA curriculum and program, but also acquire and utilize subordinate plaza locations through which to do the same. The subordinate plazas are sought and acquired through direct contact agreements with the site supervisors of each specific location that is to receive support from the central plaza. Many times these sites are at public schools and the agreement is made directly with its principal or director.

Each site that utilizes the central hub is also called a Plaza Comunitaria. The idea and reason for the name is so that students to have access to a local venue where they can meet to advance in their learning goals through the INEA program. Ideally, every student at the Plazas Comunitarias supported by the hub should be provided with the same curriculum and technology that exists at the hub. In other words, the students should not have to physically attend classes at

the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria in order to advance toward earning their diplomas. The intent is that everything offered by INEA should be available to its students at the plazas closest to their homes.

At the Plazas Comunitarias adult students are able to enroll in courses leading to the Mexican primary, secondary and preparatory diplomas that will hopefully enable them to further their education in the U.S., Mexico or their other Spanish-speaking countries of origin. A central goal of INEA is that the students will enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in the U.S., learn English and continue to study academically in English. Whether or not students who study within INEA in the U.S. perceive that they will go on to study and learn English pertains to a research question of this case study. As some of the students enrolled in the INEA program may also be enrolled in U.S. public high schools, they may already be receiving English instruction.

The COMEXUS accord between the U.S. and Mexico does not specify any program or resource by which students are to continue their education in English upon completion of the INEA program. It simply allows for educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

**INEA program goal.** Plazas Comunitarias were developed to offer students local resources through which to realize their academic and occupational educational goals. The resources available to students may differ widely depending on the availability of materials and technology at each plaza. The leadership and supervision by the governing body at each plaza also may vary greatly, along with the technology available. If such variations exist, they may hinder the INEA implementation in such ways as calendaring of classes,

administering the logistical support and curriculum implementation. With online implementation, INEA desires to reduce the need for logistical support and overall costs. Yet, political and organizational barriers from the local Plaza Comunitaria level and all the way up to the headquarters of INEA and CONEVyT may also impede better program implementation in the U.S. This case study will address these issues only as they pertain to students' perspectives of INEA's capacity to successfully reach the goals of the program, including its transition to online education as it relates to the students' ability to realize their academic, professional and personal goals.

The goals established by INEA for the education of adults in the U.S. are the same as within Mexico, but with some specific additions. The general goals of INEA overall are to a basic educational program for Mexican and Hispanic adults 15 years and older who do not know how to read and write or who have not finished primary or secondary school. The goals were established under the two principles of first, being relevant and responding to the necessities, aspirations and interests of the persons to whom it is directed; and second, to be effective as it provides a comprehensive development of the individual in his or her abilities, knowledge, values and attitudes. The specific educational goals of INEA for all students are to:

1. Develop and strengthen values related to the comprehensive development of the self as a participant in the decisions that affect his or herself.
2. Develop knowledge and abilities that facilitate the continuation of his or her education and the certification of his or her studies.
3. Acquire basic knowledge, attitudes and abilities that all individuals should have in order to participate in and form part of a society.

In addition to the above general educational goals, INEA desires to meet

the following five supplementary goals for students studying in the U.S., which are the basis for the research questions in this study:

1. To contribute to the immigrants who are 15 years or older of Mexican origin, so that they have participation in INEA strengthen the ability of parents to be involved and support the education of their children.
2. To provide the best elements of preparation in order to obtain a better employment where they live or if they return to Mexico.
3. For Mexican compatriots to gain greater dominance of their native language in order to facilitate their learning of the English language.
4. To strengthen the ability of Mexican parents to be involved and support the education of their children.
5. To stimulate self-esteem and pride in Mexican immigrant for their culture of origin.

The focus of the program is on those adults who do not know how to read or write, lack basic skills in mathematics or those who have had their primary or secondary education interrupted. INEA aims to provide the means and support necessary for Spanish-speaking adults to raise their level of academic education by focusing on the development of reading and writing skills, especially for those who have never attended school. The principles guiding the INEA instruction are to be relevant, which means they respond to individual's needs and desires, be effective, develop and improve each individual's skills, knowledge, values and positive attitudes, and be practical (INEA, 2005).

The realization of INEA's goal facilitating the development of English learning skills, seems to be based wholly upon the theory that students learn second languages better when their primary language is more fully developed (Cummins, 1979). English as a Second Language is not taught, nor is it directly addressed in any of the INEA curriculum. Nevertheless, it is one of the five goals

INEA stipulates for its students in the U.S.

The INEA program is the main academic support for primary language development in Spanish for its students in the U.S. Its students tend to be immersed within Spanish language communities, both at work and at home. Therefore, while the program only offers primary language support, the question of whether or not its students will continue to seek further learning in English needs to be addressed.

The research lending credence to the theory that students can learn a second language better when their primary language is more wholly developed is extensive (Cummins, 1981,1984; Dutcher, 1994; López, 1991) and INEA grounds its program methodology in such research. It adheres to the theory that previous knowledge and the continued development of the primary language contribute to the study and acquisition of a second language, and that there exists a linguistic interdependence between the two. The hypothesis is that competencies developed through the primary language constitute a foundation upon which the second language can be constructed. For INEA's purposes, the primary language constitutes and provides the original knowledge on which to base new knowledge and facilitates the acquisition of additional competencies, such as a second language (López, 1998). This reinforces the theories with respect to the level of maturity that individuals develop in their primary language that aids in learning a second (Vygotsky, 1962).

Most of the research regarding the utilization of primary language development to enhance the development of a second language addresses the issue of second language learners in the schools of the dominant language



society and the eventual ability of the student to integrate into the dominant culture, while at the same time retaining their native language and culture. The aim of INEA differs in that the priority is not to enhance the students' ability to integrate and succeed in the host country, but to develop a basic academic education through high school in the Mexican public school system and enhance their pride in Mexican citizenship. The program also aims to promote a greater desire for academic learning among its students' immediate family members, as well as increase the students' interest in eventually seeking to learn English on their own accord.

It has yet to be studied whether or not INEA is meeting its previously stated goals for its students in the U.S. If the focus of the INEA program is to promote academic success in the native language of Spanish, even though the students are residing in a host country in which the dominant language of the culture and of business is English, does the program promote overall life success in the U.S. or serve to maintain the students' status quo as residents relegated to the mostly blue collar employment previously mentioned? Instilling pride for one's native country is a positive aspect of the program, as is the improvement in the ability of its students to speak their native tongue. But when considering the students' perceived temporary status in the U.S, is it possible that such a program may not promote the eventual learning of English? Moreover, by advancing students through the Mexican school system while living in the U.S., is it possible that their success at learning English may even be hindered? Due to such possibilities, the INEA students at Palomar College will be interviewed to evaluate their perceptions and to decipher if they are seeking, or are planning to

seek, further learning in English in programs such as English as a Second Language, which are also offered at Palomar College and other institutions in the same region.

Although a greater development in the primary language may contribute to better learning in a second language, the contextual environment in which the students learn and the time necessary to solidify a base in the primary language may work against the students as they attempt to reach the goals and benchmark requirements within educational organizations, such as the stipulated standards in California public schools. A solid base in a native language may contribute to better and faster learning of a second language, but as working adults who may be supporting families, do the INEA students have the motivation and opportunity to eventually study and learn English?

Critics of focusing primarily on native language development, when it is not the dominant language of a society, suggest that the years dedicated to developing it may serve to delay English acquisition at a time when the students most need it to learn core academic subject matter and to advance in the greater society and culture in which they currently reside, which at times may be for many years. In other words, time is of the essence. Critics also charge that focus on the primary language may segregate students from the larger society (Porter, 1998, 1999).

An aspect of this case study seeks to analyze the perception of INEA students in regard to some of the factors that may hamper INEA in its objective of having its students continue to learn English on their own after graduating from the program. Specifically, the question is whether or not the INEA program,

taught entirely in Spanish, fosters motivation in its students to learn English, or simply solidifies its students' comfort with Spanish and cultivates continued separation from greater social and cultural integration, as well as economic improvement, while living in the United States.

Student perspectives are relevant if INEA hopes to develop a culture of continuing education that is shared, promoted and passed on, especially by those students with children. To reach the goal of having its students learn English, INEA needs to develop learners of language, both primary and second, as a social practice. Their success may rest upon INEA's ability to develop the whole person in learning, so that its students become part of a greater community of learners in similar situations and who continue to further their education after completing the program. Rather than simply learning specific skills, the students may need to build upon the practice of learning within a social community, a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

**Binational cooperation.** On July 8, 2003, then President of Mexico (2000-2006) Vicente Fox, in a satellite teleconference connecting Los Pinos, Mexico (the Mexican presidential residence), the Rindone Technology Center at the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) and the State of California's Secretary of Education in Sacramento, publicly inaugurated the San Diego Plaza Comunitaria initiative and The California Project implemented through INEA and CONEVyT. Fox highlighted the importance of the INEA/CONEVyT programs in the U.S. and the technology utilized in their implementation. He praised the programs' initiatives as a means to combat the low educational level of 52% of Mexico's adult population, of which one-tenth are living in the United States

(Passel, 2006). The Mexican president stated,

The education Mexican men and women receive in this Community Plaza will be essential to the development of knowledge and skills that will improve their occupational performance and quality of life prospects. The teaching of English as a Second language will also facilitate their full integration into United States society. (Fox, 2003, p.1)

Yet in the same address, he also emphasized, "... for our migrants, community plazas are one of the keys to progress; they strengthen their sense of identity, and bring them closer to their origins (p.1)" Fox's statements underscore the dilemma that confronts the INEA and CONEVyT programs in the U.S. While Mexico's government is seeking full integration of its migrants into the U.S. society, it also wants to bolster their sense of identity and origin. In an educational context that is very difficult to do. Full integration of migrants into U.S. society also connotes that society's concurrent acceptance of the migrants as productive residents, and if the aim of the Plaza Comunitaria system is to strengthen students' ties to Mexican culture and identity through further learning and Mexican public school diplomas, succeeding at both goals may be problematic, especially if the students are on their own in regard to learning English, without the direct involvement of INEA.

If INEA hopes to instill a desire for continued learning in its students, it may want to consider their perspective when evaluating whether or not its Spanish-only curriculum and its completely online instruction, learning and evaluation is the best way to help its students in the U.S. meet its program goals.

Not well addressed in the research of bilingual education is the issue of

the effects social promotion in public schools, specifically as it pertains to the time necessary for second-language students to attain a solid base in their primary language in order to transition to the second language. Students involved in transitional bilingual education may improve their native language skills and have a higher success rate in learning English, but by the time they developed a useful base in their native language they may have fallen behind in the core subjects at each grade level. Social (age) promotion of students, as opposed to academic promotion, allows for students, including native Spanish speakers to advance and enter secondary school without the English skills necessary in time to graduate with their peers. This may contribute to the low graduation rates of native Spanish speakers in California public schools, which in turn leaves them with less socioeconomic opportunity while residing in the U.S. Could this same scenario be repeated with educational paradigm promoted by INEA? Is it possible that INEA's students may be impeded from further advancement in learning English in the U.S. due to the Spanish-only instruction? Consideration must be given to the fact that the students learning through transitional bilingual education in public schools at least had the benefit of receiving core subject matter instruction in English and had the opportunity to socialize with English-speaking students in the classroom on a daily basis. INEA's program offers its students neither the opportunity for core instruction in English, nor the opportunity for social interaction in English.

**Transition to online instruction and the California Project.** The year 2008 was when INEA mandated the total transition to instruction and evaluation through its digital Internet portal. This mandate is significant in that it seems to be

a progressive step to ensure that INEA's students learn through the most modern means available. The problem is that not all the Plazas Comunitarias in the U.S. have access to the computer hardware necessary to comply with the mandate; and for many of the students the plazas would be the only places where computer access and training would be expected for free. Moreover, the transition must be examined in regards to its relevance to the educational level of the students, as well as their limited experience utilizing computer technology. Depending on the level of education that students had prior to enrolling in INEA's program, they may have become accustomed to a curriculum presented only through the traditional means. There also exists the possibility that the students received very little classroom instruction and textbooks experience prior to INEA, for many of them the only familiarity with formal education could be due entirely to attending INEA classes in the U.S. If that is the case, learning through computer mediation, or simply with the assistance of technology, may prove difficult without preparation and familiarization.

The lack of a concomitant availability of necessary technology at many of the current Plazas Comunitarias means that the INEA administrators and plaza coordinators in the U.S. are impeded from implementing the online mandate. They must make do with what they have while under attempting to fully comply with the new directives. Prior to the mandate, Mexico needed to provide the all of the curricular materials necessary for the program, meaning texts. The logistical difficulties of cost and transportation may be alleviated with the implementation of online curriculum, instruction and evaluation, but for the plazas with no online access, the question of whether or not the students can receive equitable

education is evident. Without a guarantee of online access, traditional curricular materials would have to be utilized, whether or not they are current or available.

This scenario may currently exist within the INEA program at Palomar College, which is the focus of this case study. Even though the Palomar College is in San Diego County, where former President of Mexico Fox praised the binational cooperation between the Mexico and the U.S. along with the innovative implementation of technology of the California Project to assist Spanish-speaking students enrolled in California's public schools, the Plazas Comunitarias implemented out of Palomar College may not be currently benefitting from the resources and binational cooperation lauded by Fox in 2003. This case study will analyze student perceptions in regard to curricular availability as it relates to meeting the goals for INEA students in the U.S.

**California Project cooperation.** CONEVyT is the supervisory organization of both INEA and the Mexican contribution to The California Project hosted by the San Diego County Office of Education. In the California Project, the state's standards-based curriculum is translated to Spanish and supported through CONEVyT's Internet portal for the benefit of Spanish-speaking students in California's secondary schools. The entirely computer mediated California Project enables students enrolled in the state's public schools to utilize computers available at every school site to study the standards in Spanish (SDCOE, 2007). Only those INEA students who are also enrolled in public secondary schools have guaranteed regular access to the CONEVyT portal.

The coordination on the two projects, INEA and the California Project, is high between the state of California and Mexico, so much so that even

California's then Secretary of Education, Kerry Mazzoni, participated in the video conferencing with Mexican President Fox to inaugurate it.

Rich Thome (2003), the SDCOE Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Technology at the time, described The California Project as a possible solution to the problem experienced by Spanish second language learners in public schools as they attempt to maintain academic competence in core content standards, especially in Mathematics and Science while at the same time attempting to learn English. He described the California Project as a resource throughout the state through which students will be able to access supplementary high quality digital content in Spanish through the project's Internet portal that is aligned to California academic content standards. The Spanish supplementary material for use by students in California was developed by several Mexican government and educational agencies over a number of years.

The California Project is at the forefront of the INEA/CONEVyT programs within the U.S. Not only does it allow native Spanish speakers to access the California Content Standards curriculum translated into Spanish, it allows Spanish speakers 15 years and older to enroll online for their Mexican elementary or secondary diploma classes while in California. Wherever the Internet is available to a Plaza Comunitaria, all of the digitized curriculum developed by the Mexican Government and offered through the California Project will be available to assist English learners. The expected outcomes of the project are:

- A significant increase in the number of California English Learners successfully completing Pre-Algebra and Algebra courses



- Increased passage rates for program participants on the math portion of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
- Increased parental involvement and knowledge regarding technology's impact on student learning
- Increased number of Spanish speakers fifteen years and older who enroll in courses leading to the Mexican Primaria or Secundaria certificate

**Instructional and financial support.** As a binational project between Mexico and the state of California and accessed from the CONEVyT website, the project is meant to be a resource not just for students, but for both Mexican and American educators, connecting them with services and information in regard to INEA/CONEVyT and California Content Standards curriculum in Spanish. The California Project is also a prime example of how the financial responsibilities are delineated between INEA and entities in the U.S. Mexico provides complete funding for the portal development and content, which amounts to a cost of more than 3 million dollars. Yet, it does not spend it specifically on the California Project. Those costs for implementation are incurred by the SDCOE, as are the costs to any entity hosting a Plaza Comunitaria. Such costs consist of the hardware, in the form of computers and other telecommunication equipment, venues, utilities, staff and furniture. The expenses incurred by Mexico are from the development of the program's content, translation of the standards into Spanish, for INEA/CONEVyT curriculum, the Internet portal, training of teachers and tutors and educational material.

Financially, per Mexican law, INEA may not distribute financial resources for the development of its educational programs in the U.S. Its support is offered within the framework of international cooperation in regard to educational and

cultural material between the U.S. and Mexico. All the operational expenses for the implementation of the program are incurred by the institutions in the U.S. In the public realm, these are mostly state and local government facilities and sites, controlled by school districts, migrant education and correctional facilities. Private institution facilities, such as schools, religious and social organizations are also utilized as sites for INEA services (INEA, 2005). Of the aforementioned institutions, public schools sites are the most common venues for Plaza Comunitaria implementation.

The costs associated with facilities usage is mostly for utilities, such as electricity to power lights and computers. The usage occurs outside of regular school hours when classrooms and computer laboratories are not being utilized by the hosting institutions. INEA incurs personnel cost in administering all the processes of accreditation, training, consulting, evaluation and technical assistance, among others, such expenditures are not categorized as expenditures by INEA for the Plazas Comunitarias in the U.S. They are simply part of the internal operating budget in Mexico (Stringel, personal communication, December 12, 2006).

**Instructional overview for Mexican programs in the U.S.** The California Project goes a step further than the average Plaza Comunitaria in the U.S. It not only supports the INEA program, but also provides curriculum for Spanish-speaking students in California's public schools. The Plaza Comunitaria at Palomar College in San Marcos, California was the first plaza and was the model upon which all other plazas have been based. Based on theory and practice from the research of Cummins (1979) and Dutcher (1994) and other researchers

supporting the development of primary language literacy as a base on which to support second language acquisition, the California Project was developed to complement the Plaza Comunitaria implementation. It is specifically designed to aid Spanish-speaking students, some of whom may also attend classes offered by INEA, in learning the California Content Standards.

The Mexican curriculum offered in the U.S. is implemented by INEA with CONEVyT as the supervising entity. Under the purview of Mexico's SEP, both aim to educate Spanish-speaking adults through programs in the U.S., but with differing goals, design of instructional delivery, curriculum and specific objectives. The essential difference is that INEA offers academic diploma programs at any available venue conducive to presenting a class, although preferably at public school facilities. Although traditionally a textbook curricular program, INEA is in the process of transitioning to a mostly computer mediated instructional environment. Nevertheless, most of the curriculum and instruction still occurs through the traditional means with textbooks and teachers, rather than through computer mediation supported by tutors. This study will attempt to ascertain how well the transition to online instruction is proceeding.

CONEVyT, in contrast, offers a program that is similar to trade or technical schools in the U.S., in which students learn specific skills that may enable them to begin working in a particular industry. Both INEA and CONEVyT programs are offered in Mexico, but the INEA program is by far the more extensive of the two in the U.S. due to the prohibitive costs and lack of availability of equipment for implementing technical and trade learning programs in another country.

**Instruction at the Plazas Comunitarias.** While the curriculum and

approaches for instructional delivery differ, both INEA and CONEVyT adhere to the philosophy of providing a common venue at which their students enrolled in the programs in the U.S. can access instruction and information through both traditional and digital means. They follow the Plazas Comunitarias concept to provide their students with a nearby location within their community by which to access the educational resources. Depending on the economic and means of the entity hosting the plaza, each is expected to provide the administration, technology, educators and a furnished venue necessary to impart and maintain the INEA curriculum. With COMEXUS as its vehicle, INEA has increased the number of Plazas Comunitarias and has made great progress toward digital access to their curriculum, with The California Project representing the highest level of coordination between INEA and an entity in the U.S. It also represents the most technologically advanced implementation of the INEA curriculum. Even though San Diego County is one of the counties where traditional curriculum implementation through the utilization of textbooks and classrooms still occurs, beginning in 2006, INEA began moving toward full online implementation. The CONEVyT Internet Portal, accessible wherever an Internet connection is available, allows students to access the complete array of curricular, evaluative, collaborative and informational resources offered through INEA. Through the collaboration of the Mexican and California state governments, INEA and the California Project have established 87 Plaza Comunitarias throughout the state, of which there are now 11 in San Diego County (CONEVt, 2010).

**Agreement for Plazas Comunitarias.** The idea for Plazas Comunitarias was presented in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico, which was the site of the

Eleventh National Seminar for the Formation of Educational Administrators, Educational Institutional Directives, and Community Leaders for Plazas Comunitarias “e-México” in the United States on October 19, 2004. The seminar established and defined Plazas Comunitarias as a manner by which Mexico, working mostly with public education authorities, but also with private entities in the United States, would make possible the opportunity for Spanish-speaking adults who were at least 15 years old to have access to curriculum and instruction to improve their lives, obtain skills to enhance their job opportunity, have a greater command of their native language to make it easier to learn English, and to become examples of improved self-esteem for their children and to be proud of their origin and culture.

To make Plazas Comunitarias a reality, the Mexican government, through INEA and CONEVyT, pledged more than a million textbooks to be free to students taking classes through the plazas in the United States. The National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), a conglomeration of Mexican universities, also pledged to support the programs with initiatives for educational integration and curriculum development, such as producing the online educational program that mirrors that of the Mexican SEP and the translation of the California standards into Spanish. Essentially, the IPN offered pedagogical theoretical and research support on which the INEA program is based.

With INEA’s current implementation in 34 states and Washington D.C., and with such large numbers of Spanish-speaking students being serviced, it is incredible that the public’s awareness about the programs’ existence is not widespread. Not only is the program offered at public school venues, but it is also

offered also in some correctional facilities in the U.S.

For this case study, the research of student perspectives will focus on INEA classes offered through the Plaza Comunitarias implemented at Palomar College in San Diego County, California and through the CONEVyT Internet portal.

The research questions for this case study were developed through scrutiny of the specific program goals developed by INEA and the need for this case study to describe the program's effectiveness at accomplishing its goals and objectives, as perceived by its students. Moreover, the program administrators, supervisors and implementers on both sides of the border will be interviewed and consulted to ensure that the questions and methodological inquiry will lead to useful information.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the INEA in the United States based on its stated program goals and the goals of its students. With such vast implementation of INEA in the U.S., it is imperative to analyze the basis for its existence through the perception of the students participating in its classes. A program such as INEA merits examination, due as much to its widespread implementation as to its binational nature. INEA may be a means by which Spanish-speaking adults obtain their basic education in the U.S. in ever increasing numbers, but unless it offers ESL classes, as President of Mexico Vicente Fox (2003) said would assist in integrating the students into U.S. society, it may also have the dualistic potential of fostering and maintaining a separation of Mexican and Spanish-speaking adults and shielding them from

American culture within the U.S., which would be the antithesis of the goal previously cited by former Mexican President Vicente Fox.

If INEA is successful at meeting its goals, the students, as well as Mexico, will benefit. Literate and knowledgeable employees, regardless of their language, are a general benefit to employers, and it is also probable that INEA students will increase their critical-thinking skills by progressing through the program. On the other hand, as the program is offered entirely in Spanish and has as one of its goals to strengthening cultural ties to Mexico, the students may not perceive the goal as successful. The students may become a greater economic benefit to the U.S for having studied within INEA, but the program may also minimize their opportunity for greater social participation in the greater U.S. society. This may be problematic simply due the large numbers of non-English-speaking Hispanic immigrants residing in the U.S. If the hope is that the students simply become a greater economic benefit to U.S. employers as a result of their improved education, then the social aspect need not be addressed. Nevertheless, if cultural separation from the greater U.S. society is increased by participation in the INEA program, the effects may not be beneficial to the students.

The effectiveness of INEA's stated objectives and goals has yet to be examined, and success of the program would seem to rest on the perception of its students. Moreover, it remains to be studied if INEA students are seeking further learning, especially in English, due to participation in the program. If they are, the question must be asked if the motivation for learning English is for better job opportunity, self-fulfillment or both.

This case study examined the perceptions of the adult Spanish-speaking

students, 18 years and older, in regard to participation in the INEA program in the U.S. in order to determine if the INEA goals for its students in the U.S. are being met.

### **Problem Statement**

It has yet to be determined if INEA's goals of having its students further their academic education to improve their employment opportunities and to study and learn English is being reached. Nor is there any previous research to determine if the program is having a positive effect on the lives of the INEA students and their families in the U.S. Given that the U.S. is providing facilities, technology for course delivery and human resources to implement a program in Spanish for the benefit of Spanish-speaking expatriates who are mostly from Mexico, it is reasonable to expect that the program's progress toward reaching its stated goals is measured, and that there is a concrete benefit to the students. If it is a goal for its students in the U.S. to go beyond the Mexican diploma program and to learn English, then the effectiveness of the INEA program must be studied, not only in regard to its students, but in regard to the amount of support and implementation in the U.S. Is the program meeting all of its goals, or some of them, and if just some of them, which ones? Does the program have a positive effect on the students, INEA and the host country, and is it causing the students to take active steps toward learning English and furthering their academic education? Are all the effects positive, or does it have any detrimental effect by solidifying the students comfort with Spanish so much so that it serves to separate them from greater social and cultural integration, as well as economic advancement, while they live in the U.S.? Is it possible that the results from



studying in INEA affects students differently based on their life goals and personal situations?

