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ABSTRACT
            This publication describes a model for faculty development
in the area of immigrant Latino students. The Bridging Cultures Project was
developed to address: how teacher professional development would affect
teachers' understanding of how differing values could lead to conflict
between home and school; how teachers could translate such understanding into
improved practices bridging home and school cultures; and what effects this
faculty development would have on students, teachers, and parents. The
project was designed to validate a professional development process and
materials for use with other teachers. This publication also describes the
second phase of the project, which focused on: documenting the teachers'
changes in thinking and practice; continuing to support teachers' growth as a
professional development cadre; and disseminating the project through
presentations/professional development workshops and publications. The four
appendixes offer the Bridging Cultures Pre-assessment, Bridging Cultures
Participant Questionnaire, Bridging Cultures Post-assessment, and Teacher
Exit Questionnaire. (Contains 36 references.) (SM)

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A Model for Professional Development

March 1999

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Supporting Teachers to Bridge Cultures for Immigrant Latino Students

A Model for Professional Development

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March 1999

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I wanted to understand my students better so I started studying Mexican culture. Then I realized that the children in my class came from so many distinct regions of Mexico, Central and South America, each with differing histories and traditions, I just knew that I would never know enough. I had to give up trying.

— Kindergarten teacher

EDUCATING FOR DIVERSITY

The kindergarten teacher quoted above may well represent the frustration felt by many elementary school teachers. With waves of new immigrant students entering schools, each group with its own distinctive culture, teachers may become stymied in their attempts to learn about culture. Fears of what it would take to become a cultural expert may be exacerbated by the kinds of demands one sees in the literature on multicultural education. For example, Banks (1994) advises that "Teachers need a sound knowledge base about the history and culture of ethnic groups in order to successfully integrate content into the school curriculum" (p.52). Specifically, he recommends knowing about ethnic groups' origins and immigration patterns; ethnic identity; world views; demographic, social, political, and economic status; intraethnic diversity; ethnic institutions and self-determination; shared culture, values, and symbols; assimilation and acculturation; revolution; and knowledge construction. Is it any wonder that teachers may be overwhelmed?

To his great credit, Banks (1994, 1995) has provided guidance for educators to move away from focusing on the superficial elements of culture. His model of multicultural curriculum reform entails getting beyond occasional celebration of the contributions of various ethnic groups or isolated units on individual groups. What he and others (cf., Nieto, 1992; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter and McLaren, 1995) advocate is a social action approach to curriculum and instruction. In this view, students would be engaged in learning about social issues and taking action to solve problems relevant to their own lives. They would bring their own concerns and perspectives to the creation of actual curriculum. As active, empowered learners, they would be preparing to participate in democratic decision-making and — ideally — restructuring of society toward greater equity. Such an approach reflects the origins of multicultural education in the civil rights movement of the 1960's and the links between the classroom and the larger society (Gay, 1983; Sleeter, 1992).

Continuing Needs in Teacher Education

Unfortunately, much of what continues to pass for multicultural education in real schools only skims the surface of culture, with treatment of foods and festivals (or what some call "chomp and stomp"). Some teachers teach units on particular ethnic groups, but this approach is not likely to lead to the kind of student empowerment needed for citizenship in a participatory democracy.

"Ironically, teachers may conscientiously try to create culturally sensitive environments for their students (e.g. through multicultural displays and

activities), while simultaneously structuring classroom interaction patterns that violate invisible cultural norms for various non-dominant groups. Teachers may also inadvertently criticize parents for adhering to a different set of ideals about children, families, and parenting," (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1996, p.40).

Multiculturalism, as conceptualized in American education, may oversimplify the task of truly educating for diversity. Simoes de Carvalho (1998) says, "Multiculturalism presumes a naïve universalism that all cultures can share the same values... As in Great Britain, public schools in the United States are in the business of making good 'citizens.' It is a term that is defined by the dominant, white, Anglo-American cultures" (p. 15). Of course, the meaning of "democracy" itself differs from country to country; so the aim of preparing good United States citizens needs to take into account some of the culture-based assumptions underlying that goal. Many of our new students come from cultures that value consensus over majority rule, for example. How will this value influence students' ways of participating in classrooms or their own interpretations of what it is to be a good citizen?

It appears that even when teachers have been "prepared" to teach children from cultures other than their own, they may still feel the need for a new kind of professional development that deals with a deeper knowledge of culture. In a study designed to address the question: "What do Latino children need to succeed in school," Darder & Upshur (1992) studied four Boston elementary schools with high percentages of Latino students (45-55 percent of total enrollment). They found that "Teachers of all racial and ethnic groups, regardless of educational level, expressed a great need for in-service opportunities to assist them in better meeting the needs of Latino children. The needs of the teachers included understanding cultural issues in education..." (p. 3).

In another study, researchers investigated problems faced by student teachers and new teachers in multicultural classrooms (Taylor and Wilson, 1997). One of the greatest difficulties teachers were having was in relating to children's lives outside of school and in understanding their children's lives and behaviors.

What is missing from existing models of multicultural education is an "anthropological layer" that addresses how to get to the deep cultural values that motivate people's approaches to child-rearing and schooling. It is at the level of such values that conflicts are often born between home and school, between classroom expectations and children's unconscious ways of knowing and behaving. It can be argued that one cannot know another's culture without knowing one's own first, yet few teachers are exposed to cultural theories that would allow them to examine their value systems and those of schools, along with those of their students. To address this need, teacher preparation must move beyond the specific histories of individual ethnic groups, although these are certainly important to understanding the present status of groups within the society (Banks, 1994). In addition — and at least as important — teachers need frameworks that explain the deep value orientations underlying the beliefs and behaviors of different cultures (Trumbull, Greenfield, Rothstein-Fisch, Quiroz, in press).

INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM: A USEFUL FRAMEWORK

Individualism and *collectivism* were originally conceived of as one of four sets of dimensions of cultural variation by Hofstede[1] (1980, 1983), who assessed the degree of individualism and collectivism of 66 countries. The continuum he proposed has been used to describe the extent to which a culture emphasizes *self* or *group* goals. Individualism is representative of mainstream United States culture. In fact, it is the most individualistic culture, according to Hofstede's research (1980).

The principal developmental goal within an individualistic system is *independence*. Individualism stresses objects and the physical world in decontextualized states. This contrasts with the value system of collectivism, whose principal developmental goal is *interdependence*. Collectivism emphasizes the importance of human relations and the use of objects for the purpose of social benefit. Collectivism is representative of many immigrant cultures in the United States — in fact of a great many cultures. Indeed, over 70 percent of the world's cultures could be described as collectivistic (Triandis, 1989). Table 1 summarizes the features of individualism and collectivism.

Table 1
Features of Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Emphasizing understanding of the physical world through direct exposure to objects, often out of context	Emphasizing an understanding of the physical world as it enhances human relationships
Fostering independence and individual achievement	Fostering interdependence and group success
Promoting self-expression, individual thinking, personal choice	Promoting adherence to norms, respect for authority/elders, group consensus
Associated with private property	Associated with shared property
Associated with egalitarian relationships and role flexibility	Associated with stable roles

Research on Individualism and Collectivism

Research by Greenfield and her colleagues (Greenfield, Raeff and Quiro, 1996; Greenfield, Quiro and Raeff, in press) has demonstrated that the individualism-collectivism continuum can be useful in understanding the cultural value systems of families and schools. Immigrant Latino children and families enter school with a cultural

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1 The others were masculinity-femininity, power-distance, and uncertainty-avoidance. Hofstede (1991) defined individualism and collectivism as follows: Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism, as its opposite, pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (p. 51).

value orientation quite different from that of the dominant culture. For example, Greenfield, Raeff and Quiroz (1996) presented elementary school parents, teachers, and students with a set of eight scenarios based on real-life conflict situations involving Latino and European-American children at home and at school. (See Table 2 for an example of a scenario.) Each scenario could be solved from either a collectivistic or an individualistic perspective. Subjects came from two different Los Angeles schools. One school population was composed of European-American parents, teachers, and children. The other school served a large immigrant Latino population. In both schools, there was ethnic diversity among the teaching staff, but a large majority was from European-American backgrounds.

Table 2
Example of a Scenario

A scenario is a brief vignette that may demonstrate how differing values associated with a collectivistic or individualist orientation lead to different interpretations of the same event or different behaviors in the same circumstance.