If the INEA program is to demonstrate successful implementation on such a widespread basis in the U.S. and to be presented as a successful program, its students must perceive that they are experiencing success with their personal goals along with the goals of the program.

This case study examined the students' perspectives of the effectiveness of Mexico's INEA program implementation within San Diego County in the United States, where 11 of the 87 Plazas Comunitarias (CONEVyT, 2010) in California exist. The study focuses on the INEA implementation at Palomar College in North County San Diego, the largest of all plazas. INEA's basic program objective is to offer its students an education leading to primary, secondary and preparatory school diplomas awarded by the Mexican SEP, but its goals for its students in the U.S. are even more far reaching. For its students in the U.S. it seeks to help its students gain knowledge and develop skills, improve their fluency in their Spanish language in order to learn English more easily, be a positive example for their children and to improve their self-esteem and to be proud of their culture and place of origin (CONEVyT, 2010).

### **Research Questions**

This case study analyzed the students' perspectives of the effectiveness of the INEA Plaza Comunitaria at Palomar College at meeting its goals for students living in United States. The analysis will be made by analyzing students' responses to interview questions that relate to the research questions. The research questions are:

1. From the perspective of the students, does the educational contribution offered by the INEA program have an effect on the quality of their lives? If so, how (academically, economically, personally, technologically)?
2. From the perspective of the students, has participation in the INEA program allowed them to gain greater dominance of their native language to facilitate the learning of English? If so, how?
3. From the perspective of the students, has participation in INEA strengthened their self-esteem and pride in their culture, and their ability to be involved in the education of their children? If so, how?
4. From the perspective of the students, has a technology mediated curriculum had an effect on the quality of their lives? If so, how?

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Historical Perspective**

As neighboring countries, the United States and Mexico share many historical, social and cultural characteristics. They also share a territorial history rooted in conflict. First, Mexico lost roughly 17% of its territory when the Republic of Texas declared independence from Mexico in 1836 and later became part of the U.S. Then, at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, Mexico ceded another 55% of what was left of its territory to the U.S with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (U.S., 1848). That 55% became the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico. When combined with the previous loss of Texas, Mexico overall had lost roughly two thirds of its total territory to the U.S. Since 1848, the relationship between the two nations has only become more intertwined and complex due to the vast economic disparity and cultural differences separating them.

Due to a variety of reasons, Mexicans have often migrated to, and lived in the United States in great numbers. Obviously many were living in the conquered territory that became the U.S. Since 1848, Mexicans have migrated north, and between 1850 and 1880 an estimated 55,000 more entered the U.S. to fill farm cultivation jobs previously filled by Chinese and later Japanese immigrants. Although this was a new influx, the institution of Mexican workers in the now U.S. territory was well established prior to this period in commercial agriculture, the mining industry, light industry and the railroad. The working conditions and salaries of the Mexicans were poor (PBS, 2007).

Sometimes the migration was due to invitation, such as with the Bracero

program begun in 1942. During World War II, when the U.S. lacked manual labor for agricultural industries, it signed the Bracero Treaty with Mexico, which allowed for legal immigration of Mexican laborers between the period of 1942 and 1964 to be contracted temporarily with growers and ranchers. More than 4 million Mexican farm workers came to work the fields of the United States under the Bracero Treaty (PBS, 2007). Mexicans have always migrated to the U.S due economic necessity.

The strength of the U.S. economy has stood in stark contrast to the economic anemia of Mexico. Its per capita income is one-fourth that of the U.S. and its income distribution remains highly unequal. Since resisting the British invasion in 1812, the U.S. has benefited from political stability, capitalistic prowess and militaristic power, while Mexico has suffered from political and economic instability since declaring its independence from Spain in 1810. Even after the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1917 and having recently joined the trillion dollar gross domestic product economy class of nations (CIA, 2007), Mexico has never been able to create an economic environment conducive to assisting its lowest socioeconomic workers in bettering their lives.

Mexico's history is one of dictatorships, oligarchies, invasions and interventions by foreign powers such as Spain, France and the United States. The U.S. alone openly invaded Mexico on three different occasions. In 1846, the U.S. went to war with Mexico and ended up with a third of its territory two years later. In 1914, the U.S. invaded the Mexican states of Veracruz and Tampico as a result of a dispute with then Mexican President Victoriano Huerta, resulting in Huerta's resignation in the middle of the Mexican Revolution. And then again, in

1917, U.S. troops occupied northern Mexico for 10 months after being sent on a “punitive expedition” to capture Francisco (Pancho) Villa after his attack on the town of Columbus, New Mexico (Yockelson, 1997).

Whether from invasion, political or economic pressure, the effect of such international interference has contributed to Mexico’s economic instability and inability to remedy the substandard conditions in which so many of its citizens have lived and continue to live. In addition, throughout its history it has been governed by leaders guided by self-interest and indebtedness to foreign governments, rather than by a desire to improve the plight of their country’s people through economic advancement.

For example, the Mexican Revolution begun in 1910 lasted seven years and had the aim of overthrowing the country’s dictator, Porfirio Diaz, and reforming land ownership laws in favor of its citizens. Yet even after the exile of Diaz and new laws, Mexico’s oligarchical government continues today. Only as recently as the year 2000 did the 70 years of single party rule in Mexico end. Even so, systemic political instability and economical corruption continue to impede the country’s progress. More recently, the war on narco-trafficking declared by now President Felipe Calderon has resulted in more deaths in Mexico than in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq combined, and in less than half the time.

Mexico is a rich nation. On a world ranking, economically it has the 16<sup>th</sup> highest Gross Domestic Product, 15<sup>th</sup> largest labor force, is 8<sup>th</sup> in oil exports and 17<sup>th</sup> in proven oil reserves. It is 17<sup>th</sup> in overall exports and 11<sup>th</sup> in reserves of foreign exchange and gold. In the communications sector Mexico ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in

telephone use (both cable and cellular), and is 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> in the number of Internet servers and users. It also has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest number of universities (CIA, 2007). Notwithstanding these impressive statistics, the country appears quite poor in contrast to its northern neighbor. Its government is unable to improve the welfare of the majority of its citizens to any large degree, and the perpetuation of the enormous gap between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, still exists.

The economic disparity between the two countries, along with the persistence of an enormous percentage of Mexican citizens remaining in poverty, has led to mass migration from Mexico to the U.S., which is a phenomenon similar to that of other countries south of the U.S. border, especially from Central America. While the opportunity for an improved standard of living is the principal reason for the massive Hispanic migration north, there is a disparity between whites and Hispanics in the U.S. in relation to occupational assimilation. Hispanics, especially those foreign-born, continue to lag behind whites occupationally and economically. This is true for all Hispanic groups except Cuban immigrants, who are comparable to whites in occupational status (Toussaint-Comeau et al., 2005). So strong is the attraction of employment in the U.S., that it is now estimated that as of 2004, as many as 6 million Mexicans, which is roughly 6 percent of the country's population, were living in the U.S. (Passel, 2006) for what may be considered mostly economic reasons (Alfred, 2002) Furthermore, as the Mexicans who migrate north are generally the poorest and least educated, in that they have not completed their education through high school, their opportunity for advancement beyond blue collar employment is severely limited. Mexico does have a middle class, but it is quite small in

comparison to that of the U.S. Mexico does not keep statistics of percentages of the population in poverty, but generally only those considered poor migrate to the U.S.

### **INEA Program Relevancy**

With most Mexicans lacking the means necessary to advance beyond manual labor and blue collar employment and to improve their standard of living beyond meager incomes, the INEA program in the U.S. is designed to serve that adult portion of the Mexican population in finishing their academic education they did not complete in Mexico.

The INEA program merits study for several reasons. Educationally, the program is specifically designed for Spanish-speaking adult learners and has a Spanish-only curriculum that is implemented in a country where English is the dominant language. INEA cites some research (Cummins, 1981; Dutcher, 1994; López, 1991, 1998, Thomas, 1997) that supports English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education programs as a basis for the Spanish-only implementation within INEA, but neither program is implemented within its curricular structure. INEA's program goal instead is for its graduates to study and learn English on their own after improving their native Spanish language fluency.

The research cited by INEA postulates that learning and development in the primary language contributes to the learning and development in a second language. There is also research to suggest that there is a linguistic interdependence between the two (Vygotsky, 1962). INEA cites Vygotsky's research as a basis for establishing a linguistic maturity in Spanish that will assist the students in eventually learning English.

The research cited in INEA's program literature pertains mostly to improving literacy in a bilingual setting and educating adult learners. What is lacking is research to support the notion that Spanish-speaking adult learners taught exclusively in their native language through high school within an English speaking society will seek to learn English, and succeed in doing so. In essence, research to determine the progress of the program and of the students has yet to be performed. Recognizing this, INEA highlights the need for such study on its program information literature that it makes publicly available (INEA, 2005).

Unlike programs for transitional bilingual education, INEA offers no direct assistance to its students to further their education in English after receiving their diplomas, even though that is one of the program's goals. Rather than supporting a specific monolingual (Spanish) program for adults within an English dominant society, the research on which the program is based specifically details highly controlled and monitored bilingual immersion and two-way programs for children to be implemented over many years for the second language learner to obtain academic fluency in the majority language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). A successful bilingual program should be two-way and adhere to specific criteria (Lindholm & Zierlein, 1991). Specifically, they maintain that a successful two-way program should offer a minimum of six years of immersive bilingual instruction, although nine is best for complete fluency. It should focus on core academic curriculum, which means to utilize the language for instruction, rather than focusing only on specific language development, as does the current English Language Development (ELD) requirement in California public schools. The program should be implemented in both languages, but at separate times, with



50% of the instruction occurring in each language, as with the international American School model, where students receive 50% of their instruction in English for core subjects and 50% in the language of the host country, also for core subjects. Lindholm and Zierlein (1991) describe successful two-way programs as also enjoying the promotion of positive interdependence among peers and have the full support of the administration within an active family/school partnership, as well as highly qualified instructional personnel.

INEA stipulates in its informational literature that it will research the success of its learning program, including its online aspect, track the adults that return to Mexico, and study the effect of primary language development among its students studying through INEA in the U.S. on learning English as a Second Language (INEA, 2005). The four aspects of the relationship between learning in Spanish within INEA and the level of learning in English that INEA proposes to investigate are:

1. The relationship between the prior development of knowledge and abilities in reading, writing and basic mathematical calculation in Spanish and learning English as a Second Language.
2. To identify the principal cognitive, phonological, grammatical, and vocabulary abilities acquired in the primary language that influence the effectiveness of learning in the second language.
3. To understand the relationship of linguistic interdependence between learning Spanish and English as a function of diverse variables such as gender, age, level of education, labor/job activity and duration of study in each language.

4. The level of correlation of literacy in Spanish with the level literacy in English (INEA, 2005).

Currently no data have been presented by INEA in regard to studying these aspects or to know if the students have reached the goal of learning English or have experienced career advancement due to completing the INEA program in the U.S.

**Contextual learning environment.** INEA has decided what it should teach, but it has not been studied how the context in which the students are learning in the U.S. will affect their success. Essentially, the INEA program curriculum is identical whether implemented in Mexico or in the U.S. It still offers mostly a traditional learning environment through the use of an instructor and textbooks. Yet the contextual learning environment in which the students are acquiring academic and primary language skills is vastly different. The curriculum as implemented in the U.S. may not be compatible with the social-cultural environment in which the students are currently living. It may be beneficial for INEA to define the reasons for offering a mostly identical program in the U.S. to what students would experience in Mexico but with additional goals. By doing so the effectiveness of the program may be better measured and the results might better serve INEA in developing a program that is progressively more relevant to its students in the U.S.

So unique is the context in which INEA students receive instruction that it must be considered as a separate variable from instructional content and delivery. INEA recognizes that the learning environment is a relevant basic concept when students are attempting to learn. When addressing learning, INEA

refers to the students' Frame of Reference, which is a group of concepts concerning environmental features that affect individuals' lives (knowledge, experiences or beliefs that someone uses to understand something). The concepts constitute the cultural heritage, by which individuals have a better understanding of their surroundings (INEA, 2005).

There is ample research to suggest that immigrant students benefit from being taught in their native language at the same time they are learning a second language. Whether still living in their native land or having emigrated to another country, a well, or better developed literacy in the primary language does aid in cognitive development and literacy acquisition in a second language (Krashen, 1991). Additionally, greater literacy in the primary language allows second language learners to reflect on and analyze their language skills in regard to grammar and phonemic-graphemic structures that contribute to the learning of a second language (Snow, 1990). The process of transferring primary language skills to second language learning has proven to be successful when all variables of student language percentages and core curriculum delivery language are highly controlled (Thomas, 1997). Without the same structured support previously detailed, it is less certain if the INEA students will independently pursue the education needed to acquire English literacy after completing the diploma program.

Unlike programs for transitional bilingual education, INEA offers no direct assistance to its students to further their education in English after receiving their diplomas, even though that is one of the program's goals. The research supporting the program relies on theory developed from research in bilingual

education environments, where the native language literacy has been used as base for transferring literacy skills to the second language. Therefore, what must be examined is how well the students are reaching their goals for learning English when they have no formal instructional exposure to it in the INEA program.

Although a solid literacy in the native language is crucial for transferability (Cummins, 1979), the goal of having INEA students gain literacy skills in English may not be realized if the context in which they live and work is not considered when designing the learning environment. The micro-contextual environment in which INEA provides instruction is distinct from that in which the students live and work. Notwithstanding that they are linked to their particular Hispanic cultures and communities, they live within a macro-contextual environment of the U.S., where the opportunities to acquire and benefit from English exist. It is at the macro-societal level where the students will need to utilize their newly learned academic and literacy skills if they are to improve their economic and living prospects beyond the Plazas Comunitarias.

The scope of the contextual learning environment has implications for both the students and INEA. On a micro level, the students participate in education within their community and culture, for which the benefits may be realized on a smaller scale. But if INEA's goal of having its students expand their knowledge and advance within the greater society is to be realized, the entire micro and macro contextual learning environment must be taken into account and considered in order to promote current and continued learning beyond the INEA program. In other words, INEA has the challenge of designing learning

environments that take into account the desires of the students and the realities and opportunities existing within the macro-societal contexts. The students essentially need to understand the reasons for acquiring the skills through INEA, what value they have and how they may be applied in their lives.

Because the research utilized by INEA suggests that students may benefit from being taught in their native language at the same time they are learning a second language (Cummins, 1979), the theory of transferability of primary language skills to second language learning requires that it be well understood and supported. As transferability of literacy skills for learning a second language are essential to INEA's goal of having its students pursue the acquisition of English literacy subsequent to participating and completing the program, the lack of support for further study in English is problematic. INEA officially urges continued learning after students complete its program (INEA, 2005), though no counseling or outlining of strategies for further learning, especially in English, are offered. The students are left to their own devices when they finish the program.

Although the research supports strong ability in the primary language as a base of interdependent development of a second (Cummins, 1979; Dutcher, 1994; López, 1998), the contextual learning environment, especially for adult learners within INEA must be considered if the goal of learning English is to be reached. Specifically, INEA must consider the paths its students will take toward learning English, especially when the theory it cites as the foundation for the program demands that support for learning is maintained throughout the process of acquiring a second language. INEA may also want define how it will track the progress of its graduates.

By addressing the contextual learning environment, INEA can develop the educational content and curriculum most relevant and conducive to achieving the goals of the program and its students. Within the context of the Plazas Comunitarias, INEA desires for its students to improve their Spanish and earn a diploma that demonstrates skill proficiency at predetermined educational levels. Its most specific objective is to increase students' literacy and improve their basic academic skills. But as the INEA curriculum replicates that of the larger system in Mexico, it must be considered within the context of the Mexican school system that serves the larger Mexican society, conforming to it and affected by it. Such conformity to the larger Mexican public school system begs analysis of how the adult students will replicate any academic success and benefit within the macro-context of the larger U.S. society. Whether or not that replication of success occurs in the U.S. is a focus of this case study.

**Society as an educational context.** In Mexico, as within any country, the social interplay between school and society cannot be ignored; one affects and benefits the other. Thomas Jefferson observed that the health of a democracy depends on an educated and informed citizenry. In turn, individuals benefit from education through increased opportunity to grow personally, socially and economically. Society benefits as individuals learn and become socialized about institutionalized and cultural norms that define a nation. This is the functionalist view of school, in that it serves to assimilate, socialize politically and modernize, which in turn prepares individuals to be knowledgeable about the culture and mores of the society in which they live, widen their political loyalty beyond smaller groups to a nation as a whole and to reach a prerequisite for technological and

economic advancement (Feinberg & Soltis, 1998, p. 25). Dewey (1916) described education as “a fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating, process.” (p. 10) and “a shaping into a standard form of social activity.” (p. 10) Obviously, such a standard form of activity can only be defined by a society as a whole. The definition may always be in flux due to a society’s diversity, but schools and the education they provide stem from a general acceptance of societal norms that a country wishes to perpetuate. Therefore the cultivating process for the perpetuation of societal activity is the context in which students learn, and which must be considered when developing a learning environment.

So too must the interaction between the INEA program and the larger society in the U.S. be taken into account. The INEA learning environment merits examination in the context of its relationship to society on a macro scale, since its students are constantly affected not only through their interaction with others within the classrooms of the Plazas Comunitarias and from within their particular Hispanic communities, but also by the larger society in a country that is not their country of origin and where neither the Spanish language nor Mexican culture is predominant.

The contextual learning environment in the U.S is quite different from Mexico. In Mexico, students have little exposure to English and even less exposure to the culture in the U.S. that utilizes English as the dominant language. As INEA students see themselves primarily as Mexican or Hispanic, and both INEA and the students have a desire to foment those linkages or heritages, it is imperative that INEA consider tailoring its program so that it takes that desire into account when attempting to meet its students’ needs in regard to

their personal aspirations in the U.S. Attention needs to be given to the fact that in the U.S. English is the dominant language in every aspect of society, which makes it “the single most important element in the construction of national identity, both positively as a communicative instrument shared by members of the nation and as a boundary marker affirming their distinction from others” (Zolberg & Woon, 1999, p. 22). Although no official language in the U.S. exists, English has been institutionalized as the language of business, government and education. Such institutionalization serves to assign to it a linguistic value for which social and economic capital can be gained. This is especially true when considering the context of an educational environment, “which determines access to the labor market for new generations” (Zolberg & Woon, 1999, p. 21) and noteworthy when considering INEA’s goal of improving the economic opportunities of its students.

In the U.S. the issue of educating a burgeoning non-English speaking and Hispanic immigrant population is already at the forefront of a national debate. As immigration is the single biggest source of the Hispanic population increase in the U.S., of the over 35 million Hispanics living in U.S., 47% of them are still primarily Spanish speakers (Brodie, Steffenson, Valdez, Levin & Suro, 2002). With half of Hispanics not able to speak English, and only 25% considering themselves bilingual, they are not able to assimilate into the larger society in great numbers; and therefore are unable to access its greater benefits, because the capability to speak English is a major factor in gaining access. Not until the second generation does English become the more dominant language among Hispanics (Brodie et al., 2002).



INEA students encounter many of the same obstacles to seeking more academic learning as do many adults in the greater society. Hispanics and Mexicans as a group are also limited by economics, the need to earn a living and maintain a family. The limitation of language only exacerbates the difficulties of limited time and money.

Their motivations for overcoming these obstacles to pursue academic learning and complete the diploma process stem from a variety of reasons such as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, maintenance of cultural identity while living in the U.S. and the degree of desire to eventually assimilate into the U.S. society with its concomitant improved economic opportunity.

In relation to the motivation for assimilation, how much the students decide to integrate and assimilate into the dominant society is largely a factor of the particular immigrant group and the social and economic conditions and situations for which they migrate to the U.S. Moreover, it is a factor of the personal connections made by individuals and the internal differentiation available within an ethnic group. Internal differentiation refers to social capital, the social ties and contacts available within and to a group. While they almost always include the close ties of family and friendship, the term also refers to a group's ability to maintain contacts beyond personal ties and that overlap social and economic status boundaries. Among Hispanic groups, Mexicans are characterized by a low degree of internal differentiation (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994). In contrast, a group that exhibits high internal differentiation is Cubans. Cubans have a much more extensive ability to attain their social and economic goals. They tend to have greater access to societal benefits due to their ability to make

greater social and economic connections beyond social and economic boundaries with resources they deem necessary for personal advancement. The reasons for the difference in degree between Mexicans and Cubans can be explained by the difference in economic, educational and social capital each group and individual already had in their home country. Mexican immigrants to the U.S. have tended to come from lowest socioeconomic means in Mexico. But in 1959, during the first mass emigration from Cuba to the U.S. to escape the communist dictatorship, most Cubans tended to be from a higher socioeconomic means and, for the most part, were able to continue their socio-economic success in the U.S. In contrast, of the nearly 150,000 Cuban immigrants that fled Cuba in 1980 during the Mariel Boatlift, their previous socioeconomic class was one of poverty. Nevertheless, upon arriving in the U.S., these impoverished Cubans benefitted from integration into communities with a pre-established high level of internal differentiation.

Unlike the Cubans in 1959, there has never been a mass influx of highly educated Mexicans into the U.S. Because the low internal differentiation among Mexicans in the U.S. may limit the quality of resources available to them, it is important for INEA to examine how the program can assist its students in improving their social capital, which in turn would aid in their social, academic and economic success. Awareness of the low level of internal differentiation among Mexicans in the U.S. may assist INEA in improving the learning environment of the Plazas Comunitarias.

**Family as an educational context.** The education provided through the INEA program must have contextual meaning for its students in relation to their

families, as well as to the greater society. Unless the students have no family ties, which is quite unlikely, they aspire to reach personal goals within the context of an immediate and/or extended family. Therefore family connection, the context in which individual students derive much of their support, should not be ignored by INEA when developing and implementing curriculum and learning environments. Such connections may be the greatest motivational factors in determining to what degree the students wish to maintain their native language and how much success they have in learning English. In contrast to the traditional concept of integration and assimilation, INEA's students may practice what Linton (2004) termed Selective Acculturation, by which strong ethnic networks and communities support the students as they learn to deal with societal norms, prejudice, and to navigate the educational system, both within INEA and beyond in the larger U.S. society.

The term selective acculturation is normally applied to children being educated within the institutional systems of the receiving country if they are immigrants, or within the country where they were born, but where their parents are immigrants. In either case, selective acculturation implies that there exists a degree of support for bilingualism and biculturalism while at the same time maintaining ties to family, language and cultural. For INEA students, the term is applicable, yet less balanced. For them, although they reside in a foreign country, maintenance of language and culture is a primary concern, with gradual integration an eventual desirable goal through the learning of English. This case study will attempt to analyze how important that eventual integration into the larger society is among INEA students and graduates.

Weinstein (2004) suggests that a literacy program for adult immigrant learners should be learner-centered, in that their needs as learners and parents are addressed, and that family literacy services need to be offered, with curriculum and instruction that allow for sustainable changes in a family through the promotion of interactive literacy between parents and their children, including training for parents, so that they are the primary educators of their children. The parent literacy training should contribute to economic self-sufficiency. She also emphasizes a focus on connecting materials development with professional development. Although her focus is on teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL), the idea of offering a curriculum based on the needs of the students and that assists them in advancing professionally and economically is also a goal of INEA. If INEA is to meet its goal of promoting further education among the families of its students, techniques for promoting family literacy may need to be addressed within the instructional content of the program, especially as they pertain to economic self-sufficiency.

**Immigration as an instructional context.** As well as taking into account language, culture, educational level and socioeconomic status, immigration as an instructional context must also be addressed. Previous studies linking motivation for immigration to adult education indicate that when immigration motivation is taken into account, the needs of the students can be better understood and utilized by the teachers (Alfred, 2002). Although the studies have pertained mainly to adult immigrant learners in the U.S. taking classes in English and who are already attempting to better assimilate into the greater culture of the U.S., recognition of immigration as a context for learning should be addressed, as it

affects life decisions and motivations for further learning. Such recognition may assist INEA and its students in meeting the goals of both. As a focus of this case study, consideration of immigration as a context for learning also assists in examining whether or not the adult immigrant students receiving instruction in Spanish are meeting programmatic and personal goals while living in the U.S.

By understanding the causes and motivations for the students emigrating to the U.S., program developers and implementers can create better curriculum and instruction that leads to improved learning. Portes and Rumbaut (1996) assert that the basic reason for migration is a result of a gap between life aspirations and expectations and the means to fulfill them in the country of origin. Understanding this can be useful for focusing any educational instructional development or initiative for the benefit of the INEA students. If the INEA program administrators can tailor the curriculum and instructional delivery in relation to the context of its students' motivation for emigrating to the U.S., they may be more successful. By developing an instructional environment that accepts immigration as a context for learning and recognizes the reasons its students emigrated in the first place, INEA can tailor the curriculum in the most conducive way to meeting both its goals and those of the students. Immigration, and the reasons for it, must be part of the context of instruction (Alfred, 2002).

**Community as curriculum.** Improving Spanish is the primary academic objective of the INEA program. Nevertheless, Plazas Comunitarias also serve Hispanic communities by promoting interaction among people and solidifying and transferring culture and knowledge among the community and within families. The plazas are not only central meeting places where academic knowledge is

disseminated and acquired, but are also collective cultural exchange centers. They extend the culture of Mexico to the students, allowing them to remain in contact with it to serve themselves and their families. It is therefore incumbent upon INEA to ensure that the program be responsive from the outset to students' and their families' needs (Cummins, Chow, Schechter, & Yeager, 2006) and ensure that the context in which they learn is familiar.

Being responsive means making the students feel welcomed and valuing the knowledge and experiences they bring to class. As with Cummins et al. (2006) study of new immigrants in a school in Canada attempting to create a sense of belonging within a new country and culture, INEA has the same aim, even though its curriculum does not directly promote second language development. INEA uses primary language for instruction, which helps to promote belonging. It adheres to the theory that developing and reinforcing the primary language better assists students in learning a second language, if the student chooses to do so. According to Schechter and Bayley, (2004), focusing on the development of primary language literacy in Spanish, even though it is not the principal language in a country and society dominated by another culture, should not be considered an impediment to learning a second language. Basing its program format on that theory, INEA's focus on Spanish does not impede development of the second language, due to transferability. If stronger skills in Spanish can be developed, it will be easier for the students to learn English, and their sense of value in their own language and academic abilities will be maintained in the process.

Furthermore, INEA seeks to develop greater literacy in Spanish for the

students' own sake. It desires to guarantee literacy in the language they use daily at home and within the Hispanic and Mexican communities in which they live. Through teaching and utilizing Spanish within the Plaza Comunitaria context, strong literary experiences can be nurtured while at the same time ensuring strong home/school connections (Cummins et al., 2006).

For these reasons academic development of students' primary, home language is a key to the INEA mission objective for awarding diplomas. Spanish is the language of connection. It links students to the program, to family, the Hispanic culture and community, as well as being the vehicle to further success in learning English in the U.S.

Although maintenance of the community connection may be accepted on face value, academic success, the furtherance of learning and the transferability to learning English, must be measurable. If the students receive a sense of belonging and improve their Spanish literacy, then they will have succeeded to some degree. Yet the measures of success must be related to the goals and objectives of the program, and must also include how much of what is learned is retained, utilized for further learning and is motivational for other family members to also seek more education. It is especially important to know how the percentage of students who pursue learning English after completing the INEA program.

Unlike within the public school setting, where immigrant students are attempting to learn a second language in a new culture, INEA's does not have to undergo the scrutiny of whether or not its students are learning English fast enough or whether or not they are succeeding in connecting to the larger society

outside of the Hispanic community. Nevertheless, there is evidence to show that a strong community based native language/English bilingual program can succeed. In an analysis of the Thornwood Public School (Cummins et al., 2005), school-based language policy was to include students' native language as part of the curriculum and as a resource. In what is termed Additive Bilingualism, use of native language for instruction, on par with the dominant second language, was made both policy and practice to ensure that the students' community was part of the curriculum. The Thornwood School utilized the first and second languages interdependently so that the more students learned, the more their academic self-concept grew and the more academically engaged they became. In other words, a reciprocal relationship between cognitive engagement and identity investment was seen as a positive outcome. The study did not address concerns of assimilation or duration of language learning necessary for students to be fluent in the second language.

### **INEA Learning Diagnostic Assessment**

Upon registering with INEA, every student undergoes a learning diagnostic assessment designed to assist them in beginning or completing their basic education. The results of the assessment are utilized to determine a student's level and to speed up their learning pace. Based on the assessment results, students commence studying in the INEA program according to their knowledge and skills previously gained and developed. It also allows them to receive official acknowledgement for mastery in specific academic content areas, if warranted.

Student educational placement is determined through review of records of



prior study, the development of a student profile and through diagnostic instruments designed to assess students' educational level and interests. The instruments administered assess three areas for consideration in placement (INEA, 2005). The specific instruments are:

- Interview of Educational Interests: Used to assist students in mapping out an educational plan, taking into account their interests in conjunction with their academic background, if any.
- Equivalence Tables of Primary and Secondary Education: To determine knowledge level in previously studied material, only if the examinee delivers official school documentation from the Mexican Educational System.

Diagnostic Test: A five-Session test with the first three sessions for primary and fourth and fifth sessions for secondary. It is utilized to point out skills and knowledge the examinee has acquired. It is also administered to literate examinees who wish to continue studying.

### **Formative and Summative Assessment**

To ensure the ability to collect and analyze data relating to student progress and achievement, INEA administers both formative and summative assessments to all students throughout each module. They are self-assessment processes independent of the accreditation and certification that allow students to gain knowledge and develop abilities and skills. They also assist in developing learning strategies and knowing when to administer the final exams.

INEA promotes the updating of its assessment resources by its tutors through a variety of printed and online resources. All tutors are trained and are

directed to utilize the assessment resources to give the necessary time to students in each module to develop core abilities and skills, to prove what has been learned, to allow for self-assessment exercises to reinforce knowledge according to learning achievements, to inform both students and tutors of weaknesses and strengths in the instructional process and assist in the planning and development of program activities with the students to readdress the instructional process. The final assessment is administered at the end of each module to students who wish to accredit their knowledge and skills and get the primary, secondary or preparatory certificate. For the tutors and INEA, it serves to provide feedback about the quality of the instructional process (INEA, 2005).

### **Instructional Content**

For Mexican communities abroad in the U.S., INEA established the objectives of having students gain knowledge and develop work skills to improve their standard of living, develop more elements for lifelong learning and English and language skills, support their children's learning by example, and to develop self-esteem and cultural identity. The instructional content of the INEA program is specific and consist of basic education at three levels: educational materials and resources, learning assessment and enrollment, accreditation and certification.

The basic education students receive is divided into the four areas of Literacy, Spanish, Mathematics and Sciences (Natural and Social) over the course of 43 modules at three levels – Literacy (Basic), Primary (1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades) and Secondary (7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades), which offer students a variety of required, as well as alternative studies. Modules may be added depending on the interests of the students and demands of the program. At all levels, students

receive instruction and curriculum in Literacy through printed materials, which are still the most common medium of curriculum implementation at the Plazas Comunitarias (Stringel, 2006, personal communication), such as student practice books and didactical material aiding in grammar and tutors with printed guides books. Nevertheless, according to Jorge Stringel (2010), the transition to digital implementation of all curricular offerings is progressing, albeit at a pace that is lagging behind the original estimate of full digital implementation by the end of 2007. All of the INEA curriculum is available online, beginning with the Basic level, and is accessible from the CONEVyT web site, yet most of the Plazas Comunitarias do not have full access to the Internet for all their students, which limits the possibilities of full digital access. The resources available to individual Plazas Comunitarias vary so much that guaranteed online access cannot be ensured. In such cases, traditional printed curriculum implementation through trained tutors is the only option.

In the traditional INEA implementation students at every level do not work independently, but with study groups and tutors, who are expected to access and provide ancillary curricular materials, such as newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, videos, and other resources of educational value. A digital library is also available to INEA tutors and students through the CONEVyT website, referred to e-Mexico. As INEA desires to greatly increase digital implementation of the curriculum, how it will design the digital content and access to allow for tutor and student collaboration will be a major challenge that will depend on what it expects the students to learn and how they will apply their skills.

## **Mastery vs. Constructivism**

Regardless of the level at which students begin, INEA expects them to master certain defined skills of its Primary Main Learning Objectives of the Basic education areas of Language and Communication, Mathematics, Sciences, and Social Studies (see Appendix A) in order to be evaluated as meriting advancement in the program. Subject area and skill mastery is the focus of the modules and is a requirement. INEA defines skill mastery as the ability to carry out an activity or solve problems in specific fields, recognizing that the ability an individual has in specific situations is not identical, but variable. Individuals not only have the ability when they achieve one or more criteria consistently, but also in isolated events. Individuals have mastered skills when they are consistently able to achieve the expected results carrying out a specific task, particularly, when experiencing different circumstances in several events (INEA, 2005).

When considering skill mastery and the goal of having students apply skills in different situations, it is imperative that INEA consider how its curriculum is relevant to the students' needs based on their personal desires and prior knowledge and to focus on the transferability of skills into productive use. If the students are to develop the motivation to continue learning, as well as the ability to do so, skill mastery alone may not be sufficient. Plus, skills alone in isolation are less useful than if utilized in collaboration for continued learning or projects.

INEA's definition of skill mastery above acknowledges that learning is not just the ability to successfully perform a task, but the ability to analyze and apply skills in variable circumstances due to changing social interaction. Therefore, how skill mastery will be translated into application and how to provide practical

situational skill application opportunities needs to be considered a participatory endeavor within a social context.

Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasized that participation, not cognition, is the crucial process in learning, and that learning involves the whole person in relation to social communities to become a “participant, a member, a kind of person” (p. 53). In what they call Legitimate Peripheral Participation, the learner’s intentions, or reasons for attempting to learn define the individual within a sociocultural practice.

INEA’s intent of graduating students who can apply skills in variable, ever-changing social and work situations is a worthy goal. How INEA ensures that its learning environments allow for the students to practice such variable skill application when they graduate may need to be considered. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Dewey (1916) warned against learning environments that exhibited an absence of a social atmosphere and motive for learning and the “slight opportunity afforded individual variations” (p. 301) within the classroom. He connected freedom with conditions in the learning environment that allowed students and individuals to make their “own special contribution to a group interest, and to partake of its activities in such ways that social guidance shall be a matter of (their) own mental attitude, and not a mere authoritative dictation of (their) acts” (p. 301).

Stemming from constructivism, where knowledge is constructed by the learner through social interaction and a focus on participation, and where learning occurs not just for the student, but for both the teacher and the student, the learning environment INEA aspires to provide should promote activities for

which meaning and understanding are constantly developed and renegotiated between the teacher and learner through participation in variable social tasks. When learners' intentions are shaped through a process of becoming a participant in a greater social-cultural practice, both learners and teachers benefit and the skills learned are perpetuated and defined within society.

The challenge for INEA, especially as it moves toward online learning and evaluation throughout its program, is to make the instruction and learning as essential a process as skill application that is meaningful for its adult learners. Through contemplation of how its program will be meaningful to its students, the context of both the traditional and online learning environments can be better designed. Moreover, learning entails the development of a personal identities, knowing and social membership (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and if the students are to succeed beyond the confines of their micro socio-cultural communities and participate in the greater society with in the U.S., including learning English, INEA should to take into account how its learning environment will support legitimate participation by its students in the greater, macro-society.

The vast majority of INEA students have very modest, or no, experience with computer mediated curriculum implementation, nor do most even have much experience in traditional classrooms. It is therefore incumbent upon INEA to examine ways to familiarize its students enough with the technology to create a learning environment that takes advantage of the technology in conjunction with what is known through research about adult learners, prior knowledge, shared culture and community, and experience with computers and the Internet. Its students cannot make meaning out of performing a skill without prior

experience if technology, especially technology for learning, if it has never had meaning in their lives. Petraglia (1998) emphasized the importance of attempting “to make learning materials and environments correspond to the real world prior to the learner’s interaction with them”.

In support of a constructivist methodology for learning, INEA references Vygotsky (1978) and his Theory of Social Development, in which he stresses that learning does not occur in isolation, but through social interaction and the sharing of cultural tools, such language and writing. Such a view is applicable in the Plaza Comunitaria environment because the plazas are hubs of shared cultural interaction where individuals with similar ethnicity, language and history come together in search of greater knowledge. If INEA recognizes that students enter the program with previous experiences and knowledge, as well as certain styles of learning developed within a specific socio-cultural environment, and that collaboration is beneficial to learning, then it is appropriate to study how the program’s instructional methodology utilizes collaborative learning methods where students work with and learn from other students, teachers and tutors. INEA can assist students in acquiring and mastering skills, but in keeping with its definition of mastery, which in essence espouses the incorporation of a constructivist and collaborative model, it must prepare its students for the variable situations they will encounter during life as a result of the social interaction they have, and will need to have in order to advance academically, in their work and careers, and to improve their life situations.

Whether or not the current INEA program is assisting students in better preparing themselves to meet the goals of furthering their careers, seeking to

learn English and being an inspiration for further learning to their families is a topic of this case study. The students must master specific skills at all levels within the program, but how INEA supports its students beyond the skill mastery they can learn in the diploma programs is still nebulous. There may be a disassociation between the INEA program curriculum and the greater society in which the students live. In keeping with Vygotsky's (1978) theory, the learning that takes place at the Plazas Comunitarias must be considered in reference to the greater society in which its students wish to expand their knowledge and experiences.

### **Textbook vs. Digital**

Notwithstanding INEA's intent of providing as much of its curriculum online as possible, the current status is that the vast majority of the program is still offered through the traditional teacher, textbook and classroom method. Nevertheless, the transition from traditional instructional delivery to digital implementation is occurring wherever possible. The transition to digital began in 2006, and the INEA program administrators had hoped to have mostly online instruction and evaluation by the end of 2007. For reasons including the high costs of publication, transportation of materials from Mexico and distribution, as well as the philosophy of simply modernizing the way students learn in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the complete transition to online education is still the goal (Stringel, 2006, personal communication). Albeit that computer mediated instructional delivery is more cost effective than a traditional textbook curricular program, the question whether or not it is a better way to learn in every circumstance should be addressed.



Instructional delivery designs need to be related and relevant to particular student needs and backgrounds, including the reasons they are participating in INEA and their experiences with formal education. Up until 2006, the INEA program had offered its students instruction only through the traditional means, which has served INEA since its inception. Traditionally, INEA's students have always attended classes at Plazas Comunitarias closest to them and have been provided with the textbooks and materials related to their level of study. The focus on the closest possible Plaza Comunitaria will continue to be important even as the transition to online instruction accelerates.

Before the transition to online program delivery occurs on a massive scale, the effectiveness of such delivery should be considered in relationship to its relevancy to the learner. Digital instruction and content is nothing new in the U.S., but for Spanish-speaking adult immigrant learners it is. Familiarity with technology, computers and the Internet are extremely limited for the students taking classes within INEA, in that the Plaza Comunitaria may be the only place where they have access to computers and the Internet, or at least where they have access to tutors knowledgeable enough to assist them in utilizing the technology. Therefore, the relevancy of online instruction should be examined if it is to contribute to having a lasting positive impact on the lives of the students. Moreover, adults learn differently than children, which is another aspect that needs to be considered when implementing online instruction for the adult learners at the Plazas Comunitarias.

### **Online Education Implementation**

Along with being more cost effective, INEA sees the online education as

the best way to implement its curriculum and instruction and to promote collaboration among its students within the U.S. and the world. Online education has the potential to be in keeping with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social learning by offering more expansive access and shared or social learning by students. The issues presented by online education center on INEA's ability to promote collaborative teaching and learning while the students access curriculum and instruction individually. The amount and type of training tutors receive also needs to be considered, as their role is defined not only by their ability to guide learning, but also by their ability to interface between the students and the technology. For only after having acquired sufficient skills to manipulate the technology will students be able to use it as a learning tool.

Currently, the percentage of Mexican adults that have practical experience with technology is low. In the year 2000, 58% of Hispanics did not own computers and 40% believed that they were not necessary. Although at the time, the increase in computer ownership by Hispanics was rising faster than with the general population in the U.S; a 68% increase compared to a 43% increase over the previous two years among the general population (Lach, 2000). Also, in a recent study (Fox & Livingston, 2007) of Internet usage by Hispanics, 56% percent of them in the U.S. use the Internet, and one in three who speak only Spanish go online. Hispanics are less likely than whites to have an internet connection at home, but some Hispanics who do not use the Internet through a computer are connecting via cell phone for mostly text messaging, which cannot be considered relevant for online education. Most relevant to INEA is that only 31% of Hispanics with no high school degree and living in the U.S. use the

Internet, and Mexicans are the least likely to use the Internet out of all Hispanics.

The application of appropriate quality pedagogy within the Plaza Comunitaria environment encompasses the need to consider not just cultural and language aspects, but also the pedagogy designed specifically for adult learners in an online environment. Computer mediated learning is a new concept for most of the students entering the INEA program. Even for those currently in the program, the switch to online learning is, or will be, a completely new concept, or at least a drastic change. The same may also be said for the instructors and tutors who implemented the traditional textbook approach. In a traditional setting they were the central focus of the classroom, while with computer mediation they will need to assist and foster educational growth together with the students, and such a paradigm shift is not easy.

The decision to implement online education as a replacement for traditional approaches is not just a mechanical endeavor; it indicates both a philosophical and methodological shift that also affects instruction. Therefore, the influence on the learners needs to be analyzed and taken into account prior to online implementation Huang (2002). The environmental and socio-cultural contexts of the Plazas Comunitarias are considerations for the planners of online learning at INEA. From a constructivist point of view, the meaning and learning that the INEA students derive from the program are based on their prior knowledge and experiences. If they have little experience with computer mediation and an online learning environment, then the meaning they derive from online learning may be minimal if the learning design does not take into consideration what they already know. For a theorist such as Dewey (1916),

learning occurs as students interact with their environments in particular situations. When students encounter a situational environment, it causes them to respond and reason based on their prior knowledge and experiences in order to make meaning. How INEA can best capitalize on students prior experiences and knowledge is an important consideration as it develops its online instruction. A central tenet of Dewey (1916) is that student should be offered the opportunity for problem-solving that relates to real life situations. A constructivist learning environment is one that attempts to create meaning by examining students' needs based on their life situations and goals. For INEA to create a meaningful curriculum that rises to the promise of online education and the educational desires of its students, it will need to assess how the Plaza Comunitaria online learning environment can present problem-solving situations from which the students can reason and apply what they learn, the skills they master. Computers do not offer face-to-face interactions, so problem-solving strategies for pedagogical implementation online are more difficult to develop, especially for students who have minimal or no academic experience.

For Vygotsky (1978), students' interaction with people was more important than interaction with the environment. He believed that cognitive development was the result of the interplay between students and teachers, as well as with other students. His theory, upon which INEA is partially basing its instructional model, emphasizes the socio-cultural context of learning.

The challenge of creating a constructivist learning environment within the context of an online environment is daunting, and the recognition of how social-cultural factors play a role in such an environment is a positive step, as the

relevancy of such factors to the students' needs and desires must be considered. Obviously, when computers are used to carry out initial evaluations, provide curriculum, perform formative and summative assessments and to correspond and collaborate with other Plazas Comunitarias, how to best utilize the technology within a constructivist philosophy is a consideration. INEA will need to reflect on the role of tutors trained to monitor and assist the students as they learn through computer mediation. The traditional approach of lecturer/receiver has little relevancy in a constructivist learning environment, and even less relevancy and utility in an online environment. A constructivist approach would necessitate that the tutors be facilitators of the curriculum presented online, rather than lecturers.

**Issues for adult learners.** The issues confronting the implementation of an online program by INEA are many, and all of them must be taken into account if the program goals are to be met. Aside from the issues already presented, INEA cannot overlook the unique issues confronting adult learners in particular. Due to their unique motivations for learning, adults necessitate a curriculum tailored to particular adult needs. Adults are not forced to attend school; they attend out of what they believe is a personal necessity, whether for personal satisfaction or improvement of their socioeconomic situations. The mere existence of INEA signifies an open recognition of the needs and desires for adults in general to begin or continue learning academically. But it does not necessarily indicate that INEA's program design has been specifically tailored to the adult learner in regard to instructional delivery and contextual environment, which necessitate even more examination in an online learning setting.

Huang (2002) identified seven issues when considering a constructivist approach to online learning. The first issue to address is the isolation of learners in an online environment. Constructivism stresses interaction with both environment and with others, meaning other students and teachers. If students are left to their own devices when connected to the INEA learning portals, the only interaction they will have is with the computer, which is not a negative, but certainly limiting insofar as INEA's goals and the exploration of the possibilities of constructivism.

The second issue is that adults have strong self-direction and are active participating learners. Even with the lack of formal education among INEA's adult students, they still are self-directed and motivated by personal necessity. As they acquire more technology skills and are able to collaborate with other students online, they will need guidance from knowledgeable instructors familiar with the curricula being offered.

A third issue is perhaps one of the most important, it is the recognition that the instructors or tutors have roles as facilitators in recognizing, developing and searching for real life situations. The Plazas Comunitarias are not meant to disconnect students from their real lives, but to act as extensions of them. Only through extensive training and oversight of the instructors can the potential of the plazas be realized.

Petraglia (1998), in his definition of "pre-authentication" (p. 53), presents the fourth issue, in that he advocates the preparing as much of the real-world scenario as possible in regard to learning materials, and in the case of INEA, technology, prior to the students' interaction with it. The lack of experience

among INEA's students with academic learning environments and technology must be regarded as an issue, and pre-authentication has the potential to support or distract from a positive learning experience, depending on how well it relates to the student's need in real-world scenarios and interaction. If INEA prepares students in the way of basic technology skills and computer operations prior to implementing its curriculum, some benefit may be realized. But such pre-authentication may also be in conflict with the constructivist view of sharing and developing the learning experience with the learners based on their need to apply the learning to real world situations. In other words, how can INEA know how to best pre-authenticate a learning environment without first knowing the needs of its students? Even after having taught basic computer skills in order to implement curriculum through computer mediation, INEA must wrestle with the issue of how to make the curriculum authentic. The "real world" has never existed online for the vast majority of INEA students. Nevertheless, to offer any relevant pre-authentication, INEA may wish to consider how its initial student assessments can be designed to offer more insight into students' valid real-world and technology needs, not just academic.

That leads to a fifth issue for INEA, which would be a thorough review of its process of evaluation, from initial evaluations, through formative assessments to the summative evaluations. Constructivism, the cornerstone philosophy of the theorists cited by (INEA, 2005) to be used as the basis of their learning environment, stresses the process of learning over the results. INEA outlines certain skills that its students must master in order to obtain a diploma at the particular levels. Even though its definition of skill mastery supposes the ability to

apply the skills in various and ever-changing circumstances, the evaluation is still based on outcomes, skill mastery.

The sixth and seventh issues presented by Huang (2002) for consideration in adult online education are appear to conflict with a constructivist approach. The sixth issue is that in constructivism, the approach should be learner-centered, in that the curriculum should be tailored to the individual needs of the learner. Yet, the final issue of collaboration, which is a potential benefit of online learning, does not easily lend itself to the tailoring of curriculum to individual needs. It is difficult to present a shared learning environment or project if each learner would gain most from an individualized program, unless of course, INEA can decipher from the initial evaluations that enough of the students' needs are so similar as to merit similar individualized program design.

**Authenticating real life learning.** Constructivists would appreciate the process that INEA must initiate in order to study and meet its learners' needs, even if some of the issues are challenging. Probably most challenging for INEA is the issue of pre-authentication of the learning environment. The question is not only if it can be done, but whether or not it should be done. Petraglia (1998) points out the inherent contradiction of attempting to implement a constructivist learning environment while at the same time relying on program directors and instructors to develop an "authentic" environment in which to learn. Such an attempt is antithetical to constructivism. He suggests as a possible solution the melding of psychological and social learning theories in the form of collaborative learning, apprenticeships and cognitive flexibility when developing a constructivist online learning environment and to present learners with



opportunities to make decisions about possible solutions to problems with no clear singular path to resolution. He suggests that instructors as facilitators should focus on convincing learners of the authenticity of problems, rather than trying to promote learning environments with preauthenticated problems.

The implementation of cooperative learning through computer mediation is a demanding task for INEA. In order to present students with, and have them believe in the authenticity of, problems on which they can work collaboratively within their own Plaza Comunitaria or across the cyberspace expanse with other plazas, INEA will first need to promote the learning of basic technology skills that could be utilized in any collaborative learning environment. The environment needs to enable the learner to share their knowledge and skills while providing opportunities for them to observe the learning process of others (Petraglia, 1998).