It is the end of the school day, and the class is cleaning up. Salvador isn't feeling well, and he asks Emanuel to help him with his job for the day, which is cleaning the blackboard. Emanuel isn't sure that he will have time to do both jobs.

What do you think the teacher should do?

The problem solving strategies used by parents, children, and teachers from a school with a predominately European-American population were quite similar. That is, the parents, teachers and children agreed that in the school jobs scenario (Table 2), Emanuel should find a third person to help with a classroom job. The solutions to the scenario centered on the student's need to protect his own task, that is, to maintain autonomy over it. Furthermore, it was the student's choice as to whether he wished to help his classmate. However, in the school serving an immigrant Latino population, the results told a very different story. The responses of children and parents represented different problem solving strategies from those of the teachers. For example, immigrant Latino parents overwhelmingly thought that Emanuel should help Salvador, regardless of his obligation to his own task. Teachers preferred to solve the problem by finding a third person to help — in some cases, designating the teacher in the scenario. Children's responses reflected both value systems, with a greater emphasis on helpfulness than the teachers exhibited, but only about half that of their parents — suggesting that they were pulled in two directions. (Figures 1 and 2 show the two different response patterns.)

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Figure 1
Dominant Responses to "Jobs" Scenario, School 1 (Euro-American)

Legend:
- ■ Children, N=19
- □ Parents, N=15
- ▦ Teachers, N=10

Bar chart: Proportion of Subjects (y-axis, 0–70) by category Find Third and Help (x-axis)

Figure 2
Dominant Responses to "Jobs" Scenario, School 2 (Latino)

Legend:
- ■ Children, N=26
- □ Parents, N=17
- ▦ Teachers, N=13

Bar chart: Proportion of Subjects (y-axis, 0–70) by category Find Third and Help (x-axis)

The results of this study support the contention that the "developmental scripts," or the theories of development that guide decision-making for parents vis-à-vis their children, differ for European-Americans and Latino immigrants. Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz (1996) interpreted the difference in the outcomes above as representing the collectivistic orientation of immigrant Latino families compared to the individualistic perspective of the schools.

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A second study was conducted (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, in press) to investigate the source of complaints from immigrant Latino parents and their children's teachers about miscommunication and confusion in parent-teacher conferences. To determine if contrasting cultural value systems might be the source of ineffective communication, a series of nine parent-teacher conferences between immigrant Latino parents and their children's Euro-American elementary school teacher were videotaped and analyzed. All of the children came from a combination third-fourth grade classroom. The analysis of the conference discourse revealed discord between parents and teachers where cultural values differed.

The research uncovered seven areas of conflict between home and school for immigrant Latino immigrant families. All of these differences could be accounted for the individualism-collectivism framework. For example, in parent-teacher conferences, Latino parents often asked questions about how their child was behaving, rather than focusing on the child's academic progress (a social vs. cognitive skills emphasis). Likewise, Latino parents tended to discuss their child within the family context, i.e., in relation to other family members, rather than looking at the child as a separate individual. Parents showed discomfort at times when their child was praised, apparently looking instead for advice on how to ensure the child's appropriate behavior. Table 3 shows the seven areas of potential conflict between home and school.

Table 3
Sources of Home-School Conflict

Individualism	Collectivism
1. Child as individual	Child as part of the family
2. Personal property	Sharing
3. Independence	Helpfulness
4. Praise ⇒ positive self-esteem	Criticism ⇒ normative behavior
5. Cognitive skills	Social skills
6. Parents' role	Teacher's role
7. Oral expression	Listening with respect for authority

The studies raised questions about whether professional development based on the framework of individualism-collectivism would be useful for teachers serving large numbers of immigrant Latino students. Would learning about the framework lead teachers toward greater understanding of how differing values could lead to conflict between home and school? Would teachers be able to translate such understanding into improved practices that bridged home and school cultures? What would be the effects on children, teachers, and parents?

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THE BRIDGING CULTURES PROJECT: PHASE I

Background and Purpose

The Bridging Cultures Project was developed to address the questions outlined above. It is a collaboration among a regional educational laboratory (WestEd), a large university with a research emphasis (UCLA), the largest teacher education institution in California (California State University, Northridge), and seven bilingual public school teachers from Southern California. The intention of the project was not to create teachers who would suddenly take an exclusively collectivistic viewpoint and use that to throw over all of their existing individualistic practices. Instead, the hope was that teachers would find the individualism — collectivism framework useful in identifying new ways to build cross-cultural bridges in the classroom. Their successful innovations in practice would provide a body of examples for other teachers.

Another purpose of the project was to validate a professional development process and materials that could be used with other teachers. It was also hoped that the small group of teachers could become a cadre of experts on the project, assuming it was successful for them.

The reader may notice that nothing has been said about influencing teachers' attitudes toward "diversity." It is a byword of educational reform in the multicultural area that teacher attitudes are an essential part of classroom change. On the other hand, the few studies conducted on the impact of professional development for multicultural education suggest that attitude change alone does not lead to changes in the way classrooms are structured and run (Sleeter, 1992). In the case of the Bridging Cultures Project, there has been no specific intent to identify or alter teacher attitudes *per se*. Rather, the project is focused on deepening understanding of cultural differences. Attitudes may, of course, change as a result of increased understanding. We are interested in how teachers "take in" the research and theory of the project and apply it in their own classrooms. In addition, changes in the ways teachers talk about "diversity" or "culture" in relation to their students and classrooms as a result of their involvement with the project will be analyzed.

Researchers

A group of four researchers from the institutions named above came together to address these questions: a cultural psychologist, an applied psycholinguist, an educational psychologist/teacher-educator, and a Latin American Studies/Psychology graduate student. We represented the Euro-American and immigrant Latino populations whose conflicts in schools we would be addressing. Henceforth, we refer to this group as "core researchers," because (as will be seen) teachers quickly became Bridging Cultures researchers themselves.

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Participating Teachers

The participants are seven elementary school bilingual teachers serving predominately immigrant Latino students. Four of the teachers are Latino/a; three are Euro-American. Two teachers were born in Mexico, one in Peru, and one in Germany, although all of these had emigrated to the United States as young children (between two and eight years of age). Three teachers were born in the United States.

Six female and one male teacher participated in the study. The teachers' grade assignments ranged from kindergarten to fifth grade, with every grade level represented by at least one teacher. All seven teachers were bilingual (to varying extents), English-Spanish. The teachers were all experienced, with years of teaching service ranging from five to 21 (X=12.7). Teachers were selected to participate on the basis of their interest in better serving Latino students.

Procedure

The four core researchers jointly conducted three four-hour workshops, which took place on Saturday mornings over a period of about three months. The sessions were held in a small library at UCLA and were videotaped. A small stipend was provided each teacher for participating in the three workshops. As mentioned, we fully documented and had teachers evaluate the professional development approach. With their help, we would decide on the best ways to introduce the framework to others as well, should it turn out to be useful.

After the series of workshops, core researchers were to follow up with teachers' application of what they had learned through classroom observations and interviews.

WORKSHOP ONE

At the first workshop, after brief introductions, the teachers were asked to complete a pre-test (Appendix A) that assessed their familiarity with the individualism-collectivism framework. The pre-test presented some of the same scenarios validated in the initial study by Greenfield, Raeff & Quiroz (6) and asked teachers to suggest solutions that would be acceptable to themselves, to a Euro-American parent, and to a Latino immigrant parent. Each scenario could be solved from either a collectivistic or an individualistic perspective.

After the teachers completed the scenarios, they filled out a questionnaire (Appendix B) about their cultural background, country of origin, primary language, teaching history, learning goals for the workshop, and any concerns they had about the project. Then, they discussed their scenario solutions with the whole group. The discussion was followed by a lecture/discussion on the previous research on individualism-collectivism. Dramatic bar graphs depicting the contrasting responses of teachers, children and parents from the two schools to the same scenarios the teachers had just completed (Figures 1 and 2) were shown (Raeff, Greenfield, & Quiroz, in press).

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At the conclusion of the first meeting, the teachers received blank journals for recording observations of situations or behaviors in their schools and classrooms related to individualism or collectivism throughout the professional development period. In addition, reading materials related to the theory and research on individualism and collectivism were distributed. The teachers' assignment was to read more about the individualism-collectivism framework and bring examples of how individualism and collectivism played out in the classroom to the subsequent workshop.

WORKSHOP TWO

At the second workshop, teachers explored applications of the framework of individualism and collectivism to their own lives. They met in small groups, paired with one or two of the core researchers, so that each would have many opportunities to describe their experiences and verify their relationship to the framework of individualism and collectivism. At the conclusion of the second workshop, teachers were asked to make at least one change in their classrooms they deemed appropriate on the basis of what they were learning. Whatever changes they made were to be recorded in their journals for discussion in the third workshop. Core researchers discussed more examples from the research and helped teachers use the framework to think critically about their own classroom-based examples.

WORKSHOP THREE

In the third workshop, teachers were asked to describe specific changes they had made in their classrooms. A great proportion of the morning was devoted to this discussion, which was rather open-ended but facilitated to some degree by questions from the core researchers. Teachers also completed post-tests with scenarios parallel to those in the pre-test and with equivalent instructions (Appendix C). At the conclusion of this workshop, teachers completed an exit questionnaire (Appendix D) designed to determine how the model had influenced changes in their cultural awareness and classroom practices and to evaluate the professional development process, itself. We asked them to respond to the following question on the exit survey: "Will you use your knowledge of individualism and collectivism in your classroom? If so, how?"

Over lunch, the group talked about its future as well as what individual teachers planned to do to incorporate the Bridging Cultures experience into professional development activities with which they were involved. Ideas for carrying the project forward together were discussed, and plans were made for future activities. Teachers made suggestions for conferences and other venues for presentations about the framework and project. They also requested that the process of meeting and sharing their observations and questions continue.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

As may be evident from the description above, the workshops were designed to include a combination of direct presentation (as with the theory and research) and opportunities for whole-group discussion, small group or pair activities, and individual
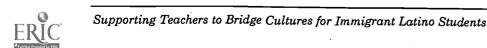
reflection. The presentation of the research and theory was complemented with visual material (charts, graphs) and supported with follow-up readings. Discussions were scaffolded with key questions but were allowed to move in directions teachers thought important. Small group and pair activities allowed intensive discussion and seemed to engage a couple of teachers who were less vocal in the group. Reflections took the form of short writing exercises focused on a single question. We built considerable informal "schmoozing" time into each workshop, starting with breakfast at 9:30 and ending with lunch, which began around 1:00. In short, we tried to provide many ways to participate, in order to accommodate more than one learning style and needs for both formal and informal participation. We wanted to make these Saturday meetings intellectually exciting, inviting, and nurturing for teachers.

Results of Phase I

The organization of the workshops did, indeed, seem effective: teachers conversed animatedly. The quieter teachers actively contributed as part of small groups or pairs. On the exit questionnaire administered at the end of the three workshops, teachers evaluated the various segments positively — even the reading assignments, which were deemed "a little dense", and "tough" but "very valuable." The graphs showing the differences in how parents versus teachers and students would solve classroom conflicts were evaluated by teachers as very important to their grasp of the impact of cultural differences. One unanticipated "problem" was that teachers did not actually leave on time. They tended to stay beyond 1:30 until 2:00 or 2:30 — or even later — rendering the usual post-workshop research meetings either delayed or larger than planned. The teachers were evidently hungry for the kind of professional interactions supported by these meetings.

In Workshop One, in discussing their responses to the scenarios, the teachers noted with surprise that theirs were consistent with those of the teachers who participated in the earlier research. But they were most affected by the graphs depicting the differences between teachers' responses and those of Latino parents and children. At this point, teachers discussed their new awareness that cultural value systems can play a large part in determining problem solving behavior. They remarked on their own previous lack of awareness. For example, one teacher said that being "tolerant" of other cultures was really inherently "showing superiority."

In Workshop Two, teachers had plenty to talk about in their small-group discussions. In one such discussion, a teacher noted a striking contrast between her class and the class next door. She had her first grade children working in groups, while the other first grade teacher had her students working as individuals. When both teachers were called out into the hall for a quick meeting to arrange rainy day recess, the difference between the classes was obvious. The children working together maintained a consistent pattern of work, with little regard to their teacher's absence. On the other hand, the children working individually became immediately disruptive and boisterous. "Was this an example of the natural collectivistic inclination of immigrant Latino children?" the teacher wondered.

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By Workshop Three, teachers were deep into the framework and its implications. They were consciously examining how it might relate to or shed light on other theoretical frameworks. The teacher who is most knowledgeable about critical pedagogy led a discussion about connections between her work and writing on empowerment and the implications of individualism and collectivism.

AWARENESS OF DIFFERING CULTURAL VALUES

The Bridging Cultures workshops resulted in a shift from teachers' generally individualistic orientation toward the pre-assessment scenarios to an orientation that reflected an understanding of both individualism and collectivism in the post-assessment scenarios. For example, two of the Euro-American teachers and one of the Latino/a teachers responded to the pretest scenarios with a consistently individualistic perspective. All three had changed their responses to reflect a more collectivistic perspective, indicating that they better understood ways to solve problems from the perspective of another set of cultural values. Another interesting finding was that three teachers moved from considering a single, individualistic perspective in the pre-test to including both an individualistic and collectivistic solution to scenarios in the post-test. Table 4 shows the numbers of responses (given by teachers) that were from a collectivistic or individualistic point of view, reflected both perspectives, or reflected neither perspective (Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, Quiroz & Greenfield, 1997).

The comparisons shown in Table 4 are between the teachers' reports of how they would solve two of the scenarios on the pre-assessment and two of the scenarios on the post-assessment (a school-related scenario and a home-related scenario, in both instances). These were chosen, because they generated the fullest responses by teachers. Responses were coded according to a system developed by Greenfield, Raeff, and Quiroz (1996). Asking teachers to take three different perspectives did not result in noticeably different responses, and so comparisons were made only for their responses made from the teacher's perspective in the scenario.

Table 4
Changes in Teachers' Orientation to Problem Solving Based upon
Individualism and Collectivism

Value Orientation	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
Individualistic (I)	12	3
Collectivistic (C)	1	8
Both I and C	0	3
Neither I nor C	1	0

In the exit survey, teachers responded to the question: "What has changed for you as a result of the Bridging Cultures Project?" The results, displayed in Table 5, reflect increased awareness, at both the personal and professional levels. In fact, early on, several members of the group (specifically the Latino/a teachers) had strong

personal reactions to what they were learning about the conflicts between individualism and collectivism. In Workshop Three, they talked about the degree to which they had forsaken their own early values orientation as they unconsciously strove to fit into American society and American schools in particular. One teacher said, "As an immigrant from Mexico, myself, I can see how I have had to fight my own collectivistic upbringing to be successful in U.S. schools. Those of use who jumped from one orientation to another made the leap without even knowing it! Now we need to tap our own cultural knowledge for the sake of our students." Other teachers echoed her comment in various ways.

Table 5
Cultural Awareness as a Result of the Bridging Cultures Workshops

"I am more conscious of my perceptions and immediate reactions to others."

"It has given me a greater understanding of why my kids tend to work together automatically."

"I am able to improve the classroom time through the use of the model."

"I am much more aware of how strong the collectivist model is ingrained in my Latino students and how strong the individualistic model is ingrained in our curriculum, teaching methods, and society."

"I feel less isolated and more heartened (less disheartened). Awareness of the model and the possibility of change is encouraging."

"I am more aware of my individualistic tendencies. I've made efforts to connect more with parents."

"I have a whole different perspective on culture and how it affects the decisions I made as a teacher. I see that my actions are culturally-bound also."

"What has changed the most is the need to want to inform others about the collectivistic model."

Some teachers spoke of personal struggles between loyalty to family and dedication to their own efforts to get through college and graduate, which required ignoring family needs at times. So, it was not only in terms of potential professional practice that teachers interpreted the framework. More than half of the teachers could reach back into personal experience to confirm its meaning. It is striking that even though many of the teachers had collectivistic roots (and were effectively bicultural), without an explicit framework for understanding the differences between collectivism and individualism they were unable to fully resolve certain conflicts — both personal and professional. One teacher said in discussion, "For me it's just being aware of the differences, of what we're doing. It gives a name to what we're doing. I don't think I would have known how to talk about this before."

Teachers' Anticipated Applications of the Framework

As mentioned, the exit survey included the question, "Will you use your knowledge of individualism and collectivism in your classroom? If so, how?" Teachers'

responses are listed in Table 6. Of course, teachers had already been using this knowledge in the classroom and reporting their innovations.