Such observation of the learning processes of others can be considered an apprenticeship, or what Lave and Wenger (1991) described as a process that allows for situated learning and leads to legitimate peripheral participation. But to see any activity in which learners participate as legitimate or valid, it must offer access to a wider community that shares and values such activity. Their definition of legitimate peripheral participation is that “learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community.” (p. 29). If INEA is to create a learning environment conducive to observation of legitimate activities, including online, it may first wish to define the community in which its students are bound to fully participate. In

regard to learning English, participation in activities and opportunities for learning and growth are not addressed. Although the learning of grammatical structures in Spanish and language in general are addressed, the INEA students, without any “apprenticeship” concerning English, may not be able to eventually fully participate in the greater sociocultural practices of the U.S.

The concept of apprenticeship entails the idea of masters performing activities that the learners are able to observe. Not only do the activities need to be authentic, but the persons performing them must also have some expertise. Collaboration connotes the sharing of information and learning and the need for someone with skill mastery as part of the participation if the learning is to proceed at a rate desirable to an academic program. This is where the quality of tutor preparation is vital to the success of the Plaza Comunitaria concept. INEA needs to consider how it will ensure that its tutors, especially in the online environment, will be prepared. They need to understand how they will design the learning environment, how students will observe them and participate with them, and then how the students will demonstrate the knowledge gleaned.

**Online implementation and bilingual education theory.** The learning environment within INEA relies heavily on the theories supportive of transitional bilingual education. The program cites research supporting Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language theories (Cummins, 1981, 1984; Thomas, 1997; Dutcher, 1994 & López, 1991, 1998) which are not at issue in this study. Notwithstanding the citing of these researchers, no primary language (L1) to second language (L2) transitional aspects exist within the program. English is not part of the curriculum and the progress of students toward learning English is not

tracked by INEA, even though the eventual learning of English is a stated goal of the program.

If the students were tracked beyond leaving the INEA program, the level of eventual learning of English could be assessed, and the transitional contributions of having studied in INEA in their native language could also be analyzed with the results utilized as part of the English language improvement tracking of former students when compared to students who studied English without structured development of their (L1). Further study would have to be expanded to include the students' educational journey beyond the time spent studying with INEA. Cummins (1999) suggest that case studies of particular programs or evaluations that assess student progress in relation to grade norms are potentially theoretically relevant. They become relevant for theory and policy when their outcomes are assessed in relation to the predictions derived from particular hypotheses or theoretical frameworks. The outcomes of having studied through INEA still need to be assessed in relation to learning English for the theories supporting bilingual education cited by the program to be relevant and to be utilized as predictors of second-language success. This study accepts the premise that students who have a solid primary language base (L1) are better able to learn a second language (L2).

Reliance on theories supportive of bilingual education may support language development in English upon leaving the program, but the theories do not address learning within an online environment through computer mediation. The implementation of an entirely online program may create barriers to learning English that are related to pedagogical support, tutor training, technology

awareness and equitable access to technology.

With all instruction in Spanish and with the focus of improving its students' native-language abilities, INEA is meeting the prerequisite for any eventual learning of English. But if neither the students nor the tutors are accustomed to the online learning environment, its authenticity must be questioned. The tutors must be trained to a high level of skill mastery, not just with basic computer operation, but also with the aspects of learning, even learning a second language, through computer mediation. Furthermore, if the students lack the same training as the tutors and are not offered the opportunity to provide input into the design of the online learning environment and share their life expertise, which is legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the learning environment becomes one simply of practice of basic computer hardware functionality and Internet navigation, rather than a practice of learning. In other words, the students cannot learn how to learn online if the tutors assisting them are unaware of how to best promote and nurture learning in an environment. The students are best served by tutors who are adept at computer functionality and trained in the latest methodologies for learning with, and through, computer mediation. The computer expertise of tutors and students, as well as their level of involvement in the learning process becomes a variable, which could be an advantage or detriment, in the outcome of the learning experience online.

Equitable access to technology is another aspect of the online program that INEA must confront. The lack of access to computers with Internet connections may prevent full implementation of online instruction through the Plaza Comunitaria system at Palomar College. This impediment is logistical in

nature, in that online implementation must rely on the facilities available to the plazas.

## **Chapter III: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter defines the methodology of this case study. It restates the purpose and study questions and describes the design and theoretical basis for defining and collecting relevant data within the environment and context of the INEA program implemented at Palomar College in North County San Diego. It describes the population to be studied, its guiding motivations and aspirations, as well as the instrumentation, sources of data, data collection strategies and how the data relate to the INEA program's goals and the goals of its students. It also describes the variables and criteria for interpreting the data within the learning environment of the INEA Plazas Comunitarias program.

### **Restatement of Purpose and Study Questions**

The implementation of the INEA program in the U.S. occurs within the context of a national debate about how best to serve the needs of the U.S. in regard to the forms of immigration and the status of non-English speakers currently residing in the country. The mission of the INEA is to regulate, promote, organize, and certify studies at the primary, secondary and preparatory levels in an open educational system for youths and adults of 15 years and older, who have not completed or even begun such studies (INEA, 2011). In addition, educational support is offered to students in order to develop competencies and skills for life and work, which include educational content to improve their personal, family and social integration into Mexican society. Although these Mexican educational diploma services have not received widespread publicity, their implementation within the U.S. is extensive. The goals of INEA in the U.S.,

as defined by the program's administration and national government of Mexico, are:

1. To contribute to the immigrants who are 15 years or older of Mexican origin, so that they have access to the most elemental educational base that has an effect on the quality their lives.
2. To provide the best elements of preparation in order to obtain a better employment where they live or if they return to Mexico.
3. For Mexican compatriots to gain greater dominance of their native language in order to facilitate their learning of the English language.
4. To strengthen the ability of Mexican parents to be involved and support the education of their children.
5. To stimulate self-esteem and pride in Mexican immigrant for their culture of origin.

Such a program as INEA cannot exist in the U.S. without having an impact on its students and on the environment in which they live, both in a familial and societal sense. The mere existence of the INEA program, with its intent of specifically benefiting Mexican nationals residing in the U.S. while receiving financial, personnel and facilities support from local community and educational entities, merits examination. Through examination of the program implementation and how it affects its students and their environment, its educational results can be better understood, and therefore contribute the improvement of the program. The specific research questions addressed were: From the perspective of the students, does the educational contribution offered by the INEA program have an effect on the quality of their lives? If so, how (academically, economically,

personally, technologically)?

1. From the perspective of the students, has participation in the INEA program allowed them to gain greater dominance of their native language to facilitate the learning of English? If so, how?
2. From the perspective of the students, has participation in INEA strengthened their self-esteem and pride in their culture, and their ability to be involved in the education of their children? If so, how?
3. From the perspective of the students, has a technology mediated curriculum had an effect on the quality of their lives? If so, how?

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perceptions of the current INEA program implementation in order to analyze if it is meeting its stated goals for its students in the U.S. To support the analysis of the students' perceptions, the study described the program's educational environment, implementation and resources to determine any barriers to meeting its stated goals.

This case study also had the purpose of presenting issues worthy of further study. The INEA program's implementation in 34 states and Washington D.C justified analysis of its level of success at reaching its stated goals for its students. The students' perceptions in regard to meeting the goals were essential to assessing the level of success of the program in the U.S.

### **Study Propositions**

The researcher became aware of the INEA program in the U.S. as a result of being asked as Principal of an elementary school to allow INEA to utilize a computer laboratory as a classroom in its Plaza Comunitaria system



implemented out of Palomar College. Although I had not known of the program's existence, the INEA administrator described its goals and logistical hurdles I would be helping her overcome by allowing my school's computer laboratory to be utilized several times a week at night by INEA students. I was intrigued by the program's international aspects, its lofty goals and methods of implementation. The intrigue sparked a desire to know more about its goals and if it was succeeding.

This case study examined the effectiveness of the INEA program implemented through Palomar College, CA by analyzing students' perspectives. Through interview responses, the adult students described and offered their perspective about how the program attempts to ensure its relevancy by responding to the needs of its U.S. program directors and desires of its students by remaining effective and practical (INEA, 2005), which are its guiding principles.

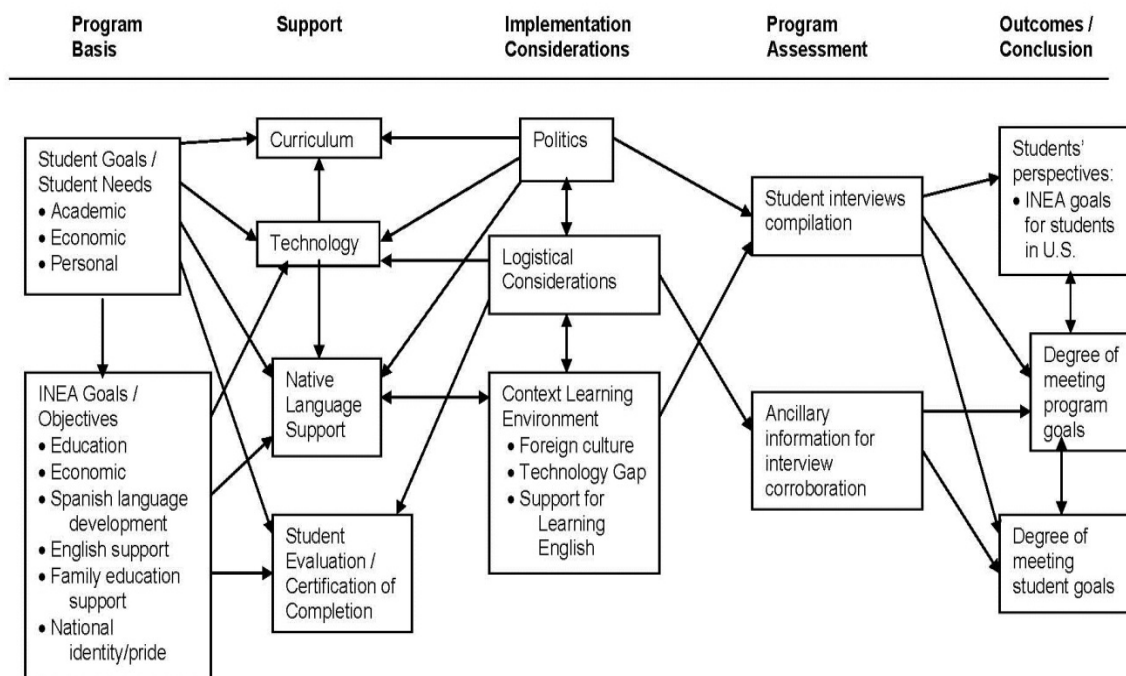


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of INEA. The case study identified the program foundations, processes, considerations and results leading to the development of grounded theories regarding its goal success.

The level of success at reaching the programmatic goals could not be ascertained without first knowing the reasons why the students enrolled and what they expected to gain. The academic program offered must relate directly to their needs and to the goals for the program in the U.S. Therefore, this study examined if that relationship exists by interviewing students and describing the program environment.

In this case study, the technological aspect was also considered as part of the learning environment having an effect on the overall success of the program and whether or not it was meeting its goals and the needs of the students. Through interviews, the researcher analyzed their perspectives of the technology implementation and whether or not it was serving to meet the goals of the program. According to INEA, the ability for students to receive the entire program and to be evaluated online exists. Therefore, as part of the learning environment,

at least for some of the students, its contribution to the success at meeting the goals had to be considered.

**Research design.** The study utilized a single case study design to describe and analyze the perspectives of the students in regard to the INEA program implementation in regard to its ability to successfully fulfill its five stated goals for its students in the U.S. The case study method was chosen due to the unique binational contextual conditions of the program's implementation that are highly pertinent to the phenomenon in the study (Yin, 2003). Both the INEA program and its students expect changes to occur through participation in the program. Therefore, the methodology utilized in this study is more closely aligned with the grounded theory approach, in which a theory may be developed from analysis of the data that offers understanding of the changes that the educational process promotes through INEA. Although other countries support expatriate cultural and academic education relating to the national goals of the country of origin, given the cultural and political history and the current relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, the contextual conditions for the program implementation in regard to the goals that INEA seeks to reach in the U.S. are truly unique. Plus, the success of the program implementation in the U.S had yet to be studied, defined or determined prior to this study.

This study attempted to describe the relationship between the personal, academic and economic goals of the students and the stated goals and objectives of the INEA program through student interviews and analysis of their responses. It also sought to show how the students were affected by the program's contextual implementation, in that it is a program designed for

Mexican adults to obtain their K-12 education, taught in entirely in Spanish, but while they live in the U.S. There may be contextual differences attributed to variations in the physical sites where INEA implements the curriculum. In some venues the curriculum may be provided through traditional means in classrooms with teachers and texts with other venues being computer mediated. Such differences may contribute to differing rates of student success at progressing through the program. In essence, the academic aspect of the program should be the same as it is for students in Mexico, but with the concurrent goals of having its students in the U.S. be able to assimilate and advance personally and economically in the U.S. society better than if they had not taken diploma classes through INEA. As myriad differences exist between the culture, language, economy and social context of living in the U.S. and Mexico, a comparison of student success in each country was not an aspect of this study. The differing perspectives of student success at the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria were described through analysis of student interviews. The data analysis procedures are described in the Data Analysis section of this study.

In regard to the INEA goal of having the students learn English, the researcher relied on responses to student interviews to ascertain if in their perspectives any of them were working independently toward that goal. This procedure is also described further in the Data Collection section.

The quality of this case study research design was assured by tests of validity and reliability that are relevant to case studies, which are applied to the subsequent conduct of the case study and not just in the beginning (Yin, 2003). The tests utilized to ensure the quality of this case study were content validity, as

well as reliability.

The content validity was established through verification that the sources of evidence gathered and utilized served to measure the perspectives of the students in regard to INEA meeting its goals for students in the U.S. To ensure that the interview questions actually measured the students' perspectives of the goals, the instruments for interview data collection were verified by a panel of experts who made suggestions to ensure their content validity.

The verification process entailed the creation of an initial set of interview questions for the students. A panel of experts, each a Doctor of Education in Educational Technology, analyzed all of the initial interview questions for content validity. The final case study interview questions were selected from the initial set. Each expert was provided with a portable document format response form created by the researcher that included the case study research questions and the interview questions. The response form was structured in such a way as to allow the experts to analyze each interview question and indicate whether it related or did not relate to one of the indicated study research question. The researcher indicated on the form to which research question he believed each interview question related. The experts responded and assessed content validity between the research questions and interview questions stated on the form by the researcher. There were initially 35 interview questions for students and 30 for administrators. The responses and comments by the experts were tallied and analyzed by the researcher, which allowed for the removal of interview questions that did not relate to the research questions and for the establishment of content validity for each interview question.

**Units of analysis.** To delineate the limits of data collection and analysis, the unit of analysis in this case study was the INEA student. The student as the unit of analysis was defined by the research questions, which were directly related to INEA's five stated goals for its students in the U.S. The students are at the heart of the programmatic goals, and their perspectives in regard to INEA's goals for students in the U.S. were therefore central to limits of analysis and the degree of the program's success.

Yin (2003) states that the unit of analysis must also be distinguished from that which is outside the study. As the INEA program implemented through the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria is focused on, and defined by, its students, this case study avoided analysis of any plazas comunitarias beyond the boundaries of the INEA program implemented through Palomar College. Through a delineated interview process, the students as the unit of analysis provided their perspectives in regard to the INEA program's progress toward accomplishing its five stated goals for students in the U.S. The instrument developed for the interviewing of INEA students is located in Appendix C.

As this is a case study of a bounded system, a "within-site" (p. 61) study of a single program (Creswell, 1998), the student interviews were supported by multiple sources of information that assisted in describing the learning environment and context.

**Sources of evidence.** Prior to the Data Collection process, the researcher secured formal consent from the INEA program supervisors to collect evidence. The evidence collected in the study consisted of interview data from students collected directly from the respondents during interviews at the sites

where they receive their instruction under the purview of the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria. All evidence in support the interviews was collected upon written authorization from the INEA administration at Palomar College. Prior to contact with the INEA site administrator, authorization and guidance was obtained from the supervising administration of INEA international programs in Mexico City.

All of the interviews were arranged through the INEA Plaza Comunitaria at Palomar College and its 7 separate educational venues in San Marcos, Vista and Escondido, California. The interviews were scheduled through direct communication with the INEA department administrators and occurred prior to regularly scheduled classes within two weeks after receiving approval from the Pepperdine IRB. All the interviews followed the methodology described in Chapter III and the procedures approved by the Pepperdine IRB. The researcher was present at each Plaza Comunitaria site throughout the interview process. Supportive evidence was also collected through email and through INEA's online educational portal. In order to ensure confidentiality and protect the privacy of the participants, all evidence was coded, categorized and retained for analysis. All data collected was related to the research questions and was utilized as evidence of whether, or to what degree INEA was meeting its stated goals for students in the U.S. from the perspective of the students.

There were no risks to the students due to participation in the study aside from the personal anxiety that may have been experienced by some participants during the interview process. Nothing in any of the interview questions could be construed as a risk or as having a potential to harm the subjects, aside from the

anxiety a subject may have felt due to being interviewed by a researcher outside of the INEA program. The possibility that students involved and participating in INEA classes may have been apprehensive about participating in the interviews due to their resident status was nullified when the researcher presented the objectives and goals of the study and that their residency status could not be negatively affected in any way. The researcher presented his personal current and past history as a public educator and administrator in California for 20 years who has always served all students in public schools with the singular interest in improving students' lives and who has always been keenly aware of potential apprehensiveness and questions that a participant may have in regard to protecting his or her ability to study in the INEA program in the U.S. An essential aspect of this study was to completely inform the subjects in regard to the purpose and goals of the study and that no aspect of the study could do any harm to their residency status. The informed consent sought from the subject was only acquired after each participant understood completely that the goal of the study was to improve the efficacy of the INEA program in the U.S. and that any and all information acquired in the study was to be absolutely confidential. In the case of any adverse or unexpected event, the researcher made it clear to the participants and the INEA site supervisor that they would have the opportunity to address it privately or in a group setting, as he or she prefers, as was stated in the informed consent.

**Interviews.** With the prior approval, assistance and scheduling of the regional and site INEA administration, the subjects were recruited from the actual INEA classes during regularly scheduled class-time in order to maximize



participation. With the consent of the INEA program administrators, the researcher provided an oral presentation to the students in their class environments regarding the goal of the study and the purpose of the interviews. The recruiting presentation was offered to each INEA class until at least 20 interview volunteers could be obtained, although there were eventually 33 participants. Upon completing the 33<sup>rd</sup> interview, the researcher decided not to present to the last three classes of the ten available through the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria. The last three classes of possible participants was held in reserve in case it was necessary to recruit new participants.

The presentation emphasized the voluntary nature of the interviews and how the confidentiality of each participant would be preserved. The researcher read the presentation from a script, provided to all students, and immediately followed the presentation with an opportunity for the students to ask questions concerning the study. The entire presentation lasted approximately 20 to 25 minutes.

The student interviews were an essential component of this case study. The intent of the interviews was to follow a line of inquiry linked to the research questions and to ask questions in an unbiased manner that also served the need of the line of inquiry (Yin, 2003). The data collected from the interviews was indispensable for gauging the progress of the students toward meeting their goals and those of the program. Although INEA can evaluate academic progress and award diplomas based on established criteria, only the students can assess whether or not their personal goals are being reached and if participation in INEA is assisting them in their endeavors.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, translated to English where necessary and coded in order to condense and analyze the responses. The coding process, which is thoroughly described in the Data Analysis section that follows, allowed for differentiating and combining the data retrieved from the interviews and to reflect on its meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and to draw conclusions from the categorizing and retrieving of the salient data pertaining to the case study questions.

The evidence of students' perspectives gathered from the interviews was corroborated through supportive evidence collected through documentation and direct observation. The program's goals for students in the U.S. were then cross-referenced with the actual administrative and pedagogical implementation that occurs.

The responses to the open-ended interview questions allowed the participants to have the opportunity to comment on the consistencies and inconsistencies between the goals of students and the INEA program design and its actual implementation. It was quite possible that some program practices neither support, nor are based on the same goals and motivations that the students hold. As neither a self-assessment, nor study of the INEA program had ever occurred, the results and conclusion from this case study of student perspectives will allow the program administrators to continue with any successful practices reflect on the aspects that may be hindrances and improve the viability of the overall program.

**Cultural awareness and consideration for human subjects.** All interviews of the students for this case study were conducted in Spanish by the

researcher and a native Spanish-speaking bilingual research assistant. The researcher has both studied and worked in Mexico for three years while attending the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City and during his tenure as Director of the American School in Aguascalientes, Mexico. He is credentialed by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to teach Spanish as a single subject and to teach multiple subjects in a bilingual environment, which he has done since 1992. During the interview process, the researcher utilized the linguistic and cultural expertise of a native Spanish-speaking bilingual research assistant, who is a graduate of the University of Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. The assistant aided in the interview process by helping to ensure that the presentation, recording and translation of the interview questions and responses were grammatically and culturally correct. Also, as a native Spanish-speaker and an ethnic representative the Mexican culture, the assistant had the secondary function of allowing the participants to feel more comfortable with the interview environment and to assuage some of the apprehension they may have felt from participating in the interview process.

The interview questions were formulated to be open-ended in order to allow the respondents to answer and provide as much information as they felt comfortable. Moreover, by interviewing the students in Spanish, their native language, any misinterpretations due to mistranslation and limits of expression were avoided. The students were encouraged to respond in any manner they preferred as a technique to lessen their anxiety and to reassure them that their answers were important. The interviewer diligently followed the line of inquiry delineated by the study questions and asked questions in an unbiased manner

(Yin, 2003). As a precursor to each interview, each respondent was asked to confirm their permission to be recorded. Moreover, due to the need to protect the privacy and civil rights of each participant, the interview process only include participants who were 18 years of age or older, even though students as young as 15 are permitted to study through INEA.

In order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants being interviewed on campus, only the researcher and research assistant were present with one participant at a time during the interview process. Neither INEA staff, nor other fellow students were present when each participant was being interviewed. Each interview strictly adhered to the interview questions as written, and no personally identifiable information was collected. The interviews were transcribed from the audio-recordings for data analysis. During the transcription process the participants were coded, such as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on. All data collected was securely stored digitally in the case study database and kept on a private computer according to the for the period three years, after which it will be destroyed.

**Documentation.** This study utilized documentation collected to corroborate and augment evidence from the student interviews and will not be accepted as a literal recording of events (Yin, 2003). It was utilized as a record of the intent of the program and will be an important aspect in delineating its goals. Although the entire INEA program is described online, from conceptual introduction through requirements for graduation at each level (CONEVyT, 2010), the study also utilized documentation on hard copies and in other electronic formats, such as CD's officially produced by INEA, to support evidence from

other data sources.

Documentation for the study included:

- The INEA online web portal supported by CONEVyT
- Local and bi-national administrative communiqués, such as:
  - Interviews
  - Reports
  - Policy delineations
  - Emails
- Program description information
- Evidence of INEA / Plaza Comunitaria communication

Such ancillary documentation was utilized to augment and corroborate information from the student interviews and to make inferences in regard to the outcome of INEA's goals for its students in the U.S.

**Data collection procedures.** The research process for this study involved various steps leading to the collection of data. Prior to proceeding with the data collection procedures the researcher provided a complete overview of the study to INEA program administrators. The purpose of providing the overview, including the interview questions, was to describe the purpose of the study, its intent and the reason for selecting Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria as the study site. Official permission and support to implement the study was also obtained from the program administration in Mexico City prior to collecting any data. Only after securing permission from INEA in Mexico was the overview of the study presented to the local Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria administration.

Upon securing permission to proceed, the second step was to meet with the INEA program administrators at Palomar College. As with the meeting in Mexico City, the program administrators were provided with the intent of the study and the reason for choosing Palomar College as the site. Subsequent to that meeting, the administrators were provided with a packet containing an outline of the study, including a request for access the students for interviews, as well as supportive evidence, such as official information produced by INEA that is provided to all students, handbooks, policies and procedures, and any advertisements about the program.

The researcher also secured official written permission from the site supervisor to implement the study through the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria. Information describing the manner by which data was to be collected, how the participants would be selected for interviews, and the actual interview questions was also provided to the INEA supervisor on site. It also included signature forms to be completed by the students granting permission to be interviewed. The signature forms described the purpose of the study and how the information was to be utilized.