Table 6
Applying the Principles of Individualism and Collectivism to the Classroom

"I will use [knowledge of collectivism] in classroom management decisions and in my view and understanding of the parents' actions and views. Not to view parents as ignorant because they do not look at things my way."

"I will modify certain things such as: conferences, helpers, collaborative work, relationships between teachers, parents, aides and administrators. Examining individualistic classroom policies or reexamining them."

"Everyday I will be much more understanding and tolerant of my students' need to help each other and their families."

"I plan on reforming my class so that it can be more collectively friendly with the freedom of expressing individuality. My reading and math journal groups are going to be much more group."

"I want to use this knowledge in my classroom. I need further training in how. I do try to meet situations with openness and heart, but putting that desire into practice in the school setting is a challenge that needs support."

"I will think before I act of speak when dealing with conflict that may occur between students and also participate more from this perspective on a professional level at faculty meetings or just at lunch."

What was evident from the discussions of Workshop Three was that teachers were grappling with questions of what would constitute a more "collectivist-friendly" school environment. They were also still digesting the meaning of the framework itself. An example of this developmental process is seen in the following exchange between two teachers:

> *Kindergarten Teacher: "In my classroom, I started being really conscious of the helpers — not just allowing them to help, but encouraging it. It is a much different atmosphere... I can tell by the looks on their faces."*

> *Fourth-Grade Teacher: "One of the goals of the social studies curriculum is to learn how to get along — to develop social skills."*

> *Kindergarten Teacher: "Yes, but you can do that goal and do it individualistically. For example, during Math Their Way, I took a new approach. I did use other students — didn't just send the smart student to help. I did it more cooperatively. I said to my students, 'You can see that two heads are better than one.' Now I have kids who have finished their homework help others who didn't do theirs."*

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A fourth-grade teacher noted,

"We had a colonial presentation, introducing the concept of 'village.' In the village, you're allowed to help. I tied the concept into the present classroom issue.... Historically [in the United States], we were much more collectivistic."

He also talked about his increased understanding of the family focus of his students' cultures:

"...I think I'm a little more tolerant of who's in the conference — grandparents, siblings, etc. Also, this awareness has helped explain why Latino parents are there [in the school at breakfast time] for food, for the flag salute. Another teacher (commenting on the parents' behavior) said, 'That's why the students are immature...because parents stay until kids go into the classroom.' But I realize that it has to do with the importance of the family as a unit."

Sometimes teachers were clearly seeking a way to link the implications of this new framework to their beliefs and current practices. The teacher mentioned earlier, whose guiding philosophy is based on critical pedagogy said,

"The collectivist approach is more empowering for the group, even for individuals. Group work needs to be centered on something real. [This supports] stronger voices. I think of Freire working with groups of disempowered people, using people's real lives as curriculum. This leads to people's and students' challenging authority — critical pedagogy — shared power, and a democratic classroom. This is threatening to some teachers. But I want to empower students to be more vocal, more comfortable in the classroom."

This teacher was conceptualizing a bridge between the dominant culture and cultures that do not necessarily encourage children to speak out and find a public voice in the classroom by using what she perceived as a more collectivist approach.

The end of the formal workshops was a crucial juncture for the Bridging Cultures Project, since the researchers did not provide prescriptive methods or suggestions for explicit practices. Teachers had to, in effect, construct their own meaning and uses of the model for their classrooms. But, as can be seen from teachers' responses to the question we posed, they were already formulating what they would do or perhaps, more accurately, how they construed the "cultural situation" in their schools.

As mentioned earlier, we planned to follow the teachers' classroom innovations through observations and interviews and give support through school site visits. We also hoped to engage their assistance in "packaging" the professional development process for other teachers. There were no firm plans to continue meeting as a whole group. However, recognizing that they could benefit from continuing to work as a group, the teachers requested to continue meeting on a monthly or semi-monthly basis. One said, "Meeting

three times sets the fire, but nothing's been cooked yet. The risks are that people will go back and close the door on their classrooms. We should keep this core group alive."

TEACHERS DOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We should also mention that even at this point — less than a year since teachers and core researchers had begun to work together — teachers had already begun to take a strong role in the design of further professional development. The whole group collaborated on planning for a presentation at a conflict resolution conference in Texas, and two teachers co-presented with two core researchers at the conference in the summer of 1997.

THE BRIDGING CULTURES PROJECT: PHASE II

Purpose

Phase II of the project is focused on documenting the teachers' changes in thinking and practice; on continuing to support the teachers' growth as a professional development cadre; and on disseminating the project through presentations/professional development workshops and publications.

Teachers' Roles as Research Collaborators and Professional Developers

As of the conclusion of the third workshop, teachers began to shift in their roles as subjects to that of collaborating school-based researchers and professional developers. In these new roles, they have contributed to the Bridging Cultures Project in several ways. First, they have continued to test the validity and usefulness of the theoretical framework, as they attempt to apply it to daily life in their schools and classrooms. In the process, they have developed and documented numerous innovations that bridge cultures for their students. Second, teachers have actively participated in planning and carrying out dissemination of the project. They have co-designed and presented workshops and conference presentations, developed presentation materials and handouts, and contributed to project-related publications. Third, teachers have been pivotal to the process of deciding on the most productive routes of dissemination within the Los Angeles Unified School District, a particularly important "market" because of its size, numbers of new and inexperienced teachers, and large immigrant Latino student population.

Procedure

REGULAR MEETINGS

Bridging Cultures meetings are held approximately every two months. The group has met 10 times during a period of 22 months. We now meet in a private room in the back of a popular Los Angeles delicatessen. As before, we start with breakfast and go straight through the lunch hour. Some people order lunch, and some don't. There is always an agenda, and one of the core researchers facilitates the session. Teachers bring

examples of how the framework of individualism and collectivism has affected their practice (recording phrases in their journals to trigger memory). Sometimes reflection and discussion bring up dilemmas and creative solutions that teachers have not consciously identified as related to conflicts between individualism and collectivism — but that can be understood better via the framework. Any presentations participants have made at conferences, school sites, or elsewhere are debriefed; and any available evaluation data are reviewed.

Meetings have also served the purpose of rehearsal for new presentations, which usually involve at least one teacher and one core researcher. Other participants give feedback and make suggestions for improvement. Publications in progress are usually circulated before a meeting, and meeting time may be used to discuss points of disagreement or editorial decisions. Another function of meetings has been to teach more about ethnographic approaches to learning about people and cultures. For example, we have discussed ways of asking questions that are appropriate with immigrant Latino families.

Core researchers meet after each whole-group meeting to reflect and plan. Sub-groups have met occasionally to develop materials, draft publications, or prepare for presentations.

DOCUMENTATION OF TEACHERS' CHANGE

At the same time as the teachers have been documenting their own changes in practice (as well as thinking), the core researchers are documenting what they hear teachers saying and what they see them doing. The first meeting following the three workshops was videotaped. Now all meetings are recorded through the notes of the core researchers and shared with teachers later for comparison to what they recall having said. Core researchers have also followed up with observations in each teacher's classroom. There is not a single protocol for observation; instead, the observations are guided by each teacher's reported changes in perspective and practice. For example, a K-1-2 teacher has channeled a lot of energy into learning about parents' backgrounds, with a view to tailoring her volunteer program to meet the interests and skills of her students' parents. A feature of her classroom practice is the way she integrates volunteers into the daily functioning of the classroom. So, when core researchers visited her classroom, we focused to a large degree on how the volunteers worked and interacted with the children.

Researchers typically visit the classroom in pairs, take extensive notes, and compare notes later. After each observation, researchers interview the teacher, exploring questions that have arisen from the observation. These rather open-ended post-observation interviews, which take from one to two hours, usually lead to deeper understanding of how teachers conceptualize their instructional practice and new insights into their relationships with students and parents. The emphasis, of course, is on understanding how the framework of individualism-collectivism has influenced the teachers' thinking and practice.

Results

The examples discussed here are drawn from the notes of the researchers and confirmed (and sometimes edited) by the teachers. It is always interesting to the entire group to hear the teachers talking about changes in their thinking and practice. What one teacher reports inevitably stimulates the thinking of the rest of the group.

Classroom Organizational Policies. Teachers have recorded and discussed changes in traditional classroom policies. For example, one teacher now selects two or three "students of the week," rather than isolating only one student for special recognition. Sharing privileges with a friend seems to make the children feel much more comfortable with the special attention they are given (recall the potential discomfort with public praise or focus on the individual). This concept has generalized to the use of classroom monitors, and several additional teachers have now established policies for having two monitors at a time in their own classes, reflecting the collectivistic value of sharing. In another variation on this theme, a first-grade teacher began having "co-presidents" of the class instead of one president (a rotating leadership position). In general, teachers report that they are letting children help more in the classroom. This helping takes the form of more shared jobs and more shared learning activities. (See below. Additional examples are cited under "Examples from Researchers' Observations," beginning on p. 22.)

Instructional Strategies. In giving an example of how she applies the individualism-collectivism framework, a fourth-fifth-grade teacher described the experience of her class as they prepared to take a field trip to the Ballona Wetlands near Los Angeles. A docent came to her classroom and asked a series of factual questions about plants and animals, but the students responded with stories based on family experiences, rather than with "scientific discourse." The docent asked the children to "stop telling stories." The children fell silent. As a naturalist, he was making a familiar assumption about what counts as relevant scientific information. However, the Bridging Cultures teacher did not make this assumption, because she understood that children from collectivistic value systems relate objects and living things to their social meaning. This does not mean that the children could not learn to talk about plants and animals in "accepted scientific ways." They naturally put their knowledge of plants and animals into a (socially) meaningful context.

The teacher recognized that these stories would be the source of the implicit "scientific" information that her students, children of Latino immigrants, brought to school. When she followed up on the docent's presentation, she encouraged the children to write and tell their stories about flora and fauna. From the stories, she helped students extract the "scientific" information and frame it in "scientific" language. Table 7 shows a T-chart with examples from the children's stories on the left. On the right are statements in "scientific" language created in a process of questioning, elaboration, and modeling by the teacher. The children had much of the knowledge; what they needed to learn was how to frame it in a way demanded by the classroom. Of course, this entailed

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learning some new vocabulary and concepts, but because she elicited what children already knew, the teacher was able to target the instruction appropriately — and keep her class engaged.

Table 7

Student Experience	Scientific Information
Carolina's Story:	*Hummingbird:*
Playing in garden with grandmother, saw hummingbird near the cherry tree.	Brownish with bright iridescent green and red coloring around head and neck
Bird "stood in the air." Carolina tried to go close to pretty little bird, but it kept darting away.	Wings beat rapidly
	Bird can hover and fly in any direction
	Has to eat frequently because of using so much energy in its movements

This teacher's strategy is used in various ways by other teachers in the project. When she began to talk about how she uses children's personal stories to bridge to curriculum content, a second-grade teacher exclaimed, "That's my life [in the classroom]." She went on to explain how if the students are learning about the ecology of the desert, she starts with their own experiences in the desert (a realistic starting point for children in Southern California). She wouldn't think of beginning with a text or formal lesson and waiting to get to their stories as an afterthought.

Teachers report that they use more "partner" activities in their classrooms. One of the fourth-fifth grade teachers has found that she can get a reluctant student to participate in Writer's Workshop by putting him/her with a partner. She gets students to focus on family and personal experience and encourages them to think about their roles in their family, how holidays are spent, and other family-oriented topics. She says this approach nearly always gets them writing. This teacher also has students write in teams of three or four at times. In order to evaluate each student's input, she has them alternate the writing. She reports that Godzilla stories have been popular this year, along with anything having to do with family.

Other teachers have noticed the same topic phenomenon: students will write more when given a topic that connects with family experience than when assigned one that doesn't. The third-grade teacher observed that on a district-wide writing assessment students wrote little in response to the prompt, "What is it like to be a good friend?" In contrast, they tended to write lengthy responses to the prompt, "Write about a family vacation or an unforgettable experience you have had with your family."

This teacher had students at three levels of reading proficiency at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year (first-, second-, and third-grade levels). She has used classroom plays as a way to capitalize on her students' group orientation and boost their reading and oral language skills. Students chose to work together across reading levels to put on plays together. The teacher prepared scripts for all of the children. Then they

got cast in roles and learned their parts. When they were ready to perform for other classrooms, no one knew who was at first-grade or third-grade reading level. According to the teacher, "The experience empowered the second-grade group to move forward. They moved to third-grade level. Now students are sharing the third-grade books, because we don't have enough to go around. But they don't mind!"

Class books are a tool that these teachers use to reflect the group orientation of their students. Students each contribute a piece of writing, and then all of the pieces are bound (sometimes laminated) into a single class book to be shared. The third-grade teacher had her students write what might be called "if fantasy statements" (paralleling a book they had shared in class) and illustrate them. Some of the fanciful outcomes were, "If people could smell wind...." " If tables could have faces..." "If my heart were a butterfly...." "If apples could eat trees..." "If books could play dominoes...." "If a whale could run in the park...." "If grass could be eyebrows..." Taken together, these short fantasies were delightful to read, and the children had a whole book that they all took turns reading. "It was nice to have them reading each other's writing," says the teacher.

In California, where bilingual services to students who are still learning English have been reduced, these culturally-appropriate ways to involve students in language and literacy activities are all the more important. One teacher says, "The issue of how to engage students, now that we can't use their first language, is even more pressing. The writing prompts, the literature selections, the core books we select show families and cultural experiences familiar to the children. *Amelia Bedelia* just doesn't cut it!"

Home-School Relations. A Bridging Cultures teacher used his knowledge of individualism and collectivism to solve a mystery. For the second year, this teacher was planning a camping trip for the whole fifth grade. In his words:

> While the African-American and immigrant European parents quickly signed their children up, I found that I had to talk with some immigrant Latino parents individually to get them to respond. In the process of these telephone calls, I discovered that there were two major issues. First, parents were not comfortable with having their children away from them overnight — for the first time especially — without the ability to make contact with them (something that was prohibited). A few requested that we take a cell phone along, but most school staff feel that part of the value of the trip is for students to be in a natural setting without benefit of modern technology.
>
> Second, some parents said that they would have to discuss as a family whether the child could go and how to apportion his or her responsibilities to other members of the family while he or she was gone. Here was a real example of the collectivistic values of helping and safeguarding the needs of the group over those of the individual. In this case, the potential conflict was resolved through extended discussion with parents and allowing enough time for families to work through a decision-making process that made sense to them.

I have to mention that in retrospect, I understood that it was not that the non-Latino parents had no concerns for their children's safety. Rather, they seemed to be suppressing their own fears in order to promote an individualistic value: their children's independence.

One teacher said she was experimenting with group parent conferences. Subsequently, several teachers picked up this idea. The teacher wrote:

I scheduled three group conferences on the "Pupil Free Day," two Spanish-speaking groups and one English-speaking group. I arranged the Spanish language groups when my paraprofessional aide could attend and assist in translation.... The parents sat in a circle with me and the children (including many siblings of the children in the class). The children presented their parents (mostly mothers) with a folder that contained test scores, report card, a parent tips list, and a booklet designed to help parents interpret test scores. I explained a simple way of understanding how the children's test results showed which academic areas were strong and which needed improvement.... Parents seemed very pleased with the new approach to conferencing. A friendly, comfortable, and warm feeling came across during the conferencing. Many parents had questions that benefited the other parents. Parents' conferencing together lent a source of mutual support, like family members all supporting each other. This familial atmosphere aligns with a collectivistic model. I found the group conferencing to be relaxing for the parents. It was a less threatening environment than the individual conferencing style with support and company lent by the other parents. This format elicited a group voice from the parents rather than an individual voice. It also represented a shift in the balance of power.

Individual conferences were still conducted, if either the parents or teacher wished to communicate about specific questions or concerns. However, when these individual meetings took place, they tended to be more productive than they had been in the past from the teacher's perspective, because the necessary background information had already been provided in an atmosphere of shared power. In fact, only three such conferences had to be scheduled. The teacher is able to analyze why this conference format was so successful by referring to the individualism-collectivism framework.

Sometimes teachers' insights have led to simple solutions to serious problems. A kindergarten teacher describes how she came to realize that always taking the (in effect, superior) stance that she, alone, could figure out how to solve problems was devaluing of parents. She has found herself taking a new tone in communications with parents. At one point, she was having a serious attendance problem. Children would often be absent for a day or two because of illness in the family that prevented the parent from walking the child to school, and the children could not walk alone because of concerns for their safety in the neighborhood. She says, "It occurred to me that parents could somehow 'buddy up' and help each other get children to school when there was an emergency.... but I was hesitant to take a prescriptive approach or hand out

names and addresses to the whole group." So she started talking with parents in ones and twos and asking them if they could help solve the attendance problem. Now parents often walk each other's children to school. The teacher says, "When you say, 'We've got a problem. We need help,' versus 'You need to this' (whatever it is), they will absolutely help." Once she realized how strong the value of "helping" is in her students' home cultures, she has found more ways to accept help from parents.