Upon securing site permission to conduct the study at Palomar College, follow-up emails and phone calls were made to the INEA administrators in both Mexico City and at Palomar College to confirm their permission and program participation. Subsequent phone calls and emails were made to delineate the logistics by which data was to be collected.

The administrators and students received a presentation in regard to the study and interview process at least a week prior to proceeding with the

interviews. The presentation lasted approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Upon concluding the presentation, the researcher worked with the INEA administration to inform the students the dates and times at which he and the research assistant were going to be available for the voluntary interviews. By doing so, the participants arrived at their INEA instructional sites outside of class time to voluntarily participate in the interviews.

At the beginning of each interview the researcher collected the signed forms personally from each participant. The investigator described the purpose of and benefits of the study to each participant while emphasizing its confidentiality protections to the individuals who volunteered to be interviewed. All communication with the participants to secure informed voluntary consent was conducted in Spanish by the researcher and the research assistant, in order to ensure the highest quality communication and to maintain a low stress environment. The potential benefits of the study to the INEA program were emphasized as the principal goal of the study. As the Informed Consent form was read aloud with each participant prior to beginning the interview, each was well-informed of their rights, the goals of the study, the conditions of participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

All participants were students or former students of the INEA program at Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria. Care was taken to ensure that the sampling of interviewees represented the widest demographic array available in regard to gender, age, and educational level. For the purpose of ensuring the protection of human subjects, only students who are 18 years old and older were interviewed for this case study, even though students as young as 15 study through INEA.

Each interview conducted adhered to an open-ended semi-structured interview process with pre-established interview questions. The open-ended semi-structured interview format allowed for the participants to offer perspectives, suggestions and insight into the INEA program, making them “informants” rather than simply respondents who may perhaps offer corroboratory or contrary evidence (Yin, 2003) and offer greater insight to assist the interviewer in analysis of the data.

All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and were recorded electronically in digital audio format, which was transcribed from Spanish to English. Although the interviewer is fluent in Spanish and is certified by the State of California to teach the language, the native Spanish-speaking assistant participated by reading the interview questions from the script during the interviews to ensure the most accurate pronunciation and by ensuring the clarity cultural-linguistic interpretation of any commentary offered by the interviewees. The assistant also participated in the translation of all responses from Spanish into English. Two digital recording devices were utilized, in case any problems were encountered with any of the electronic recording equipment.

The setting for each interview was at a preestablished location within the educational site of each participant. Through communication with the site program administrators, each interview setting was chosen in accordance with the procedures stipulated in the Pepperdine IRB approval

Central to an accurate interview process was the care taken to treat each interviewee politely and respectfully. Prior to each interview, each interviewee was provided with the consent form to comply with the human subjects review



board. The interviewer explained the purpose of the interview and how the information would be utilized.

All data collected and recorded in MP3 format was securely stored digitally in the case study database. The security of the data is ensured by being stored on a private computer utilizing the latest in secure encryption technology. The software is password protected and only the researcher has access.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis of this case study is inextricably linked to the research questions that queried the participants' perspectives regarding INEA's level of success at reaching their goals. Through the coding of translated interview transcripts and other data collected in the course of the study, the researcher followed a sequential process described by Miles and Huberman (1994) in which the data is sorted to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between groups and common sequences. The patterns, practices, processes commonalities and differences will be utilized to elaborate generalities that are observed among all the data that lead to conclusions and theories regarding the level of success at meeting the stated goals of the program and personal goals of the students.

**Analysis of interview data.** The digitally recorded responses of the respondents were transcribed and translated to English. The Spanish to English translation were double verified by the researcher and the research assistant. It was imperative that any translation transcription be not simply literal, but a true transfer of meaning from the native language to English of what the respondents wished to convey. With the researcher and research assistant each bilingually

fluent in reading, writing and speaking English and Spanish, and with each being a native speaker of one of the two languages, an accurate cultural translation of meaning was assured.

The interview transcript of each respondent was coded for analysis. The coding allowed the information to be organized into visual categories based on similar and thematic responses. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this process as differentiating and combining the data retrieved and the reflections made about the information. In this case study the interview coding enabled the researcher to categorize the information in the form of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs according to how they related to the research questions. To ensure that each respondent remained anonymous and to facilitate the differentiation among the participants during the interview data analysis, each was assigned a coded label based on the biographical information provided, which included the current academic level of enrollment. Further analysis of the coded information will be utilized to generate conclusions and theories in regard to the practices within the INEA program and the levels of success being attained.

### **Analysis of Documents and Artifacts**

Documents, artifacts and archival records were collected, and as with the interview responses, coded for analysis according to their relation to the case study questions. The data was then analyzed and notes taken in regard to how they related to the data supplied by the respondents to the interviews.

## **Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Findings**

### **Introduction**

Presented in Chapter IV are the findings and analysis of the data collected in this single-case study. The data were collected from interviews of adult student participants enrolled in both primary and secondary diploma programs through the INEA Plaza Comunitaria at Palomar College that serves 10 separate INEA sites located in five cities. Interviews for this study took place at 7 of the 10 sites. A description of the interview environment is presented to aid in the contextual understanding of the data collection process.

The primary source of the data for the study is from 33 interviews of adult student participants at their regular educational settings at 7 particular sites; one in Vista, one in San Marcos, and five in Escondido, California. Each of the sites is a spoke in the INEA Plaza Comunitaria system implemented through Palomar College. Students from 8 separate classes participated in the voluntary interviews. Other secondary data collected in the study was comprised of information available on the CONEVyT and INEA websites, manuals for instructional and implementation, and from personal correspondence with the administrators who supervise all aspects of the INEA program.

### **Interview Environment**

Each of the interviews took place at the sites where the participants attend their INEA classes implemented through the Palomar College Plaza Comunitaria. Of the 7 sites where the interviews occurred, one was a Catholic church, one was a teen resource center, one was a local apartment complex community center, and the last four were public elementary and middle school sites with a

classroom at each dedicated to implementing the INEA primary and secondary program curriculum. All of the INEA classes occurred from 6-8:30 PM, Monday through Thursday, except for one class in Escondido that takes place from 8-10:30 AM in the Parent Resource room at an elementary school. This accommodation allows for parents to attend INEA at the same time their children may be in school. Although the sites were different, the precautions for maintaining the protections for human subjects, described in Chapter III were the same at each site.

During each interview process, the participant sat with the researcher and research assistant. Each participant read, reviewed and signed the informed consent. Upon securing informed consent, the researcher provided each participant with a copy of the Informed Consent and proceeded with the digital recording of the interview process. All the interview questions were read by the research assistant in order to ensure the best pronunciation, contextual understanding and to evoke the least anxiety possible from the participants. The researcher spoke as necessary with the participants when the opportunity to clarify, expand and prompt a greater response to each question arose. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher transcribed the digitally recorded student responses from Spanish to English.

General biographical information shown in Table 1 was also collected from each interview participant in order to provide a description of the variety of individual aspects that relate to the research questions and their educational backgrounds.

Table 1

*Biographical Information of INEA Study Participants*

Participant's Program Level:	Primary	=	20
	Secondary	=	13
Participant's Respondent Age:	18-25	=	1
	26-35	=	4
	36-45	=	8
	46-55	=	9
	55 <	=	11
Participant's Gender:	Male	=	11
	Female	=	22
Participant's last level of study in home country:	None	=	12
	Primary	=	19
	Secondary	=	1
	Bachillerato (Mexican System)	=	1
Participant's home country:	Mexico	=	30
	Argentina	=	1
	Guatemala	=	1
	El Salvador	=	1
Speaks English:	Yes	=	12
	No	=	21
Currently studying English:	Yes	=	10
	No	=	23
Is a parent:	Yes	=	29
	No	=	4
Children attend school:	Yes	=	28
	No	=	5
Has access to a computer:	Yes	=	9
	No	=	24
Utilizes the Internet:	Yes	=	6
	No	=	27
Has taken classes online:	Yes	=	0
	No	=	33
How knew about INEA courses:	(10) From others in INEA		
	(5) From a friend		
	(5) Information local public school		
	(4) Flyers in children's school		
	(3) From ESL site publicity		
	(2) Through Palomar		
	(1) Information at church		
	(1) From boss at work		
	(1) Through Mexican consulate		

**Educational Concepts**

In accordance with the Grounded Theory approach, the objective of the data analysis was to develop theoretical statements of the probability in regard to the relationship of concepts that became apparent during the study and that

offered an understanding of the changes spurred through the educational processes promoted through INEA (Glaser, 1998). The objective was to categorize the participants' perspectives into data by coding them into manageable concepts. The concepts were then categorized and articulated into theories that explained what was occurring in the relationship between the participants, with their common and individual goals and the administration of INEA, with its specific goals for its students studying in the U.S. The theorems developed also sought to understand what the main problems of the participants were and what was being done to solve them.

The data in this single-case study were generated by creating interview questions from the five goals that INEA developed specifically for its students living in the U.S. Each interview question pertained to one or more of the case study research questions. Every response of each participant to each of the interview questions was coded and analyzed in order to develop a conceptual hypothesis in regard to the degree of success experience by INEA toward reaching its goals for its students and to create statements of the relational probability between concepts.

The educational concepts presented in this study stem from the themes presented as goals by INEA and the responses of the participants in regard to how well the program is meeting their needs. The participants were not consulted to create the goals, so it is entirely possible that the goals of INEA may not be the same as the individual goals of the participants. Nevertheless, their responses are the genesis of the concepts from which the codes were created.

## Data Coding

The goals of INEA are to improve the lives of its students academically, economically and personally. Upon reviewing the transcribed and translated responses of the participants, common and repeated themes became apparent and were assigned codes that described them. As each concept mentioned by the students relating to the INEA goals was given a code to be used as an identifier each time it was mentioned during the interviews. In Table 1 the following codes were developed from the responses of the participants.

Table 2

*Data Coding Themes from Interview Responses*

ACA	=	Academic
ACCS	=	Access
COMM	=	Communication
CONF	=	Confidence
ECON	=	Economic
ELD	=	English Language Development
HS	=	High School
INVLV	=	Involvement
MOT	=	Motivation
N	=	No or Not existing
PERS	=	Personal
PREP	=	Preparation
PRIDE	=	Pride
RES	=	Resource
SEC	=	Secondary
SLD	=	Spanish Language Development
TEACH	=	Teacher
TECH	=	Technology

As each interview question was designed to relate to one or more of the research questions, the number of times a concept was mentioned in relation to a specific interview question was compiled in order to develop conceptual understanding to progress INEA was making toward its goals or the reasons it

may not be helping to meet the academic, economic or personal goals of the students.

The data collected from the thirty-three interviews were coded as a means of clustering patterns, themes, issues and propositions identified in the responses of the participants as they related to the goals established by INEA for its students in the U.S.

The data coding consisted of creating a rubric for organizing participant responses for analysis (see Appendix E). The rubric was divided into three sections for each of the 10 interview questions and labeled INEA Goal Themes, Issues Coding and Notes. The INEA Goal Themes were descriptions of the 5 goals that INEA established for its students. The same 5 goals applied to, and are shown in the rubric, for each of the interview questions. The rubric allowed for the responses of the participants to pertain to any of the 5 INEA goals. The Notes category allowed for the details of the responses to be recorded.

By adding prefixes to coded issues identified from the responses to each of the 10 interview questions, it was possible to be more elaborate and detailed in regard to the issues raised by the participants. For instance, by utilizing “N = No/Not” to indicate whether or not some commonly mentioned issue or aspect did not exist or was not part of the program and “MOT = Motivation” to indicate if a particular theme or aspect motivated a student to attend INEA classes, the codes could be expanded to relate to a greater number of separate issues, but that still related to the non-prefixed codes.

### **Relationship of Data to Research Questions**

To measure the level of success of the INEA program it was necessary to



conceptualize and define it from the perspective of the students as verbalized in their responses to the interview questions. The responses to each question allowed for data to be compiled and applied to the development of an overall conceptualization of what the level of success is and to develop a theory in regard to the factors that contributed or detracted from it.

The interview questions were designed not only to elicit responses in regard to the INEA goals, but in relation to the four research questions:

1. From the perspective of the students, does the educational contribution offered by the INEA program have an effect on the quality of their lives? If so, how (academically, economically, personally, technologically)?
2. From the perspective of the students, has participation in the INEA program allowed them to gain greater dominance of their native language to facilitate the learning of English? If so, how?
3. From the perspective of the students, has participation in INEA strengthened their self-esteem and pride in their culture, and their ability to be involved in the education of their children? If so, how?
4. From the perspective of the students, has a technology mediated curriculum had an effect on the quality of their lives? If so, how?

Upon compiling and coding the data gathered from the interview responses, they were graphed to provide a visual comparison of the perspectives stated by the participants relating to each question and the INEA goals.

The degree of success of the INEA program was determined by the extent to which the participants indicated that it met their needs in relation to the 5 INEA Goals (IG). In the following analysis of IQ1 through IQ10, refer to Tables 1

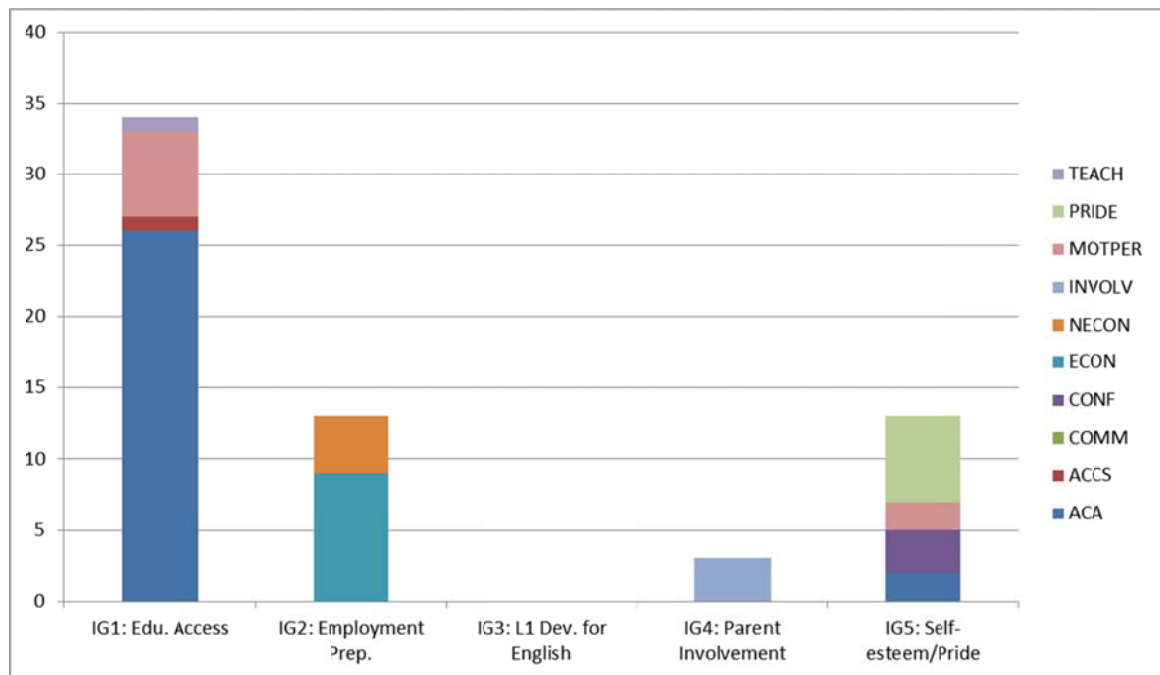
through 10 and Figures 1 through 10 for a visual representation of the thematic data gathered from the interviews.

IQ1: From your perspective, does participation in INEA have an effect on the quality of your life (Academically, Occupationally, Economically)? If so, how? (RQ1)

Table 3

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question1 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ1 Responses Chart	ACA	ACCS	COMM	CONF	ECON	NECON	INVOLV	MOTPER	PRIDE	TEACH	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	26	1						6		1	34
IG2: Employment Prep.					9	4					13
IG3: L1 Dev. for English											0
IG4: Parent Involvement							3				3
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride	2			3				2	6		13
Total											63



*Figure 1. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to interview question 1 relating to INEA goals 1 through 5*

The participant responses to Interview Question 1 indicate that from their perspective the INEA program does have positive effect on their lives, and that IG1: Educational Access, IG2: Employment Preparation, IG4: Parent Involvement

and IG5: Self-esteem/Pride are the goals that are being met somewhat and having a positive effect on the quality of their lives. Of the 63 total thematic responses to Interview Question 1, 54% of them related to the positive effect of having access to education. Of those, 76% response related to the quality of the academics and 18% to the increased motivation to continue learning academically.

The next highest percentage of responses (20%) related to the increase in self-esteem and pride, which is IG5. The entire 20% indicated a positive effect and that their pride and confidence increased as a direct result of involvement in the INEA program.

Although IG2: Preparation for Employment also garnered 20% of the responses to Interview Question 1, only 69% of those indicated a positive economic relationship, or at least an increased probability of a better economic outlook. Thirty-one percent of the perspectives indicated that the INEA program had no effect on their economic situations. Of the those comments that expressed a positive relationship, most pertained to being able to better express themselves better at work, which would increase their opportunity to advance.

There were 3 responses that indicated that the program increased their ability to help their children academically. Although, none of the comments mentioned native-language development specifically as a means to learn and improve their ability to speak English (IG3), from the overwhelming responses pertaining to IG1, that the program does provide access to an education that improves the lives of the participants, one of those responses specifically indicated that the program was an academic motivation for learning English. The

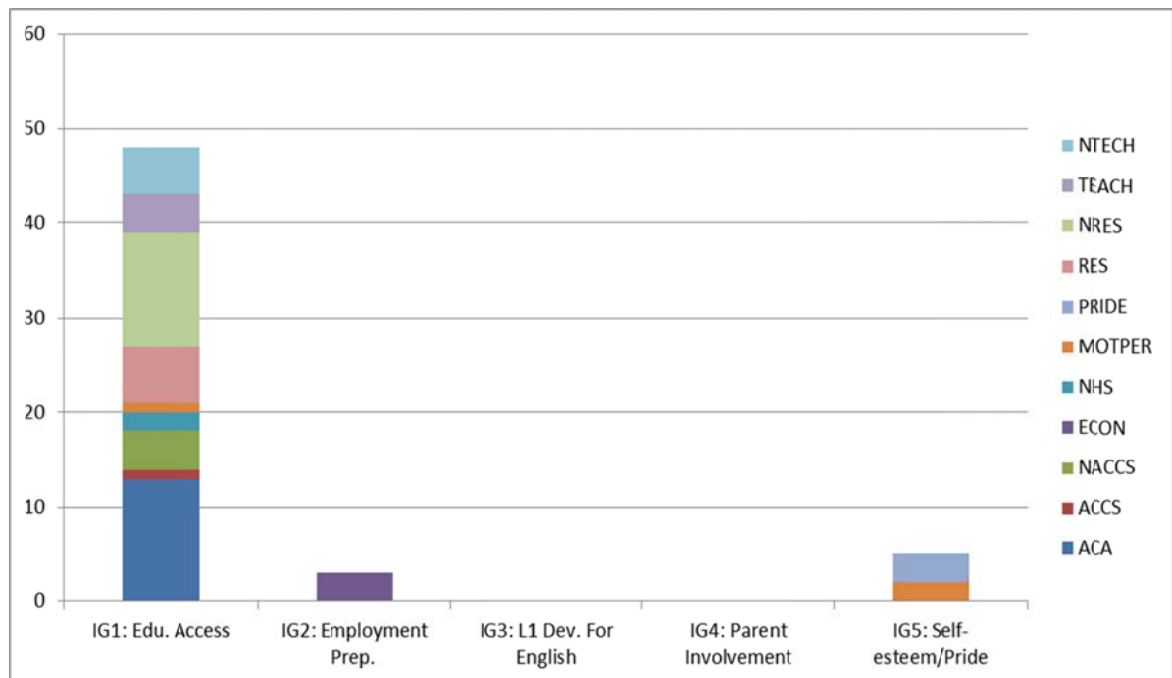
other participants may agree, but did not specifically indicate that it was so. IQ4 and IQ5 were designed to provoke participant commentary pertaining to IG3.

IQ2: From your perspective, what does INEA do well and what should it do to help you reach your goals? (RQ1)

Table 4

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question2 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ2 Responses Chart	ACA	ACCS	NACCS	ECON	NHS	MOTPER	PRIDE	RES	NRES	TEACH	NTECH	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	13	1	4		2	1		6	12	4	5	48
IG2: Employment Prep.				3								3
IG3: L1 Dev. For English												0
IG4: Parent Involvement												0
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride						2	3					5
Total	13	1	4	3	2	3	3	6	12	4	5	56



*Figure 2. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 2 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

The responses of the participants to Interview Question 1 indicate strongly that in their perspective INEA Goal 1, Educational Access, is the aspect of the program that is most important. Eighty-six percent of the respondents mentioned themes relating to IG1, yet not all of their perspective were positive. Of the

response themes relating to IGQ, 48% of them were negative.

All of the students mentioning themes relating to IG1 offered positive responses in regard to what INEA does well. But they also indicated that the program is lacking in 4 areas. Lack of educational resources was the theme that garnered the largest number of responses relating to IG1 at 25%. Lack of technology was 10%, difficulty in regard to access to the INEA classes was 8% and no high school education was 4% of the responses relating to Educational Access.

The vast majority of the comments regarding the lack of resources pertained to desire of the students to have books in class. Some students mention that books were available at times, but that most of the time they were not, and that they were almost never available to take home for practice and homework. The routine described by students was that the teacher usually wrote items on the board that the students copied.

The lack of technology mentioned in relation to IG1 is an aspect that is in conflict with an INEA program objective to transfer all of their curriculum, instruction and evaluation online. The online program is available, but with no computers not available to the students from INEA and economically prohibitive on a personal level, the online program only exists for a small number of students. This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Comments in regard to IG2: Employment Preparation and IG5: Self-esteem/Pride related to less than 2% of the themes mentioned by the participant in response to Interview Question 2. Each of the themes relating to IG2 were positive comments that pertained to INEA improving the participant's ability to

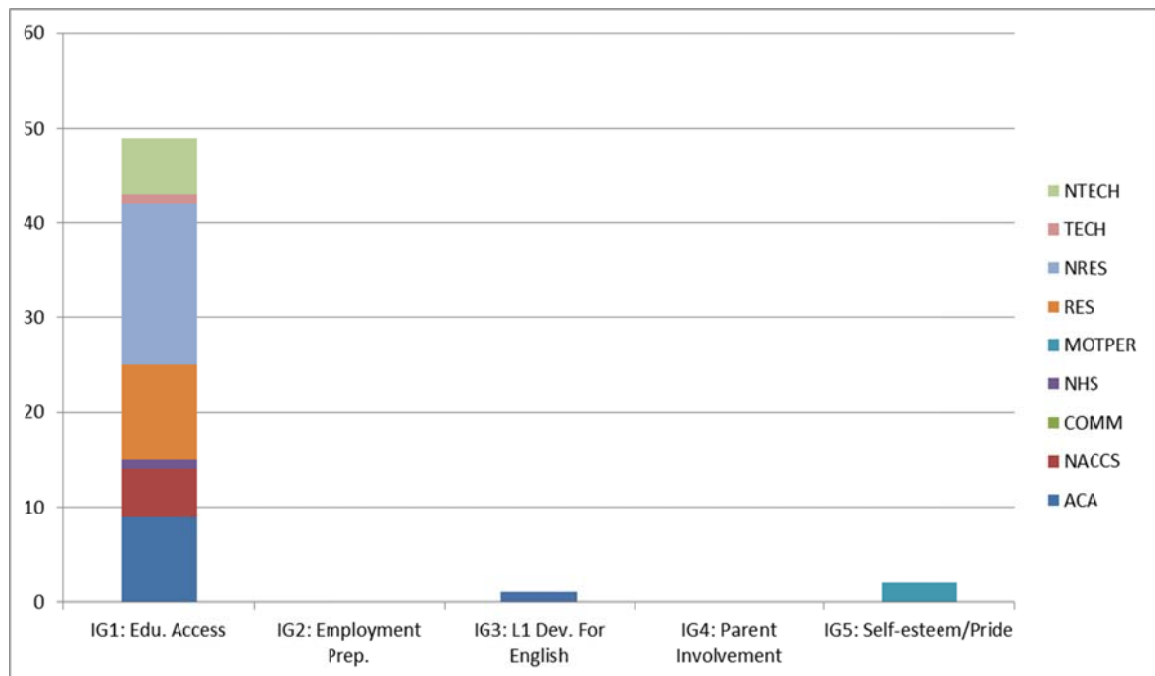
work toward better careers. The comments relating to IG5 expressed enjoyment from as a result of studying and learning within the INEA program.