Relationships with parents are, as is evident, a major theme in the teachers' accounts of change. A second-grade teacher has formalized a practice she intuitively knew was beneficial prior to involvement with Bridging Cultures. She cultivates every possible opportunity for informal conversation with parents during "bus time" or when parents are picking up and dropping off children. It may be that only a few words are exchanged, but over time she gradually speaks to all of her students' parents who come around the school. In addition, last year she and her team-teaching partner instituted a practice called "First Wednesdays." They held meetings on the first Wednesday of every month right after school and then again at 5:30 for the purpose of sharing with parents. They dealt with information ranging from routine announcements to review of upcoming curricular units. At first, only a few parents showed up; but over the course of several months, the teachers had seen most of the parents at at least one meeting. Says the teacher, "My Open House and parent-teacher conferences are attended by *all* of the parents. I think this has a great deal to do with the monthly meetings. While I've always wanted to hold these meetings, I don't think I'd have seen the full value in them had it not been for the Bridging Cultures Project."

A first-grade teacher has taken a new tack with parents. In the past, she tended to refuse invitations to social events — children's birthday parties or other family occasions. Now she finds herself accepting such invitations and reports a marked change in her relationships with families. Last year, she began a reading program with her students that required parental participation, and her increased understanding of the meaning of interacting with families (and not just focusing on students as individuals) allowed her to engage the parents in the program. "It was the Bridging Cultures focus that made me aware of where and how I was holding back and holding on to my views, even without wanting to," she says. "It was this awareness and willingness to open to another view that made last year my most successful school year academically and interpersonally (parent-involvement-wise)." This teacher's Spanish-language students scored way above average on overall reading (in Spanish) at the end of the year, much higher than the English-speaking children in the other first grades. She attributes this success to the home-school collaboration she forged.

EXAMPLES FROM RESEARCHERS' OBSERVATIONS

Classroom Community-Building. Many of the changes teachers have made have to do with what is often called "classroom management" or "interpersonal relations." But they might now more appropriately fall into a new category of "building community." Core researchers' observations often turned up examples of how teachers

were factoring in considerations for collectivistic values as they organized the workings of daily classroom life.

The third grade class of a Bridging Cultures teacher was observed on the playground. At the monkey bars, a girl was stalled, hanging and dangling from the center of the climbing apparatus. A boy called out to the teacher, "She's losing!" The teacher responded, "No, she went one more rung!" Quickly, a girl, standing in line for her turn, responded to the boy..."*she's learning.*"

In the debriefing interview, the teacher said that a new focus, as a result of the Bridging Cultures Project, was that the children now celebrate each other's accomplishments. In years past, they didn't do that, but the teacher reported she can create more "family" feeling in the class through such an emphasis. "I say, 'you know how you feel when someone accomplishes something in your family...we do that at school.' A child may still say he is very good at what he does, but the group refocuses on the collective contributions of the whole rather than his individual achievement."

In this same classroom, other evidence of collectivism was manifest. For example, children were observed ringing a bell as they completed a level of multiplication. Students, the teacher, and instructional aide stopped their work each time to clap. Choral reading was prominent, particularly among the reading group of those most limited in English proficiency. Students with higher levels of English proficiency were observed helping their classmates with vocabulary recall, often with the teacher's encouragement to whisper the word to their friend. In addition, the students all participated in reviewing the homework assignment, reading the entire assignment and deciding on the best answers as a group of eight without actually writing down their responses. The teacher says that this group support sets students up for better success with the actual homework.

During the debriefing, this Latina teacher shared: "*After 22 years of teaching, I'm doing so many new things. For example, as you saw, when each child passes his or her times-table test, he or she rings a bell so everyone claps for them. I'm more accepting of the children's needs to work in groups or with partners. I have them share to help each other. I also use choral reading a lot more of the time.*" This teacher explained that the use of homework review was important, because often the children did not have an English-speaking adult in the home to help. The homework return had grown significantly, to 100 percent, because the children were given the class time to practice the work orally before writing the answers at home.

Home-School Relations. Another Latina teacher, teaching a mixed-age lower elementary class with kindergarten, first-, and second-graders, used her understanding of cultural values to transform her parent volunteer program. Four volunteers participated on the day two core researchers visited. One father helped a small group of children for the first 30 minutes of the class, and a grandmother stayed the entire day to assist with her granddaughter's emotional needs. In addition, two mothers participated: one helped a single child with alphabet recognition while another mother worked with a group on the same task. When there were whole-group activities (like singing during

"rugtime"), they helped keep children appropriately involved; and they assisted in making transitions from one activity to another smooth. Later in the day, the more experienced of the two volunteers helped the less experienced volunteer assist children in a language arts activity.

According to this teacher:

At our Bridging Cultures meetings we discussed how valuable education in reality is to immigrant Latino parents and how they want to continue having a role in their children's lives, including while they are at school. Keeping this in mind, and seeing the need I had [for support in the classroom], I proceeded to meet with my parents and asked them at what times they could come and what days as well. However, it took a lot more than just asking parents to give me a schedule to get them involved. Both the parents and I had difficulty approaching each other for help. Most parents had little formal education and probably did not know how they could actually assist in the classroom: only a few had attended junior high or high school. I had to conduct my own informal ethnographic research about my families and began to build relationships with parents in the process.

To facilitate parent involvement, this teacher had prepared a comprehensive notebook for volunteers. Written in Spanish, the notebook included both general and specific ways to help, including an overview of parent volunteering and general suggestions for developmentally appropriate practice. Furthermore, the guide specified materials for each child in the class, with ideas on how best to develop budding skills.

DIFFERENT THEMES, DIFFERENT APPLICATIONS

As is clear from the examples of teacher change offered, the application of Bridging Cultures has taken different forms in different classrooms. Some teachers have focused more on interpersonal relationships with parents, others on modification of student structures for interaction in the classroom, and still others on specific instructional strategies. They are constructing applications to meet the perceived needs in their own classrooms and schools. Of course, now that teachers have shared with each other, nearly everyone is making changes on all of these fronts.

A REPEATED THEME

The fourth-fifth-grade teacher, who makes a lot of connections to his students' personal experiences through his social studies curriculum, often using cooperative learning groups for activities like writing about family traditions, notes that he is doing these kinds of cooperative activities with a new consciousness. He did them before, but he has a deeper understanding of why they work as well as they do — and it gives him reason to persevere with them, even when they are more demanding to manage than individual work. He said,

"What is different? In some ways, it's a matter of degree of commitment to certain ways of teaching. I have a stronger rationale for what I do, a new way of thinking about things. I do these things [like cooperative groups] more purposefully, and I am better at assessing what is working. I feel I analyze outcomes better as a result of these new ways of thinking about how the students relate and behave."

All of the teachers have talked in one way or another about this same change in themselves. They believe they have a more solid rationale for maintaining some of their practices that they intuitively thought were positive. Now they can understand why some practices work well and why they should be maintained; and they are finding ways to expand on them meaningfully. One teacher said, "I am less likely to stop doing something just because I'm tired of it. If I know it's really valuable, and I understand why, I'll find ways to keep it interesting."

TEACHERS AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS

Dissemination of the Bridging Cultures Project was a priority for the teacher-researchers as well as the core researchers. As the teachers continued to find more applications of the framework, they were eager (almost to the point of zealotry!) to help others understand how cultural value systems can influence approaches to learning. Five teachers have presented at a total of 12 state, regional, or national conferences, some as solo presenters. Four teachers have conducted professional development sessions in their own schools, sometimes with the whole staff and sometimes with sub-groups such as grade-alike committees. Audience comments from presentations have supported and extended the teachers' high level of enthusiasm for the capacity of the framework to inform educational decision-making. Two teachers, eager to disseminate but not with a large, unknown audience, have presented the framework and their experiences to their colleagues at their schools, in both informal and formal ways. The teacher who does not yet feel comfortable presenting has contributed to the design of workshops and materials and contributed as an active audience member at certain presentations.