IQ3: From your perspective, do the INEA administrators, teachers and staff provide the necessary resources for you to meet your goals? (RQ1)

Table 5

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question 3 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ3 Responses Chart	ACA	NACCS	COMM	NHS	MOTPER	RES	NRES	TECH	NTECH	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	9	5		1		10	17	1	6	49
IG2: Employment Prep.										0
IG3: L1 Dev. For English	1									1
IG4: Parent Involvement										0
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride					2					2
Total	10	5		1	2	10	17	1	6	52



*Figure 3. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 3 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

Interview Question 3 pertained to Research Question 1 and was designed to elicit specific responses in regard to the connection between the goals that students had for themselves and the resources currently being provided by INEA

to assist students in meeting them. As mentioned previously, there is no evidence provided by INEA that the goals designed by it for students living in the U.S. were created with input from the students. Interview Question 3 allowed students to openly state their individual goals and how well the resources provided by INEA relate to them.

There were 94% of the perspectives offered by the participants in response to Interview Question 3 that pertained to IG1: Educational Access. The concentration of responses relating to IG1 was centered on 7 different themes. Yet, for this question, the responses offering positive perspectives were outnumbered by the responses indicating negative perspectives.

The theme of Academics was 18% of the perspectives offered. They were all positive and generally pertained to the level of teacher preparation and the quality of assistance they provided, although there were negative perspectives regarding the amount of time teachers could spend assisting students. All students held the teachers in high regard, but many believed that there were not enough of them and that they needed to have assistants due to the number of students in each class and differing academic levels within the classes. This was just one of the negative issues mentioned by the participants. In relation to that theme, a number of students mentioning the teachers being over-extended also mentioned the need for daycare, as students in every class had the propensity to bring their children to class, which was an interruption.

Regarding Educational Access, the themes of lack of resources, access to technology and higher levels of learning, such as high school, and that the INEA program was gravely lacking in curricular resources were apparent. 65% of the

negative perspectives offered pertained to the perceived lack of resources in the program that affected the students' educational access. Specifically mentioned by the students were the lack of textbooks, the amount of time in class and the notion that other classes at other sites and different academic levels may have more resources than others. This brings up the issue of equality.

Of the other 35% of negative perspectives offered in regard to Educational Access, lack of technology and issues preventing full access to the current class offerings were most prevalent. The lack of technology theme centered on the issue of not having access to computers or the Internet. The only access available to most students was when they were able to utilize the laptop belonging to the teacher to take their tests after completing curricular levels. Other than that, only a couple students of all who were interviewed had computers of their own. Those students brought them to class at times, but could not access the Internet, even if it was available at the sites due to not having access to the security codes at the school sites. Moreover, none of the classes at the school sites were being held in the computer laboratories.

For Interview Question 3, lack of texts, both in the classroom and to take home was an issue mentioned often. Some of the students at the secondary level indicated that from their experience taking INEA classes, they believed that the program was focused on the lower level academics and that there were more resources available to the students in those classes. They also believed that a preparatory school (high school) should be implemented.

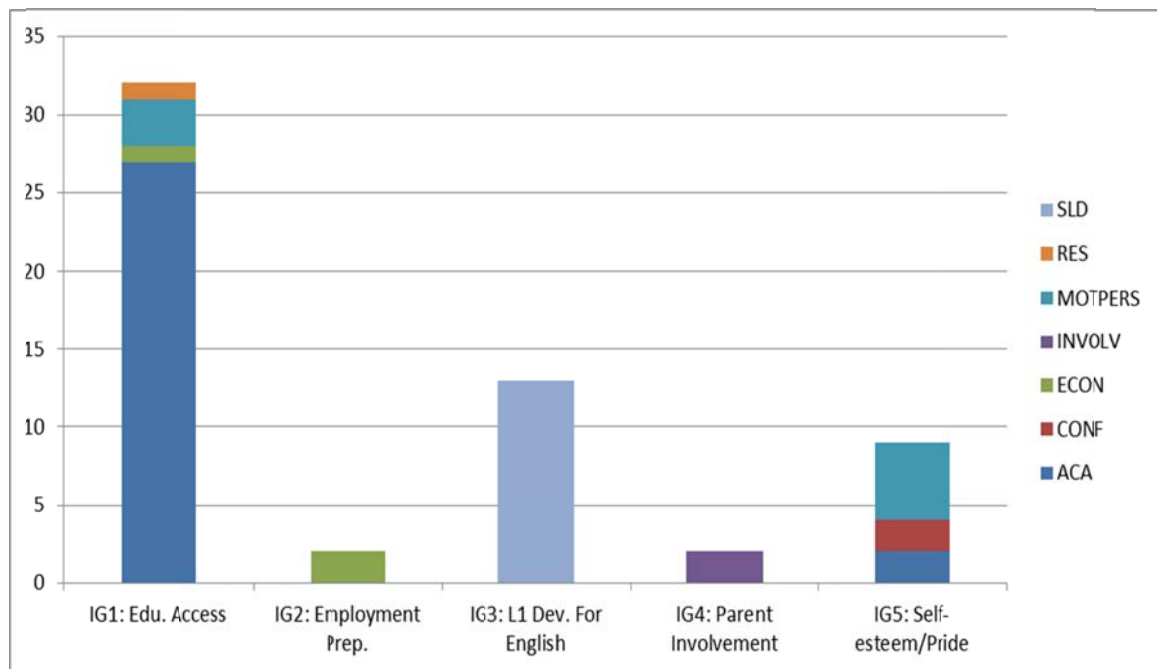
IQ4: From your perspective, does participation in INEA increase your dominance of your native language (Spanish)? If so, how? (RQ2)



Table 6

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question 4 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ4 Responses Chart	ACA	CONF	ECON	INVOLV	MOTPERS	RES	SLD	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	27		1		3	1		32
IG2: Employment Prep.			2					2
IG3: L1 Dev. For English							13	13
IG4: Parent Involvement				2				2
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride	2	2			5			9
Total	29	2	3	2	8	1	13	58



*Figure 4. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 4 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

Interview Question 4 relates to Research Question 2, asking whether or not the INEA program is assisting its students to gain greater dominance of their native language to facilitate the learning of English, which is in line with INEA Goal 3, but the responses to IQ4 indicate that the students have a variety of reasons for wanting to improve their native language that related to 7 different themes, and facilitating the learning of English was just one of them. In fact, improving native language was second as a motivation to learning English to

improving their language academically for its own sake. No participants made any negative comments in regard to native language development. From their perspective, INEA is improving their native language. Only the motivations for improving it varied.

Of the total responses to IQ4, 47% showed that improving Spanish academically was the most important aspect of all the reasons offered.

The participant responses related mostly to the INEA Goals IG1: Educational Access, IG3: L1 Development for English and IG5: Self-Esteem/Pride, although there were comments that pertained to all the INEA Goals. The responses provided in regard to improving the academic level of Spanish indicated issues of access. For a variety of reasons, such access to the level of academics in the INEA program in which the students are currently enrolled was not available to them in their native country. Access to education was also important to the student as a means to improve their communication and expressiveness, as well as their economic situation.

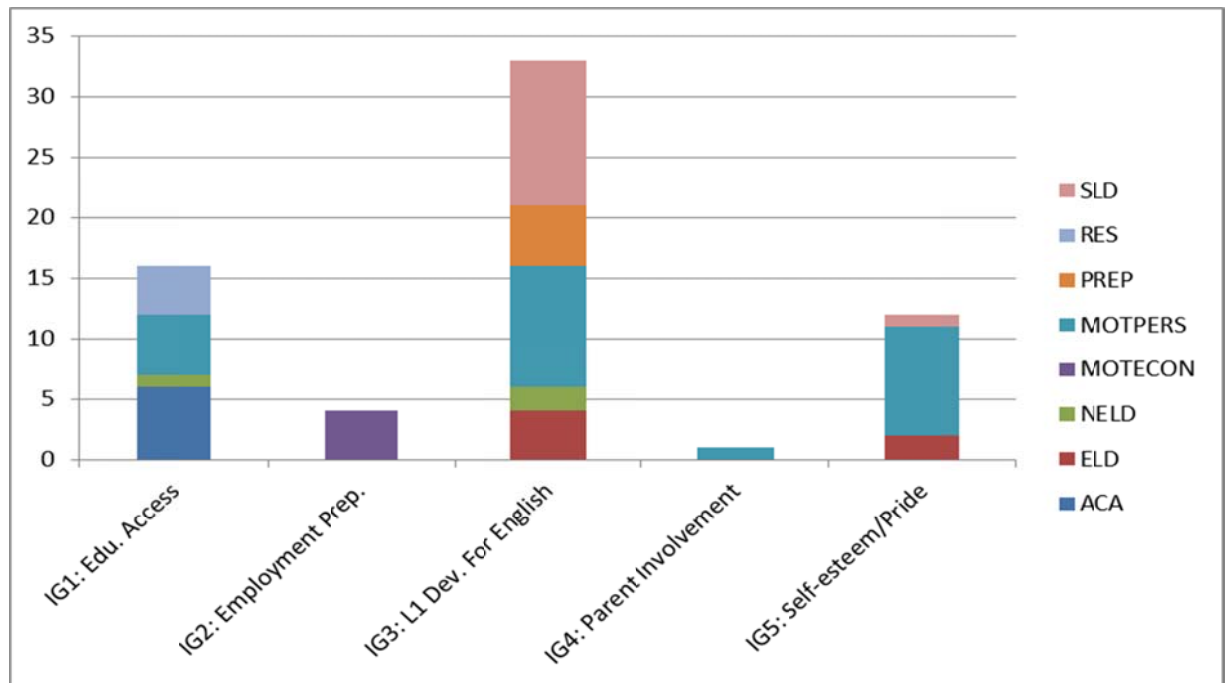
IG3 was mentioned in 22% of the responses. Learning Spanish well for its own sake was important, but this percentage of response indicates that the students have the perspective that a strong base in Spanish will assist them in learning English. Responses relating to IG3 also indicate that the students believe that participation in INEA is improving their native language. Some of the specific comments express were that pronunciation has improved, vocabulary has increased and some students are now able to sign their names.

IQ5: From your perspective, has participation in INEA increased your desire and ability to learn English? If so, how? (RQ2)

Table 7

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question 5 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ5 Responses Chart	ACA	ELD	NELD	MOTECON	MOTPERS	PREP	RES	SLD	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	6		1		5		4		16
IG2: Employment Prep.				4					4
IG3: L1 Dev. For English		4	2		10	5		12	33
IG4: Parent Involvement					1				1
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride		2			9			1	12
Total	6	6	3	4	25	5	4	13	66



*Figure 5. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 5 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

Interview Question 5 also relates to Research Question 2. Unlike the IQ4, IQ5 offered the students the opportunity to comment on whether or not their desire and ability to learn English had actually increased as a result of participation in the INEA program.

Of the responses specifically relating to IG3, 15% indicated that their preparation for learning English had increased as a result of the program. 36% of the perspectives offered supported the belief that Spanish Language

Development was increasing as a result of the program. Although English is not officially part of the INEA curriculum, 12% of the responses indicated that English was taught at times. Less than 1% said that it was not. Commentary from the participants acknowledged that English was not part of the curriculum, but that the teachers did teach some English sometimes when prompted by the students to do so.

Of the student perspectives, 30% indicated that the desire to learn English had increased as a direct result of the INEA program. Combined with the 15% of the perspectives relating to IG3 indicating increased preparation for learning English, almost half of the students, 45%, have that perspective that INEA is increasing their desire and preparation for learning English.

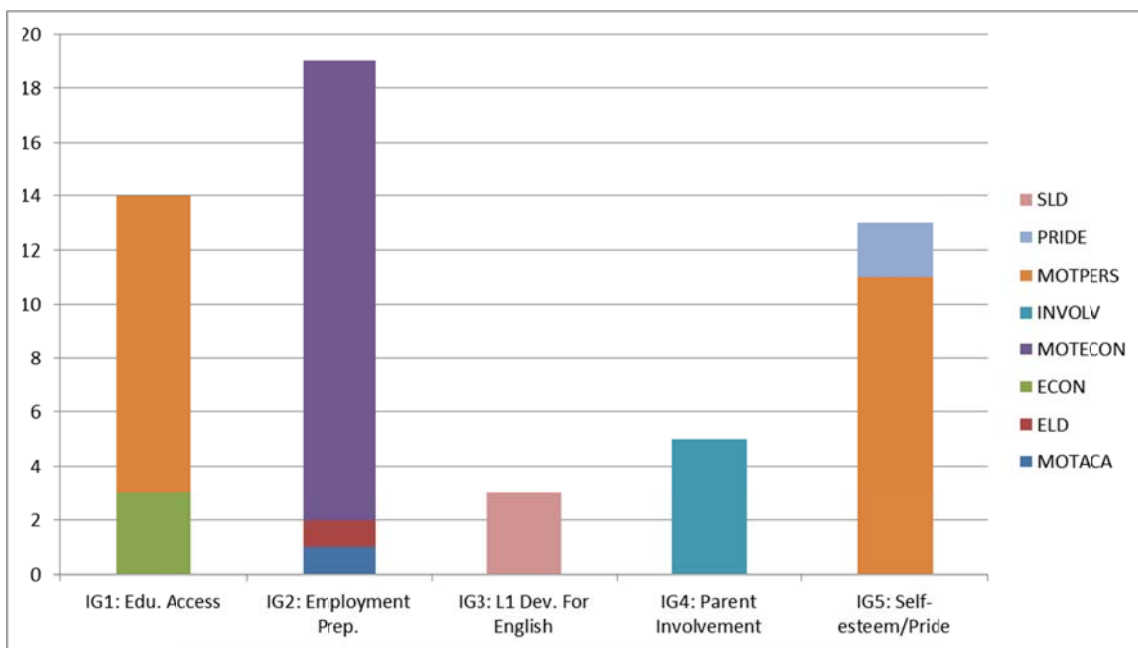
When offering the perspectives in regard to the interview questions, the students were encouraged to express any perspective occurring to them in relation to each question. For IQ5, the students also offered perspectives regarding greater skill in English would increase their opportunity and ability in a variety of ways. Some of these were economic opportunity, ability to communicate medical issues, ability to assist their children in school, ability to sort and read mail, to shop and even to laugh with their children about humor in English.

IQ6: From your perspective, how would knowing more English affect the quality of your life? Explain. (RQ1/RQ2)

Table 8

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question 6 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ6 Responses Chart	MOTACA	ELD	ECON	MOTECOM	INVOLV	MOTPERS	PRIDE	SLD	Total
IG1: Edu. Access			3			11			14
IG2: Employment Prep.	1	1		17					19
IG3: L1 Dev. For English								3	3
IG4: Parent Involvement					5				5
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride						11	2		13
Total	1	1	3	17	5	22	2	3	54



*Figure 6. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 6 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

Interview Question 6 relates to Research Question 1, concerning academics that improve the quality of life for the students and Research Question 2, concerning the improvement of their native language to facilitate the learning of English. The responses to IQ6 indicate strongly that, in the perspective of the students, learning English relates strongly to INEA Goal 2, Employment Preparation. Improving economic outlook accounted for 89% of the comments relating to IG2 and 37% of all the perspectives expresses overall. The

participants expressed that learning English would improve their job and economic opportunities and allow them to communicate with their bosses at a level not possible now. One participant stated outright that he would make more money if he could speak English.

Improved economic situation and job opportunity was the most specific theme offered by the students in response to IQ6, but many participants perspectives expressed personal motivations not related to economics that pertained to INEA Goal 1, Access to Education that Improves the Quality of life, and INEA Goal 5, Self-esteem and Pride. Of all of the perspectives expressed, 41% pertained to personal motivation for improving English, and the themes offered were from the pragmatic to interpersonal. The perspectives relating to IG1 were more practical in nature. The ways English would improve their lives were better communication, help with doctor visits, able to speak with U.S. relatives, help with child's homework, help more customers, to learn things more quickly, and even to get certified in cosmetology. It is important to note that these perspectives related to IG1 concerning how knowing English would affect the quality of their lives, not necessarily that the skill is being obtained through INEA.

An equal number of the personal motivations expressed were interpersonal in nature relating to IG5. Of these perspectives, 38% related specifically to better communication with Americans, with another 38% expressing that English would improve their ability to understand and express themselves. One participant expressed that she would feel less embarrassed if she knew English.

Learning English was associated with self-esteem and pride in 24% of the

perspectives offered. The participants indicated that English would help them laugh with their children, enjoy more entertainment, be more independent and prepare them for something better.

As the 85% of the participants had children in school in the U.S., English was also seen as a way to increase their involvement in the lives of their children. 5 of the perspectives offered related directly to IG4: Parental Involvement and Support. These participants recognized that the lack of English ability was creating a divide between them and their children, as the children had the ability to utilize English at will among themselves, and may many times choose to do so.

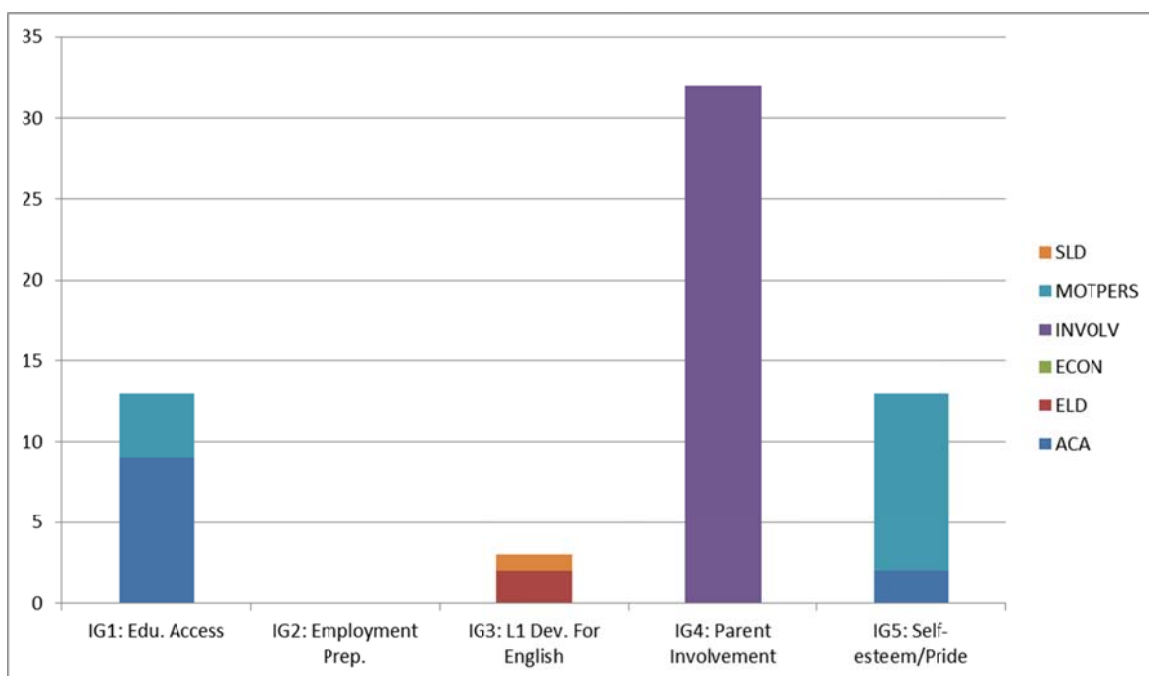
There were no negative perspectives offered in regard to IQ6, indicating the belief that learning English could only affect the quality of their lives of the participants in a positive way.

IQ7: From your perspective, does participation in INEA strengthen the ability of parents to be involved and support the education of their children? If so, how? (RQ3)

Table 9

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Rresponse to Interview Question 7 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ7 Responses Chart	ACA	ELD	ECON	INVOLV	MOTPERS	SLD	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	9				4		13
IG2: Employment Prep.							0
IG3: L1 Dev. For English		2				1	3
IG4: Parent Involvement				32			32
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride	2				11		13
Total	11	2		32	15	1	61



*Figure 7.* Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 7 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5

Research Question 4 seeks to analyze and develop concepts about whether or not, and how, participation in INEA strengthens the self-esteem of the participants and supports greater involvement in the lives of their children, and Interview Question 7 pertains directly to it. The responses to IQ7 indicate that the participants overwhelmingly believe that involvement in INEA does increase their involvement with their children in a variety of ways. Of the all the thematic responses, 52% of the themes pertained to INEA Goal 4, which is to strengthen the ability of Mexican parents to be involved and support the education of their children. A high percentage, 69%, of the participants with responses relating to IG4, commented that involvement in INEA has given them the skills to help their children with their homework and 21% indicated that helped them to be a better example to their children. Several comments expressed the pleasure at being able to help now when then could not prior to taking classes in INEA.



INEA Goal 1: Access to Education that Affects the Quality of Life and INEA Goal 5: Self-esteem and Pride were both strong reasons of motivation for participation in the program in relation to involvement and support of their children. The academics of the program were mentioned as an attractive aspect that aided the participants with parental involvement. Of all the perspectives offered, 21% indicated that INEA helped them to increase their knowledge academically enough to be able to assist their children, which supports IG1. The personal motivation of the participants also supported IG5, in that another 21% of the perspectives related to the self-esteem and pride they felt from being able to be an example and motivation for their children. Among the perspectives offered were that they could have better dialogue, teach their children about culture, be a hero and not be embarrassed in front of them. Such perspectives clearly indicate that the parent/child relationship was symbiotic in nature, in that parents wanted to motivate their children and were motivated by them to further their education.

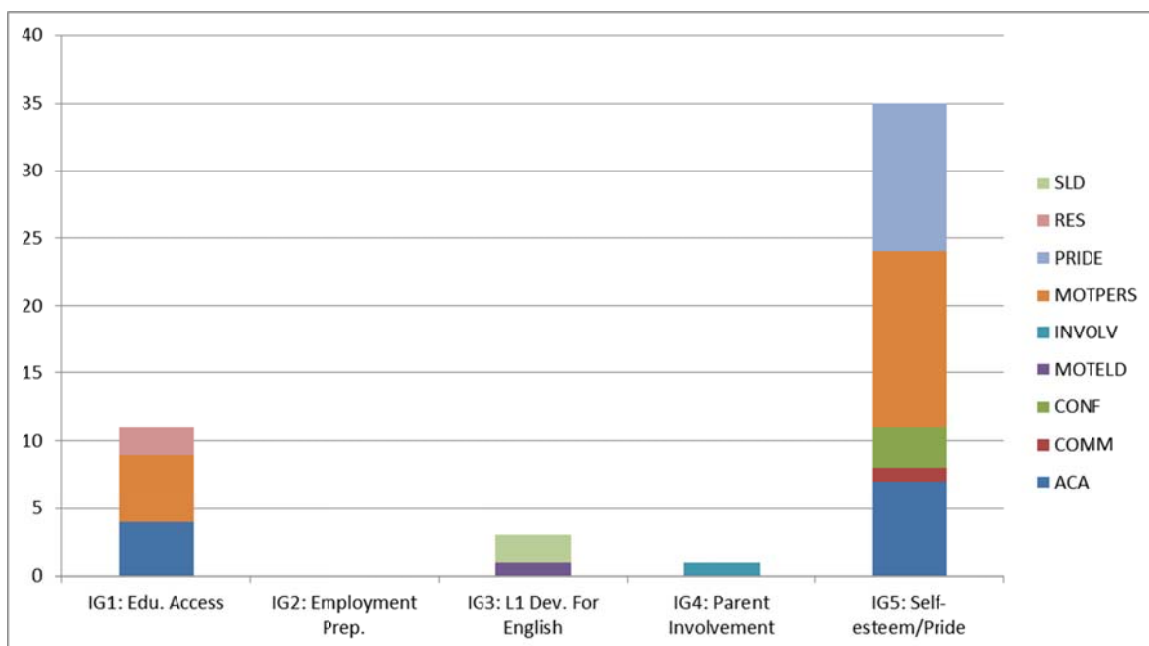
Although fewer comments were made in regard to INEA Goal 3, a few perspectives were offered to support the language development offered by INEA that aided parents in supporting their children.

IQ10: From your perspective, does participation in INEA stimulate self-esteem and pride your culture of origin? If so, how? (RQ3)

Table 10

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question 8 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ8 Responses Chart	ACA	COMM	CONF	MOTELD	INVOLV	MOTPERS	PRIDE	RES	SLD	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	4					5		2		11
IG2: Employment Prep.										0
IG3: L1 Dev. For English				1					2	3
IG4: Parent Involvement					1					1
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride	7	1	3			13	11			35
Total	11	1	3	1	1	18	11	2	2	50



*Figure 8.* Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 8 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5

Of all the interview questions, IQ8 was the most evocative. Not only did 70% of the perspectives offered pertain to INEA Goal 5: Self-esteem and Pride, this is the only question that brought tears to the eyes of one of the participants. Pride was expressed as a theme related to a variety of participant perspectives when responding to IQ8. Of the perspectives pertaining to IG5, pride was the result of improving in academics, confidence, communication, and in relation to a variety of themes in the personal lives of the participants. This question, relating to Research Question 3, also prompted the widest variety of responses relating to INEA Goal 5. Table 9 presents a list of the themes along with the frequency with which they were offered regarding why the students felt such pride and self-esteem from participating in the program.

Table 11

*Frequency of Themes in Offered in Response to Research Question 3*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felt prouder of their culture and origin (10)</li> <li>• Felt individually prouder (5)</li> <li>• Felt better and more content (4)</li> <li>• The program relates to my language and history. (3)</li> <li>• The program is in my language. (2)</li> <li>• I can now read and write. (2)</li> <li>• I am not worried about being tricked. (1)</li> <li>• I felt weaker when I knew less. (1)</li> <li>• I enjoy progressing academically. (1)</li> <li>• It is better publicity for Mexicans. (1)</li> <li>• I am an example for my children. (1)</li> <li>• I feel more secure. (1)</li> <li>• Life is more interesting now. (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can read letters from children. (1)</li> <li>• I can write my name and read street signs. (1)</li> <li>• I have improved manners. (1)</li> <li>• Contributes to my life (1)</li> <li>• Gives greater perspective on life(1)</li> <li>• Want all my people to learn (cries) (1)</li> <li>• Know words and understand people better (1)</li> <li>• Know history (1)</li> <li>• No longer nervous (1)</li> <li>• Able to complete studies (1)</li> <li>• Able to learn far from home (1)</li> <li>• Proud of native language (1)</li> <li>• It motivates to learn English (1)</li> <li>• Can read my children's schoolwork (1)</li> </ul>
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Just over 50%) of the responses pertaining to IG5: Self-esteem/Pride expressed pride in the culture of origin that had increased as a result of participation in the INEA program. The rest of the responses pertaining to IG5 were of a personal, individual nature, not expressly related to native culture, but not separated from it either. Each of the participants was grateful for the opportunity to learn where opportunity had not been available before. The high percentage of pride in native culture as a result of the program indicates that INEA is being effective at meeting IG5. Twenty percent of the participants expressed pride at having improved academics, because the improvement had an immediate effect on their lives in the variety of areas mentioned above.

The INEA Goal 1, of offering educational access to improve the quality of life for the students, pertained to 22% of the responses to IQ8. Access to education was a reoccurring theme among the participants for which they were

grateful. Attending the classes was not an easy endeavor for any of the students, as they were all working and/or raising children and caring for families, except for the most elderly of them. Those students did not begin INEA classes until their children had grown.

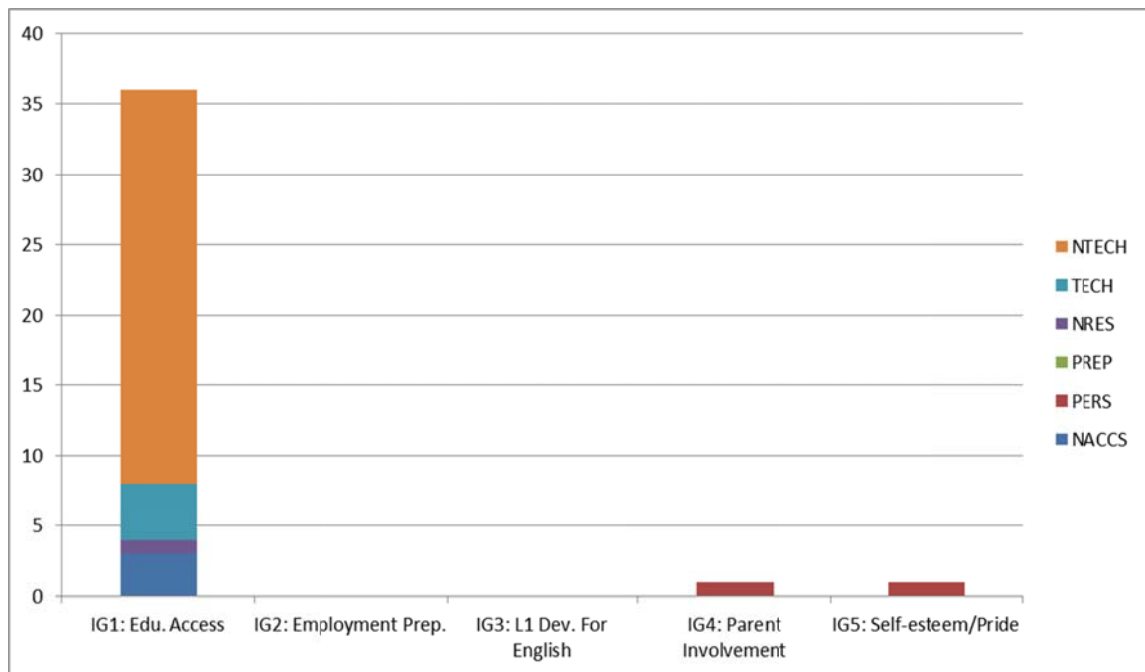
The participants realized that the INEA program is limited in what it is able to provide. They understood some of limitations, such as technology, but did not understand others, such as lack of texts. Nevertheless, from the variety of themes offered, it is obvious to the participants that they are seeing positive changes in their lives due to participation in the INEA program, which has improved their pride, self-esteem and confidence.

IQ9: From your perspective, is computer knowledge part of the basic education you receive through INEA? If so, how? (RQ4)

Table 12

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question 9 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ9 Responses Chart	NACCS	PERS	PREP	NRES	TECH	NTECH	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	3			1	4	28	36
IG2: Employment Prep.							0
IG3: L1 Dev. For English							0
IG4: Parent Involvement		1					1
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride		1					1
Total	3	2		1	4	28	38



*Figure 9.* Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 9 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5

Providing or increasing computer knowledge and practice to its students is not one of the explicit INEA goals, yet the issue does pertain to INEA Goals 1, to provide basic education that has an effect on the quality of their lives, and INEA Goal 2, to provide the best elements of preparation to obtain better employment. Basic knowledge of technology and computer usage and application not only pertains to these two INEA Goals, but it would assist in the implementation of the program.

INEA has the entire pre-assessment, curriculum and evaluation process online, available to any Plaza Comunitaria and student with the availability and ability to utilize it. Unfortunately, 84% of the total responses to Interview Question 9 indicate that computer knowledge is not part of the basic education students receive through INEA.

Of all of the participant responses to IQ9, 95% of them pertained directly

to IG1. The responses indicated that the issue was one of educational access, and 89% of those were negative in nature. For instance, of the 11% indicating that computer knowledge was part of the basic education received through INEA, those comments referred only to the few times that the students gained some operational knowledge from utilizing the computers belonging to the teachers. Even in those cases, the utilization was only in order to take the tests relating to the completion of each level of curriculum. So, even though the responses indicated the acquisition of computer knowledge through INEA, the level of knowledge was extremely limited.

IQ10: From your perspective, is computer knowledge necessary for you to improve the quality of your life? If so, how? (RQ1/RQ4)

Table 13

*Coded Thematic Perspectives in Response to Interview Question10 Relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5*

IQ10 Responses Chart	ACA	NACCS	COMM	MOTECON	MOTPERS	PREP	PRIDE	TECH	NTECH	Total
IG1: Edu. Access	4	1			1	1		29	2	38
IG2: Employment Prep.				1						1
IG3: L1 Dev. For English										0
IG4: Parent Involvement										0
IG5: Self-esteem/Pride					7		2			9
Total	4	1		1	8	1	2	29	2	48

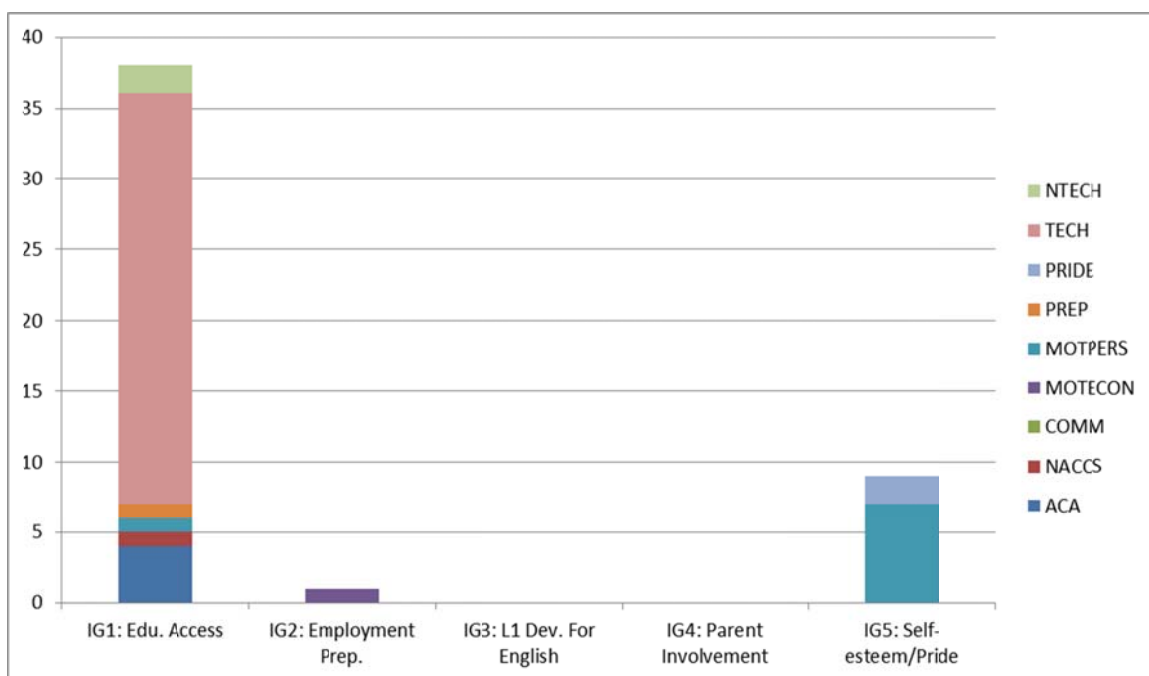


Figure 10. Graphed thematic perspectives in response to Interview Question 10 relating to INEA Goals 1 through 5

The participant responses to Interview Question 10 indicate a huge rift between the perspectives about the necessity of computer knowledge to improve the quality of their lives and the availability of computer training offered by INEA.

The perspectives offered for both IQ9 and IQ10 both pertain to IG1 overwhelmingly. Of the responses to IQ10, 89% of them pertained to IG1. The responses to both questions indicate the belief that computer knowledge is an issue of accessibility to education that would improve their lives. What is most interesting is that the number of perspectives indicating the importance of computer knowledge for improving the quality of life was practically equal in number to those perspectives indicating that such computer knowledge is not part of the INEA curriculum. Such a dichotomy is inconsistent with goal of INEA to eventually have all students enrolled and studying the program online.

## **Interview Responses in Relation to Biographical Information**

The responses of the 33 participants to the interview questions provided an abundance of themes relating to relative success of the 5 INEA Goals. Each participant commented from his or her point of view that related to their particular life experiences and needs. The biographical information (see Appendix B) collected from each participant prior to beginning the interview process assisted the researcher in understanding the individual motives behind the responses. Although the information was provided by the students after they volunteered to be interviewed, it still allows for some insight into the individual status of the each student.

The INEA program only provides certificates for primary and secondary levels. Preparatory school is not offered. Nearly two thirds (60%) of the participants are studying at the primary level and some students indicated a greater lack of resources for the secondary level. This seems odd in light of the fact that the students progressing through the primary level must be able to advance through the secondary, also. From the responses of the participants, 94% of them never studied higher than the primary level prior to studying in INEA. Of that percentage, 63% never attended school at all. So, that INEA, from the perspective of the secondary students, is not as readily prepared to offer the secondary curriculum, may signify that there is a slowing down of the progress for the students as they graduate from primary into secondary. Moreover, the few students that actually had computers were also in secondary, which may indicate that INEA is not prepared to offer technology access and online implementation of the program to its students who are most prepared to utilize it.



In regard to age and gender, the information provided by the participants indicated that female students enrolled in the INEA program in higher numbers than males (66% to 33%). This could relate to various reasons, such as work and transportation issues. It may also be due to cultural gender roles in which the men are tend to work more away from the home each day, making it more difficult to attend classes.

Mexico was by far the country of origin of most of the students (91%). Argentina, Guatemala and El Salvador were each represented by 1 student among the participants.

In the estimation of the students, 36% of them speak English. This is a very high percentage in the opinion of the researcher. But the participants were not asked at what level they speak English, nor for what purpose they utilized it. The question simply asked if they spoke it. Only a slightly lower percentage stated that they were studying English (30%). INEA does not provide English classes, so by what resource the students were studying English is not investigated in this study. A couple of participants did mention that they were taking ESL classes at Palomar College, but of those stating they were, most did not specify. Regardless of the percentage studying English, responses to IQ5 and IQ6 indicate that most participants acknowledge the importance of learning English and that they desire to learn it.

Almost all the participants were parents (88%), and only one the parents did not have children in school, due to the children having already reached adulthood. It is not surprising that high percentage of participants' responses to IQ7 indicated that participation in INEA strengthened their ability to be involved

and support the education of their children?

The last two interview questions pertained to computer and Internet usage. A very large number of the participants had no access to a computer whatsoever (73%), and an even greater number (82%) did not utilize the Internet at all. This area is a huge challenge area for INEA for a variety of reasons. As mention in Chapter I, INEA wishes to be completely online in regard to the implementation of its curriculum, yet this is not occurring for a variety of reasons. Access to useable technology at each of its Plaza Comunitaria sites is certainly an issue, but so is individual student knowledge and personal access. The perspectives offered in response to IQ9 and IQ10 indicate that the vast majority of participants believe that computers and the Internet are important to learn, both for their personal benefit and to assist their children. They understand that technology is everywhere around them, but that it does not exist through INEA, except for very limited use of computers to take INEA leveled assessments. The disconnect between the goal of INEA to implement the program completely online is, at the time of the study, far from being realized, even though it may be the single greatest aspect of program improvement necessary to meet INEA Goal 1, to provide access to education that strengthens the ability of parents to be involved and support the education of their children.

## **Chapter V: Grounded Theory and Findings to Research Questions**

The Grounded Theory (GT) aim of this case study was chosen as a means by which to develop a conceptual understanding of the perspectives of the students, who are the unit of analysis, in relation to the five goals that INEA set for them as they advance through its program in the U.S. GT is applicable to the participants as an explanation of the preponderance of their ongoing behavior which is how they are resolving their main concern (Glaser, 2002) and also serves as means by which to answer the research questions for this case study. The main concerns of the students as they participate in the INEA program are their personal needs defined by their expectations, hopes and goals. The personal needs are what drive them to continue in the program. Their behavior may be described as attending classes week after week anticipating that their participation in INEA will contribute in a positive way to their lives by meeting their needs and goals.

Their goals and reasons for attending, along with their opinions and perspectives, were myriad and could not be simply tallied as an informational description, but instead needed to be coded, conceptualized and then categorized as a means by which to develop grounded theory as to what is occurring in their relationship with the INEA program. The participants in this study are defined as students by the program, inasmuch as the INEA program is defined by them. That being the case, this study sought to develop grounded theory to describe the conceptual relationship between the two entities in regard to meeting the goals of the program and to answer the four research questions pertaining to its success.

Seeking to understand the main concerns of the participants in regard to the goals of INEA, the questions developed for the interviews were invitations to provide their perspectives regarding what the program does on their behalf. Their responses were then converted to coded data that were utilized to develop concepts that could be analyzed and compared by noting differences and similarities. By categorizing the concepts, grounded theory or conceptual relationships were developed to address the research questions and the reasons for the levels of success INEA was experiencing at reaching its goals.

The themes identified in this case study constantly overlapped in their relationship to the goals of INEA. Due to the introspective nature of the questions and the opportunity for the participants to answer any way they felt comfortable, the categories are defined by that which is most important to them. The categories may have been prompted by the interview questions that pertained to the INEA goals, but the similarities and differences in the responses are due to the individual perspectives and motivations of the students.

An overarching and reoccurring conceptual category throughout the interview responses was the motivations of students to study in the program. The motivations of the students are the basis from which all other perspectives were based. Although INEA was designed for the participants, the responses indicated that the personal motivations of the students are what keep the program alive. Without them, its goals are nothing more than ideals. The motivations of the students are more numerous than the goals of the program. Each participant offered a variety of reasons for wanting to be involved in higher academic learning, and none of them was looking for one specific thing, although their

motivations all related to personal, academic, economic and technological advancement, five goals of INEA covered them all. The research questions of this study were developed as a means to develop conceptual relationships between these INEA goals and the perspectives of the students as their motivations were driving them to continue in the program.

### **Conceptual Relationship between INEA Goal 1 and Student Perspectives**

Grounded Theory, First Theorem: INEA will continue to experience difficulty at meeting this first goal as long as the instructors are essentially by default the only academic resource available to the students. This case study did not seek to analyze why INEA does not seek sites with computer and Internet access for its students; however, the lack of texts, computer training and Internet access is severely hampering the success of meeting IG1.

The first goal of INEA is to ensure access to the most elemental educational base that has an effect on the quality the lives of its students. Research Question 1 sought student perspectives in regard to IG1 in their lives academically, economically, personally and technologically. To assess the level of success of IG1 and to answer RQ1, it is necessary to understand that although INEA defines the elemental education, the students are who define the effect on the quality of their lives. Access can be defined by what INEA is offering and what the students are willing to do to get it.

INEA does have an effect on the lives of the participants, and the effect is positive, but there are issues affecting its efficacy that need to be addressed. The academic effect is easiest to assess because the curriculum is well defined at the only two levels of education INEA provides (See Appendix A: INEA Primary Main

Learning Objectives). It meets their academic needs at the most elemental level, which is part of IG1. But issues arise in regard to program implementation. Disparity of academics and resources offered to the students differs at each site, which is an issue INEA must address. Programmatically, INEA is certainly providing elemental education with instructors at each Plaza Comunitaria site who are qualified to teach the INEA curriculum. Many students commented that the teachers were prepared and good. In fact, no negative comments regarding instructional personnel were documented. It is in the areas of academic and logistical resources that disparity educational access arises.

Academically, INEA has put its entire curriculum online, yet none of the participants is involved in the online program. As mentioned earlier, the only computer usage for the participants was when they utilized the teacher's computer to take post-instructional evaluations. And of the few participants that had access to computers at home or other places, none mentioned that they were taking INEA classes online or even perusing the online site. In an interview with a previous Mexican INEA official (Personal communication, 2010), when asked to comment on the level of online access to the INEA Internet Portal and usage, he stated that the students are even more able now to access the online curriculum than ever before due to the usage of smart phones. This is clearly not occurring, as the participants are not accessing INEA curriculum through the Internet by any means.

When INEA created the online curriculum system, it stopped providing texts to the Plazas Comunitarias. Logistically, this made sense. The cost of printing and transportation of textbooks from Mexico to the U.S. was certainly

enormous compared to the cost putting the curriculum online. The problem is that INEA did not complete the process of involving its students in the U.S. in the online implementation. From the responses of the participants, none have been trained by INEA to utilize computers and none of the extended Plaza Comunitaria classroom sites implemented through Palomar College have computer access. From INEA's point of view, it is offering access to an education that will affect the quality of its students' lives in the U.S. The problem is that the students do not have access to all of the INEA resources. INEA program administrators at Palomar College stated (Personal communication, 2011) that it is becoming increasingly the norm that the Plaza Comunitaria must make copies from texts available prior to the online implementation. Although this is one of the practices, it is not a solution.

### **Conceptual Relationship between INEA Goal 2 and Student Perspectives**

Grounded Theory, Second Theorem: There is a possibility of dissatisfaction with the INEA program in regard to increasing job opportunity, which may prevent INEA from reaching IG2. Because the INEA program is at a point of stagnation in regard to resources and logistical access, the students' high hopes and beliefs in INEA that pertain to increased job opportunity are not yet being concretely realized because INEA is not prepared to provide access to its most complete curriculum, which is online. Academic advancement is occurring, but not nearly at the speed and quality that it could. INEA must resolve the issue of online access in order to ensure that the goal of increased employment opportunity matches the personal motivations of its students for attending. In regard to RQ1, the educational contribution offered by the INEA

program is not yet contributing greatly to a greater economic opportunity.

INEA is an academic educational institute, not a technical training entity, and its academic curriculum is well developed and defined. That being the case, INEA still has the goal of providing its students with the best elements of preparation in order to obtain a better employment while living in the U.S or if they return to Mexico. Of most concern to the participants was the ability to either improve their standing with their current employers in regard to communication and advancement or to acquire enough knowledge to be able to change jobs. There was also some commentary indicating the desire to advance academically beyond what INEA offers and to study English for employment purposes. None of the participants mentioned improving job opportunity through INEA in regard to working in Mexico. Often, the participants referenced working in the U.S. as their only concern regarding IG2.

Much of the commentary relating to improved job standing was made in reference to improving communication with the persons in supervisory roles where the participants worked. Communication and expression of needs was a common theme in the interview responses. The perspectives of many students were that study through INEA increased their ability to understand and participate in the decision-making process in their employment. Mathematics learned through INEA also factored into this aspect. The theme of being better able to calculate was expressed, especially by the men who were interviewed, as something that would improve job opportunity. Several male participants referenced working in construction related fields where the ability to better calculate was also seen as a means to increased participation on the job site.



Moreover, a prevalent perspective, especially of the men, and some of the women, was that better communication, expression and ability to calculate translated into greater respect and power on the job site. The ability to communicate directly with the boss instead of through someone who had better communication ability, even if in Spanish, or to show that the participant could be the boss or foreman, was a positive connection to the INEA program. This theme was also expressed often in connection with learning English. Yet, simply improving their ability in Spanish was seen as a positive aspect because their supervisors were Spanish-speakers and had enough ability in English to be able to tell the rest of the crew what the supervisor wanted.

For the female participants, improving communication and expression was also a prevalent perspective, but not for the same reasons in most cases. Job opportunity was more important to the females at the secondary level. As they were more expressive and detailed in their perspectives, and may have already been seeing how such skill could help job opportunity. Most of them expressed that study through INEA was increasing their ability to be better consumers. Their perspectives often pertained to going to stores, offices and medical facilities where having better ability to express themselves meant more independence, in that they could receive better service and not have to rely on friend who could speak better or translate for them, when English was necessary.

Economics were also a significant factor for the participants. Better job opportunity meant more money in many of the perspectives. No perspectives were offered to suggest a direct link between learning through INEA and more money from employment, but the concept of a better economic future due to

academic advancement was prevalent among the participants. They believed in what they were doing to improve their job status and earn more money.

English was as an aspect to improve job opportunity that was included in almost every perspective offered. The language is not offered by INEA, but improvement in Spanish is. According to the research cited in this case study (Cummins, 1979; Krashen, 1983) and utilized by INEA as another reason to support native-language study in Spanish, better Spanish ability will make it easier to learn English.

The key aspect of IG2 is preparation. INEA believes, as do the students, that if best elements of academic preparation are offered and learned that they can only lead to better employment opportunity. For the most part, the students believe that this is occurring, although none of them mentioned any direct link to it in their lives. But the hope is there. For INEA's part, the quality of the academic preparation is the key to translate the students' hopes into reality. IG2 is directly linked to IG1, so access to quality education is essential. If INEA will no longer print, transport and distribute texts to its Plazas Comunitarias in the U.S, then it must ensure that every student has access to its most basic education online. Otherwise, its students' hope for increased job opportunity through further academic study will be ephemeral.

### **Conceptual Relationship between INEA Goal 3 and Student Perspectives**

Grounded Theory, Third Theorem: Lack of actual, formal promotion and instruction of English is allowing half of IG3 to go unaddressed. Without a determined effort to promote the connection between native language and ESL, the motivation of the students to seek any, or further learning of English, may be

diminished. There is much more that INEA could offer in the way of curricular preparation and theory in regard to spurning student motivation to advance in ESL.

From the perspectives offered, the conceptual relationship between IG3 and the students' needs is the belief that improvement in the native language of Spanish is a positive goal by itself. Yet, by including the facilitation of English acquisition in the same goal, it would make sense to support that aspect actively, rather than just tacitly as a statement. From the commentary of the participants, the possibility of learning English appears to be no more than an ancillary benefit, rather than a goal promoted by the INEA. If it is to continue to be an explicit goal, then a determined effort to realize it would better serve the students.