Three of the Bridging Cultures teachers are also mentor teachers in their schools. This means that they have strong leadership roles and opportunities to bring new ideas into existing professional development and norms of practice. Two of these teachers teach in the District Intern Program of the Los Angeles Unified School District, one in Social Science and the other in Language Arts. They have found ways to integrate key Bridging Cultures concepts into this professional development with new teachers. One of these teachers is the instructor for an extension course on culture at UCLA and has brought Bridging Cultures content into that course as well, with excellent responses from students.

The teacher whose account of group parent conferences was presented earlier was asked by her principal to develop a workshop on the topic for the whole staff of her school. She recently piloted it with a small number of teachers from grades K, 2, 3, and 4. The K-1-2 teacher has designed her own parent conference workshop that draws upon Bridging Cultures principles and Bridging Cultures teachers' practices. The first-grade teacher, who describes herself as very shy about presenting, gave a workshop on how to

use Bridging Cultures perspectives to improve reading performance through the Reading Recovery program she and her colleagues are using.

The teacher who has been most influenced by critical pedagogy continues to explore the links between Bridging Cultures and that approach. In workshops using poetry to promote student empowerment, she has brought to bear Bridging Cultures concepts related to cultural differences in ways of expressing oneself and interacting with others. In short, the teachers have found nearly endless ways to incorporate what they have learned in the Bridging Cultures Project into other professional development activities with which they are involved.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to disseminating the Bridging Cultures Project at conferences and in schools, all the teachers have contributed to Bridging Cultures publications. In the development of *Bridging Cultures between Home and School: A Guide with Special Focus on Immigrant Latino Families* (Trumbull, Greenfield, Rothstein-Fisch, Quiroz, in press), the teachers gave examples of how they used the framework of individualism-collectivism to inform their work with parents. One of the teachers has collaborated with two core researchers to write an article on the group conference concept and her experiences with it. This has appeared in the UCLA publication, *Connections* in the Fall, 1998 issue and will appear in the April 1999 issue of *Educational Leadership*, along with another article on the project. Only one teacher had previously presented at conferences and been published. Thus, for the majority of teachers (N=6), both the writing and presenting at conferences were novel, evidence of their professional growth.

Discussion

The goal of the Bridging Cultures Project was to explore if and how the theoretical framework of individualism-collectivism could help elementary school teachers in their work. The current study found that teachers' awareness and understanding of cultural value systems, specifically those represented by the collectivistic views typical of immigrant Latino families and those of the more individualistic Euro-Americans, could be very useful. Teachers learned how to generate more harmony between the individual academic skills emphasis of school and the group-oriented socialization skills emphasis of students' families. The findings include both quantifiable changes resulting from short-term workshop training and qualitative change on an ongoing basis over the past two and a half years.

The finding that teachers have different ways of applying the framework is consistent with a constructivist view of teacher learning. Previous studies have shown that teachers construct knowledge based upon their frame of reference, prior knowledge, and sociocultural contexts (cf., Artiles & McCafferty, 1998; Powell, 1996; Sutton, Cafarelli, Schurdell, Bsichel 1996). As noted, teachers interpreted the theory and research behind Bridging Cultures and translated it into action in ways that they believed met the needs of their own students. One could identify different themes of emphasis in each classroom, though it was clear that each teacher used the framework in multiple ways. Undoubtedly, teachers' own personal experiences and personalities colored their responses as well.

THE ECONOMY AND GENERATIVITY OF THE FRAMEWORK

In an earlier paper, we mentioned that the framework of individualism-collectivism was both economical and generative; that is, it has a limited number of fairly powerful constructs that explain a lot of behavior (Trumbull, et al., in press). Economy is important. As suggested by the quotation at the beginning of this paper, teachers can be completely overwhelmed with the task of understanding the full gamut of socio-political histories of the world's cultures. And even if they do, they will still need to know about the values associated with their students' cultures. The framework incorporates and explains the relations among many important cultural elements previously regarded as separate: intra-group relations (particularly responsibility to the family), attitudes toward authority, roles and role relations (e.g., according to sex, age), norms of communication, the value and use of objects, and attitudes toward discipline.

The generativity of the framework allowed teachers to interpret and explain a wide-variety of behaviors and interactions in their own school settings. They were able to use the framework to construct new classroom procedures and activities, some of which clearly promoted academic achievement. For example, the teacher who allowed her students to write about their personal experiences related to plants and animals of the wetlands built upon both a social and academic base. She was never taught to do this. Rather, she generated this strategy through her own understanding of the underlying cultural conflict. Other examples from this paper, such as use of several monitors or increased choral reading, were strategies the teachers used as a direct result of their Bridging Cultures awareness and understanding.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION IN PRACTICE

Reflection in educational practice is embraced by many as a key element of good teaching (cf., Krol, 1997; Kruse, 1997; Schön, 1983, among others). Some teacher preparation programs even highlight this value using the name "Reflective Teacher Education Program" (see, e.g., Stern, 1997). Reflection has been an important component of the Bridging Cultures Project, both during the formal professional development period and continuing to the present. It is almost impossible to imagine teachers' *not* engaging in frequent reflection, given the complexity of the task they face. Yet, teachers' schedules rarely permit much extended reflection, particularly with colleagues. In contrast, the longitudinal and developmental nature of Bridging Cultures has allowed reflective practice to flourish, deepening teachers' understanding of themselves and others.

Reflection was critical to teachers' learning to appreciate and take the perspective of a system of cultural values other than their own, often with applications to their own personal lives. The most salient case of personal application was the Latino/a teachers' discussion of how they felt forced to acculturate during their own formal educational experiences, losing touch with their deeply rooted values in the process. While teachers were intuitively attracted to classroom practices that were culturally harmonious for their students (e.g., organizing students in cooperative groups, sharing family stories), they did not have full-fledged culture-based rationales for many of these practices. Once they began to use the cultural framework, they could

make conscious decisions about which practices to maintain and how to vary them to keep things interesting in the classroom.

Teachers' use of journals and stories shared during meetings showed that they were making more mindful decisions about pedagogy. Both the journals themselves and the discussions at meetings offered opportunities for reflection. Teachers' practice probably benefited from the opportunity to reflect with other teachers more than from any other single form of activity. The group worked as a support for classroom change. As a result of these group meetings, teachers would try out each other's innovations, such as group conferences, shared tasks in the classroom, and the like. Of course, we believe that the quality of reflection on pedagogy is enhanced by expanding one's knowledge base. In this case, teachers had the opportunity to learn about the individualism-collectivism framework over time in a supportive setting, where they could continue to plumb its meaning with the aid of both fellow practitioners and academic researchers.

In addition, modeling thoughtful risk-taking and problem solving, the teachers experimented with their own developing skills and reached new levels of professionalism as both authors and conference presenters. Reflection was a key part of this process, too. At Bridging Cultures meetings, teachers shared their nervousness and fears, as well as the personal satisfaction about their professional growth gained from work with one another and the researchers.

RELATIONS WITH PARENTS: A DOMINANT THEME

One of the more powerful outcomes of the teachers' involvement with Bridging Cultures was the reported change in relationships with parents. The theme of enhanced home-school relationships is threaded throughout the reports and reflections of teachers. Teachers gained a new kind of respect for the parents of their students, once they understood that parents' approaches to child-rearing and schooling were not based on ignorance but on a different system of values. The examples of the revised volunteer program, the new approach to the attendance problem, the new interpretation of the camping trip problem, and the outreach to parents to support reading skills (in conjunction with more social interactions with parents) all illustrate a different stance toward parents — one of shared understanding and shared power as well.

Concluding Thoughts

Perhaps the most exciting and gratifying outcome of the Bridging Cultures Project so far is the recognition that the change it is able to support seems to have a life of its own. It is clear that the teachers will never be the same, and it is hard to imagine that the innovations resulting from their participation in the project will cease. We, as an entire group, are convinced that professional development that gets to the level of underlying values that motivate people's ideas of child development and schooling is absolutely essential if teachers are to succeed teaching cross-culturally. By teachers' own accounts, the process of taking a good look at their own cultural orientations (something that may be most complicated for those who have started off in one culture and moved into another) has been a key to their ability to understand students and

their parents. For the teachers of Latino/a background, it is as though they have been retrieving parts of themselves and making their knowledge of those "old" parts more explicit in ways they could not have previously. Moreover, the framework has allowed this new understanding and introspection to manifest itself in daily practice, perhaps preventing other children from being injured by an insensitive acculturation process.