The focus of IG3 is that Mexican compatriots gain greater dominance of their native language in order to facilitate their learning of the English language. There exists a relationship between IG3 and the motivations of the students that is somewhat abstract. The perspectives of the participants strongly indicate that their native language ability in Spanish has increased as a result of taking INEA classes, but advancement toward learning English was not the principal motivation for any of them.

INEA, as an educational institution has always had the goal of improving its students' ability to speak, listen, read and write in Spanish, and IG3 is in addition to that basic goal for students in the U.S. The goal recognizes that the participants are living in an environment where Spanish, although widely utilized, is not predominant. The goal entails having students understand that a solid base in Spanish is crucial for advancing in English, the dominant language where they

live. A third of the participants indicated that they understood the connection.

All of the perspectives indicated recognition that a solid base in Spanish was necessary and useful for many reasons. Their perspectives left no doubt that native-language improvement was the single most important aspect and skill that they were seeking from INEA.

Because the phrase “in order to facilitate their learning of the English language” (p. 7) is part of IG3, it seems that it would be imperative for INEA to make the actual learning of English part of the curriculum, rather than just hoping that the participants seek to learn it on their own accord. Learning English could not be considered a strong motivation for improving their Spanish abilities. The predominant perspective was that English would be useful and would make life easier, but that academic study of it would have to wait until the students completed their INEA courses.

The perspectives clearly indicated that English is not a formal aspect of the INEA program, although it may be encouraged by individual teachers, with some basic daily phrases being taught tangentially to the established curriculum. Even then, such instruction only occurred spontaneously. Outside of INEA, only one student mentioned that she was taking an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at Palomar College at the time of the interviews. The English learned by the vast majority of the participants was mostly through necessity in their daily lives to obtain certain goods and services, and only a fourth of them stated that participation in the program increased their desire to learn it. Personal necessity was the strongest motivator, but few of the participants had sought to learn English academically.

INEA Goal 3 does not state that the participants should be involved in learning English, nor does the program teach it. Its goal is to provide a stepping stone to English. Nevertheless, for IG3, the implication of the phrase “to facilitate their learning of the English language” (p. 7) is that INEA be actively supporting English learning and directing students to available resources to meet that aspect of the goal, but that was not the case in any of the perspectives presented. At the time of the interviews, the relationship between IG3 and the student motivations for wanting to improve Spanish was weak. Later English acquisition could not be considered a reason for the students to take classes through INEA. In answering RQ2, from the perspective of the students, participation in the INEA program has allowed them to gain greater dominance of their native language, but facilitating the learning of English was not their primary concern.

### **Conceptual Relationship between INEA Goal 4 and Student Perspectives**

Grounded Theory, Fourth Theorem: The relevance of the INEA education to assist parents with greater involvement in the academic lives of their children will decrease if proactive steps are not taken to include strategies for parental technology involvement. Even though the data suggest a concrete positive conceptual relationship between the personal motivations of the participants to be involved in the academic lives of their children and INEA Goal 4, which is to support those motivations, as their children are increasingly adept and comfortable with technology usage, the INEA curriculum has gone online while leaving its students trapped between texts and technology.

The success of both IG4 and IG5 are queried by Research Question 4, but it is IG4 that falters substantially. INEA does improve its students' confidence in

asking their children about their schoolwork in Spanish, but it is lacking in its preparation to actually to be intricately involved in assisting their children. Of course, any increase in involvement is commendable, but simply knowing about their children's successes or difficulties in school is not enough.

To strengthen the ability of Mexican parents to be involved and support the education of their children is the noblest of goals. Conceptually, the tenets of the IG4 relate very well with the motivations of the participants. All the participants recognized the connection between parental education and the ability to support the education of children, as 87% of them were parents, and 85% had children in school. This particular goal struck a chord with all of the participant parents, as well with those who were not parents. In their perspectives, they universally believed that learning through INEA was an important aspect of they believed makes a good parent.

The responses and perspectives relating to IG4 were some of the most poignant of the entire interview process. The ability to academically participate in the growth of their children was a central motivation for all the participants who were parents with children in school. Improving academic and native-language were the themes most mentioned by the participants as motivating factors in relation to IG4. INEA recognized this, and the participants were generally satisfied with their improved abilities to be involved with their children's' studies.

Many of the perspectives indicated personal frustration with not being able to assist their children or from being removed from their children's educational process, especially with technology. Helping with homework and being an example for their children were dominant motivational factors when

responding to the interview question regarding IG4, and the perspectives indicated that INEA was offering direct assistance with those issues. Although their children were learning in an environment of English, and INEA does not offer English instruction, the participants stated that due to their better academic preparation and ability to communicate, they were could still be more involved in their children's education because they understood better when their children explained their homework in Spanish. In addition, the perspectives indicated increased boldness and assertiveness to get involved in homework and their children's school life. Only in the area of technology did the parents indicate that they did not feel prepared to assist their children and that support from INEA did not exist.

### **Conceptual Relationship between INEA Goal 5 and Student Perspectives**

Grounded Theory, Fifth Theorem: The INEA program would be more relevant to the participants by increasing the students' awareness of the concrete ways that their skills support their culture and country of origin, aside from just awareness of the personal benefits. Study through INEA has the dual effect of both solidifying pre-existing pride in language and culture and promoting a greater self-image. INEA, through recognition of its students' desires and motivations to improve their lives, offers a vehicle for them to do so. Even while living in the U.S. the student retain their love of Mexico and the idea that it is their country. This conceptual relationship between the participants and INEA is a dichotomy, in that the self-esteem and pride in culture and country of origin that the students receive from participation in INEA were not available to them while they lived in Mexico, due to either economic or personal reasons.

The conceptual relationship between INEA Goal 5, which is to stimulate self-esteem and pride in Mexican immigrants for their culture of origin, and the students' motivations for attending the program, is symbiotic. One nurtures the other. For its part, INEA not only offers an academic education, but a place to reconnect. The name INEA uses for its center, "Plaza Comunitaria", meaning community center, is apropos. INEA does not just want to offer academics, but opportunity. All of its goals for its students living abroad pertain to assisting and improving their lives far from "home". Even for the students who are not from Mexico, who consist of less than 1% of the student body, the Plaza Comunitaria is a place and opportunity to be involved with people living in similar circumstances and who speak a common language, Spanish, in a society where it is not dominant. INEA is a Mexican adult education program with a historical and cultural curriculum designed for Mexicans and taught entirely in their language. In many ways it can be considered a home away from home.

For their part, the students benefit INEA and Mexico in general, by allowing them to instill and solidify the students' pride in culture and skill in the language of Mexico. Through the students, Mexico has the opportunity to maintain its citizenry, albeit far from home. The INEA program is not widely recognized in the U.S., not even among Mexicans. A number of participants interviewed mentioned specifically that the opportunity to study through INEA should be expanded to more people. In essence, each student that can be served in a positive way by INEA becomes an advocate for continuation and expansion of the program in both curriculum and geography. INEA Goal 5 promotes the coalescence of the participants' personal motivations for attending



classes and the pride in who they are as a people as the driving forces to implement the program.

The perspectives relating to IG5 indicate staunch support for the INEA program, even with the almost universal criticisms of the lack of resources and technology access. The concept that Mexico was still an advocate for their empowerment, even far from their country of origin, was universally apparent in the perspectives of all the participants. Even the students from Argentina, Guatemala and El Salvador were grateful to Mexico for the opportunity to take the INEA classes, as their circumstances were similar to their Mexican counterparts.

The two aspects of self-esteem and pride may be the essence of IG5, but the idea of hope was also prevalent among the responses. Expressions relating to the desire for all Mexicans to be able to learn more, of increased confidence, of more interesting lives and motivation for further learning were common among the perspectives offered in the interviews. In answering the aspect of Research Question 3 pertaining to strengthening self-esteem and pride, INEA is meeting with considerable success. It is fomenting both, but it needs to connect its students' increased pride in self and culture with how those aspects can be utilized for greater success in the future.

### **Recommendations**

The analysis and grounded theory development in this case study were the result of exploring four research questions addressing the level of INEA success at meeting its five goals for its students in the U.S. The findings related to the research questions allowing for the development of the grounded theories

were based upon the perspectives of INEA's students, who as receivers of the services being offered through INEA, were the foremost authorities to judge the programs' success.

In regard to Research Question 1, the student perspectives clearly indicate a conceptual relationship between IG1 and IG2 and a positive effect on students' lives, but to varying degrees academically, economically, personally and technologically. INEA is providing a highly desired education to its students, but it needs to ensure equity of access and provision of intended resources to completely succeed at meeting its both goals.

**Recommendations relating to findings.** The recommendations based on the findings from the study include the following.

1. Develop a Contractual Agreement/MOU: Create a contractual agreement between INEA and the sites of the Plazas Comunitarias.
  - The researcher recommends that INEA headquarters in Mexico City develop a general contractual agreement, or at least a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between each Plaza Comunitaria site and INEA that stipulates the accommodations, responsibilities of each entity and that ensures commonality of the general accommodations among Plaza Comunitaria sites.
2. Computer/Internet Access: INEA should only seek to utilize sites that can provide computers and Internet access.
  - The researcher recommends that because INEA no longer provides texts and has completed the development of an online program, Plazas Comunitarias should only exist at sites with online access for all

students, such as at public school computer labs that are located in every city and are not being utilized in the late afternoon and evenings.. The contract or MOU should include the provision for the guarantee of this access.

- The access should allow for one student per computer station and no more than two.at the same time.
- Such computer/Internet access would also resolve the issue of perceived curricular resource inequities between the primary and secondary level students, parental involvement and facilitate both native and English Language Learning.

3. Funding: The issue of funding for the use of facilities must be addresses by INEA. INEA in Mexico could detail funding proposals for use of facilities in the general contract/MOU utilized to secure each site. The site volunteering its facilities must be financially compensated to a degree in order to obtain rooms where computers with Internet access exist.

- Funding agreement should address:
  - The cost of electricity
  - The cost of custodial/site supervision
  - The cost of computer/Internet access
  - Insurance liability for usage.

**Recommendations for further study.** This single case study of the INEA Plaza Comunitaria was designed to investigate the effectiveness of the adult education program implemented out of Palomar College in California. The grounded theory and answers to the research questions were developed from

the data gathered from participant responses from voluntary interviews conducted in Spanish. This study's author recommends that the study be implemented at different locations within California and at other Plazas Comunitarias in other states. Although the goals for all the Plazas Comunitarias within the U.S. are the same, there must be duplication of the findings from which similar theorems may be tested.

It is also recommended that each of the theorems developed from this study be further analyzed. If the data from student perspectives yields similar results as from those at Palomar College's Plaza Comunitaria, INEA will have support for implementing the recommended additions and changes to the program. At the time of this study no similar studies of INEA had been attempted.

The author of this study also recommends that the impediments to online implementation of the INEA program be researched. Presently, it appears that both logistical and political factors may be the leading causes of extremely sparse implementation of INEA online education. The issues of individual student access to technology, as well as institutional access to technology need to be studied. As it is the responsibility of the site administrators to make local contacts regarding logistics and communication, INEA headquarters in Mexico may want to offer guidance to them on how to present the INEA program to different public school sites, or any other venue where knowledge of INEA may be little known, even though the program is implemented in 34 states and Washington D.C.

## **Conclusion**

In 2003, when INEA first began to implement its program in the U.S. at Palomar College, it did so with fanfare and the support of the Governor of

California, President of Mexico, and the local educational entities in San Diego County. At that time the implementation was entirely traditional, in that all curricular materials were produced, transported and distributed to the Plaza Comunitarias in the U.S. by INEA in Mexico. Each student was provided with the necessary texts to be able study individually away from the sites. With the implementation of the online curriculum in 2008, INEA had hoped that the program would be entirely online by now, but the opposite has occurred.

Today, not only do the students not have access to computers in their personal lives, INEA has not followed through with the online program by providing classroom venues where the students would at least have access to the online program at least twice a week. With all the resources dedicated to online curriculum creation, text book provision ceased, leaving an unprepared student body unable to access the same curriculum that was available through the first few years of the INEA program. Credit must be given to the INEA instructors, who receive outright praise for providing the curriculum to an educationally hungry student body. Although the students voiced gratefulness for the educational opportunity, they also voiced frustration that if not for the individual teachers providing the resources for each class, there would be no curricular material at all.

The lack of actual complete technology implementation has created a barrier to attaining all of INEA's goals for its students in the U.S. Full online implementation of the program would improve the success of all five INEA goals because it would ensure that there were never be a lack of curricular resources, at least while the students are attending classes. Along with learning technology

and the language of navigating the web, native language instruction would be bolstered, and the program would not have to rely on individual teachers to provide the curricular materials they can scrape up. As a student's native language ability strengthens, so does his or her educational success overall (Cummins, 1981). Full online access directly addresses INEA Goal 1, to provide an elemental educational based that has an effect on the quality of the students' lives.

Especially in regard to INEA Goal 3, which is for the students to gain greater dominance of their native language in order to facilitate their learning of the English language, access to the Internet could be the great equalizer. Through online technology implementation and access, the students could easily obtain both native language instruction and the opportunity to transfer their base language knowledge over to English. INEA correctly endorses the premise that greater native language ability aides in the learning of a second language (Cummins, 1979; Snow, 1990; Krashen, 2002), and their online curriculum could incorporate both.

A correlation has already been established that Hispanics' with lower levels of education and English proficiency are also likely to have less access to the Internet (Fox & Livingston, 2007). Such disconnectedness may not be conducive to any of INEA's goals. Academically, the lack of technology affects the students' ability to access the most relevant curriculum for both native and English language instruction. Moreover, there may also be an economic effect, which relates to INEA Goal 2. More and more, Internet access is a necessity for job seekers. Not only must they be able to communicate and calculate

effectively, they also need to be able to search for employment on the Internet and then feel comfortable with computers, in various forms, on the job.

Lastly, full implementation of online education, with all the accompanying logistical agreements may directly affect INEA Goals 4 and 5, in that it may aid in empowering the students to have more control over their lives and to be more involved in the academic lives of their children as they learn more through INEA. The question must be pondered of what these students might become if they had the ability to access INEA's entire curriculum. Full online access would allow the students to challenge the traditional teacher-student relationship where the student is subordinate to the teacher (Cummins, 2001). Not only might the students no longer be totally reliant on the teachers in INEA for everything they learn, they would be able to advance at their own rate, which may increase their self-esteem and pride.

The author of this study sees the INEA program as extremely worthwhile, but concludes that it must move forward quickly to continue ensuring its relevance, and maybe existence. The students are still motivated for all of the reasons mentioned in the study to attend. Now, it is INEA's responsibility to reciprocate and ensure that each of its five goals for students residing in the U.S. is met.

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## APPENDIX A

### INEA Primary Main Learning Objectives

#### Main Objectives

Each educational module contains information regarding knowledge and skills an adult must learn. The model is structured in the following areas of knowledge:

**Language and Communication (Spanish):** The adult must show skills learned through the use of study techniques, which allow him/her to understand and write useful documents by making correct use of words. Certainly, the adult will be able to develop other learning and work skills while continuing to study other topics.

**Mathematics:** The adult will learn how to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of rational numbers, as well as to solve equations, proportion and percentage problems. For example, when a person buys something by credit, he/she is charged an extra percentage, and thus, the person must know what the real cost is. Moreover, the adult will learn how to solve first and second-degree equation problems, use the Cartesian Plane, the Pythagorean Theorem as well as know, understand, and apply square root and the trigonometric functions. Learners will distinguish and solve problems involving geometrical shapes.

**Sciences:** The adult will learn to distinguish celestial bodies that are part of our Solar System and some of its features. Learners will understand and explain the consequences of the Earth's movements (why we have day and night, seasons of the year, and the weather). Recognize different kinds of living beings and how the reproductive system works. Learners will learn how to fight against environmental pollution, about matter and its physical and chemical composition as well as study about force, work, energy, electricity and magnetism. How matter and energy transforms in living beings. They will learn how our body works, and the importance of Carbon. Also, they will study reproduction of human beings, classification of living beings and their importance, and inheritance and evolution.

**Social Studies:** The adult will learn about law, rights, and duties of workers and citizens. Identify the different governmental institutions and its functions. They will learn where to go in case of arranging personal documentation. They will learn the main geographical, economic and social aspects of different regions of the Mexican Republic, as well as Europe, Africa, Asia and America. Identify the importance of ancient civilizations and empires, and the consequences of the Discovery of America, the World War I and World War II as well as understand the political and economic situations in Europe, America (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century), Asia and Africa (19<sup>th</sup> century). Learn about the characteristics and organization of

the pre-Hispanic groups, as well as important events during the Conquest, Colony, Independence, Reform, Porfiriato, and Revolution times. Understand the way in which presidents ruled our country since the Revolution up until our times.

## **Secondary Main Objectives**

**Language and Communication (Spanish):** At this level, students will develop skills that will allow them to employ study techniques to understand what they read. Also, they will learn how to use important documents, such as letters, administrative documents, notices, credentials, school records, receipts, etc. The student will be able to write correctly in different types of texts not only for their structure but also for their functions and meanings. This will be useful for students in their personal and work lives and for continuing studying other topics and areas of knowledge. Students will learn about Hispanic literary movements and writers.

**Mathematics:** Students will learn how to solve multiplication, addition, subtraction and division of rational numbers. Students will solve equations and proportion and percentage mathematical problems, for instance, when a person pays for an appliance by credit but pays for an extra charge to get the appliance (total cost). The student will solve first and second degrees equation problems by using the Cartesian Plane and the Pythagorean Theorem. They will learn to apply the square root, and trigonometric functions and the similarities and differences among geometrical figures to make transformations in the Cartesian Plane.

**Sciences:** The students will learn about the celestial bodies of our solar system and some of its features. They will be able to explain why the Earth rotates in its own orbit (what makes the day and night to occur, seasons and weather), why there are different kinds of living beings (how they reproduce), and get some ideas to fight against environmental pollution. They will learn about the physical and chemical features of matter. They will learn what the force, work and energy are all about as well as magnetism and the transformation of matter and energy of living beings. They will learn how our body works and the importance of carbon in our lives.

**Social Studies:** The students will learn about laws and their rights and obligations as workers and citizens. They will identify different government institutions and their functions. This is to be useful when they attend a government institution asking for information of general interest for their communities. They will learn about the main geographical, economic and social characteristics of the Mexican Republic, Europe, Africa and Asia. They will understand the importance of the ancient civilizations and empires and the consequences of the America Discovery as well as the different political movements of the past such as the World War I and World War II. They will learn about the political and economic situation of America and Europe during the XVI and XVII Centuries, and Asia and Africa in the XIX Century.

The students will learn also the characteristics and organization of pre-Hispanic groups, and the main historical events during the Conquer, the Colony, the Independence, the Reform, the Porfiriato and the Revolution times. They will understand how our country has been ruled since the Revolution to our times.

## APPENDIX B

### INEA Case Study Respondent Biographical Information

Participant's Program Level:	Primary	=	20
	Secondary	=	13
Participant's Respondent Age:	18-25	=	1
	26-35	=	4
	36-45	=	8
	46-55	=	9
	55 <	=	11
Participant's Gender:	Male	=	11
	Female	=	22
Participant's last level of study in home country:	None	=	12
	Primary	=	19
	Secondary	=	1
	Bachillerato	=	1
	(Mexican System)		
Participant's home country:	Mexico	=	30
	Argentina	=	1
	Guatemala	=	1
	El Salvador	=	1
Speaks English:	Yes	=	12
	No	=	21
Currently studying English:	Yes	=	10
	No	=	23
Is a parent:	Yes	=	29
	No	=	4
Children attend school:	Yes	=	28
	No	=	5
Has access to a computer:	Yes	=	9
	No	=	24
Utilizes the Internet:	Yes	=	6



	No	=	27
Has taken classes online:	Yes	=	0
	No	=	33
How knew about INEA courses:	(10) From others in INEA		
	(5) From a friend		
	(5) Information local public school		
	(4) Flyers in children's school		
	(3) From ESL site publicity		
	(1) Information at church		
	(2) Through Palomar		
	(1) From boss at work		
	(1) Through Mexican consulate		

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## APPENDIX C

### Interview Questions for INEA Students

1. From your perspective, does participation in INEA have an effect on the quality of your life (Academically, Occupationally, Economically)? If so, how? (RQ1)
2. From your perspective, what does INEA do well and what should it do to help you reach your goals? (RQ1)
3. From your perspective, do the INEA administrators, teachers and staff provide the necessary resources for you to meet your goals? (RQ1)
4. From your perspective, does participation in INEA increase your dominance of your native language (Spanish)? If so, how? (RQ2)
5. From your perspective, has participation in INEA increased your desire and ability to learn English? If so, how? (RQ2)
6. From your perspective, how would knowing more English affect the quality of your life? Explain. (RQ1/RQ2)
7. From your perspective, does participation in INEA strengthen the ability of parents to be involved and support the education of their children? If so, how? (RQ3)
8. From your perspective, does participation in INEA stimulate self-esteem and pride your culture of origin? If so, how? (RQ3)
9. From your perspective, is computer knowledge part of the basic education you receive through INEA? If so, how? (RQ4)
10. From your perspective, is computer knowledge necessary for you to improve the quality of your life? If so, how? (RQ1/RQ4)

## APPENDIX D

### INEA Plazas Comunitarias in the United States

State	States (Plus D.C.) Hosting Plazas	Number of Plazas in Each State	Hosting Entity			
			Schools	Religious	Correctional	Community Orgs.
Alabama	No	0				
Alaska	No	0				
Arizona	Yes	12	3	2	5	2
Arkansas	Yes	1		1		
California	Yes	71	34	5	2	30
Colorado	Yes	5	3		1	1
Connecticut	No	0				
Delaware	No	0				
Washington D.C	Yes	1				1
Florida	Yes	6				6
Georgia	Yes	13	6	3		4
Hawaii	No	0				
Idaho	Yes	6	1	4		1
Illinois	Yes	11	2			9
Indiana	Yes	14	4	1		9
Iowa	No	0				
Kansas	Yes	2	1			1
Kentucky	Yes	1				1
Louisiana	No	0				
Maine	No	0				
Maryland	No	0				
Massachusetts	No	0				
Michigan	Yes	1		1		
Minnesota	Yes	1				1
Mississippi	Yes	1			1	
Missouri	Yes	4				4
Montana	No	0				
Nebraska	Yes	3		2		1
Nevada	Yes	9	6			3
New Hampshire	No	0				
New Jersey	Yes	2				2
New Mexico	Yes	7	5		2	
New York	Yes	10	9			1
North Carolina	Yes	12	6	1		5
North Dakota	No	0				
Ohio	Yes	4		1	3	
Oklahoma	Yes	3			3	
Oregon	Yes	20	13			7
Pennsylvania	Yes	2	1	1		

Rhode Island	Yes	1				1
South Carolina	Yes	3	2	1		
South Dakota	No	0				
Tennessee	Yes	2	1	1		
Texas	Yes	41	8	5	4	24
Utah	Yes	4	1			3
Vermont	No	0				
Virginia	Yes	9			9	
Washington	Yes	23	23			
West Virginia	Yes	11			11	
Wisconsin	Yes	2	2			
Wyoming	No	0				
Total	35	318	131	29	41	117

## APPENDIX E

### Coding Rubric for Student Interviews

IQ1: From your perspective, does participation in INEA have an effect on the quality of your life (Academically, Occupationally, Economically)? If so, how? (RQ1)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ1	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ2: From your perspective, what does INEA do well and what should it do to help you reach your goals? (RQ1)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ1	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ3: From your perspective, do the INEA administrators, teachers and staff provide the necessary resources for you to meet your goals? (RQ1)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ1	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ4: From your perspective, does participation in INEA increase your dominance of your native language (Spanish)? If so, how? (RQ2)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ2	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ5: From your perspective, has participation in INEA increased your desire and ability to learn English? If so, how? (RQ2)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ2	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ6: From your perspective, how would knowing more English affect the quality of your life? Explain. (RQ1/RQ2)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ1 / RQ2	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ7: From your perspective, does participation in INEA strengthen the ability of parents to be involved and support the education of their children? If so, how? (RQ3)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ3	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ8: From your perspective, does participation in INEA stimulate self-esteem and pride your culture of origin? If so, how? (RQ3)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ4	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ9: From your perspective, is computer knowledge part of the basic education you receive through INEA? If so, how? (RQ4)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ4	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		

IQ10: From your perspective, is computer knowledge necessary for you to improve the quality of your life? If so, how? (RQ1/RQ4)

INEA Goals	Relates to RQ1 / RQ4	Notes
IG1		
IG2		
IG3		
IG4		
IG5		