Finding common ground among parents, students, teachers, and the school is obviously necessary if children are to actualize their full potential in school and remain successfully connected to their home cultures and communities. The elementary school teacher is in a unique position to become a cross-cultural connector. Usually, as many of our teachers describe from their own experiences, it is the *children* who have to figure out where, when and how to bridge their home and school experiences. This is hardly fair to them. Once teachers understand a framework that invites application and ongoing inquiry, they can reduce the stress put on children who are pulled between cultures by introducing practices that bridge cultures.

In fact, that is exactly what the Bridging Cultures teachers did: they incorporated elements of collectivism in their classrooms in ways that seemed reasonable, given the demands of their own schools and curricula. In their relationships with parents, they recognized parents' needs to focus on social interaction and the social aspects of schooling; they blended this accommodation with the usual requirements to hold parent conferences and talk about report cards and academic achievement.

> *They instituted more shared activities while still emphasizing academic achievement. Despite their new-found enchantment with collectivistic strategies, they saw these as balancing, not supplanting the usual classroom forms.*

LIMITATIONS OF THE BRIDGING CULTURES APPROACH

It is unreasonable to think that one framework for understanding cultural differences can answer all needs for improving instruction across cultures. In fact, we would like to see Bridging Cultures professional development integrated into broader professional development programs that address multicultural curriculum, student identity, societal racism, social justice, and language issues, among other areas.

The framework of individualism and collectivism has, to this point, focused on immigrant Latino populations. One might well ask, "In what ways can the framework inform teachers who work with African-American or Asian-American students?" After all, children from these and other groups sit side-by-side for the first time in elementary schools, and teachers need to understand how to make classrooms hospitable for them as well. Additional study is needed to see how the framework might be useful to teachers in schools with less Latino homogeneity. Initial research suggests the framework has a lot of explanatory power with regard to certain aspects of other cultures, such as Asian cultures and indigenous American cultures (Greenfield and Cocking, 1994). Asian cultures are highly collectivistic, overall. African-American tend to be more individualistic. (Greenfield)

Of course, the success of a project like Bridging Cultures depends on educators who are open to meeting students halfway, and we are fortunate to have found a group of teachers who more than meet that criterion. We recognize that they are an exceptional group in terms of their motivation, their dedication, and their abilities. Not all teachers will meet their standards. In addition, it is not enough to reach individual teachers. The entire school community, including teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals[2], and — ideally — parents need to be engaged. Only then can even the most powerful set of ideas lead to changes throughout school systems.

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2 The Bridging Cultures teachers recognize the important role paraprofessionals (teaching aides) in their schools play in translating across cultures. The "paras," as they are often called, come from the children's cultures and speak the home languages of the families (mostly Spanish, in this case). While their role as linguistic translators is always recognized, their role as cultural translators may not be. Recently, one teacher took the time to explain the Bridging Cultures Project to two of the paras in his school. They were very interested and told him that they could often see how confused parents were with the rules of the school. "We explain the culture of the school to them," one of them said. Here is one reason that paraprofessionals should not only be included in professional development opportunities but also recognized for their invaluable cultural knowledge.

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Scenario # 1

Rita is the first one home in the afternoon. When her mother gets home at 7, she finds that Rita has not started cooking dinner yet. When she asks Rita why she didn't get dinner started, Rita says she wasn't hungry.

What do you think her mother should do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The mother should say, "Oh, I understand." And then she should get dinner started.

2. The mother should tell Rita that the rest of the family is tired and hungry when they get home, and Rita had all afternoon to get dinner started, and would she please help her now.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

Scenario #2

Rebecca tells her mother that she got the highest grade in the class on her math test. She says she is really proud of herself for doing so well, and for doing the best in the class.

What do you think her mother should say?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The mother agrees with Rebecca, and tells her she is the best and that she is proud of her.

2. The mother tells Rebecca not to get too conceited, and doesn't she think that some of the other kids in the class feel bad.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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Scenario #3

One of the fifth grade classes has been learning about different kinds of art and artists before they go on a field trip to an art museum. The class is looking at some copies of famous paintings. The teacher tells the class that each student has to say, individually, which painting they think is worth the most. Maria doesn't understand what to do, and while the other students are making their decisions, Cathy tries to explain it to her. The teacher notices that they are talking.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The teacher should tell Maria and Cathy to be quiet.

2. The teacher should ask Maria and Cathy why they are talking, and once she finds out that Cathy is helping Maria, she should let her continue with the explanation.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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Scenario #4

Theresa tells the teacher that she will probably be absent tomorrow because her mother is sick, and she has to stay home to help take care of her brother.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The teacher should tell Theresa that she understands, but that school is her most important responsibility, and her mother should find someone else to help out.

2. The teacher tells Theresa that it is very kind of her to help her mother, and that she will give Theresa the work for the next day so that she won't fall behind.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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APPENDIX B
BRIDGING CULTURES PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ Birth Date _____

Where was your mother born?

Where was your father born?

Where were you born?

How long have you lived in the United States?

What languages do you speak?

What is your primary language?

What is your ethnicity?

What is the school and district where you teach?

How long have you taught?

What grades have you taught?

What is the student population like in your school?

What grade are you teaching now?

How many students do you have in your classroom?

What is the ethnic composition of your students?

For any of the levels of education below that apply to you, write in the city and country where you went to school at each level.

Elementary	College
Secondary	Graduate studies
Post-secondary	Other (explain)

What are you hoping to gain from this project?

What questions or concerns do you have?

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APPENDIX C
BRIDGING CULTURES POST-ASSESSMENT

Scenario # 5

A class of fifth grade students is working on posters in their art class. Next week some teachers will come to select five posters for an art show. Then, one poster will be chosen for a $50 prize. Erica and Victoria realize that they have some similar ideas for a really neat poster, and they want to work together.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The teacher should let Erica and Victoria work together, and explain to them that the $50 will be for both of them.

2. The teacher should explain to Erica and Victoria that they have to work alone because there is only one prize.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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Scenario #6

Jessica and Gloria each got $20 from their mother. Gloria buys a T-shirt. A week later Jessica wants to wear Gloria's T-shirt, and Gloria says, "This is my T-shirt, and I bought it with my own money." Jessica says, "But you're not using this now."

What do you think the mother should do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The mother should tell Gloria to let Jessica borrow the T-shirt because she isn't wearing it.

2. The mother should tell Jessica that it's Gloria's T-shirt, and she can't make Gloria let her wear it.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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Scenario #7

It is the end of the school day, and the class is cleaning up. Denise isn't feeling well, and she asks Jasmine to help her with her job for the day which is cleaning the blackboard. Jasmine isn't sure that she will have time to do both jobs.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The teacher should tell Jasmine to help Denise with the job.

2. The teacher should tell the girls that Denise is responsible for her clean-up job.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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Scenario #8

When Anna's and Christina's mother gets home, she finds that the house has been cleaned, and dinner is almost ready. She thanks them both for being so helpful. Anna says, "Why are you thanking her? I'm the one who did most of the work."

What should the mother do?

Teachers might have different ideas about how to handle this situation. For example:

1. The mother should tell Anna that she is thankful she did more, but she shouldn't try to get more credit at Christina's expense.

2. The mother should apologize for not giving Anna enough credit and she should thank Anna again, because if she is the one who did most of the work, she should get the recognition.

Which solution do you think is better? Why?

What don't you like about the other one?

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APPENDIX D
TEACHER EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Bridging Cultures: Exit Survey

Name_____

We have already learned much from you. To continue our understanding, please provide us with answers to the following questions. Additional space has been provided for specific, critical and honest responses.

Overall, your experience in the Bridging Cultures Project as been: (circle one)

great   worthwhile   somewhat useful   OK   not useful

Regarding the recruitment — very much   somewhat   not at all

	very much		somewhat		not at all
Was the initial contact for participation clear?	5	4	3	2	1
Was the initial contact enticing?	5	4	3	2	1

What made you decide to participate?

What might have improved recruitment?

Content and Method of the Workshops

How useful was: — very useful   somewhat   not useful

	very useful		somewhat		not useful
Initial overview of the model by Patricia Greenfield:	5	4	3	2	1
Examples of the model by Blanca Quiroz	5	4	3	2	1
The journal experience	5	4	3	2	1
The readings:					
Greenfield and Cocking book	5	4	3	2	1
Amada Perez's article	5	4	3	2	1
Roster of participants	5	4	3	2	1

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Name_____

How useful was:	very useful		somewhat		not useful
Stipend provided for participation	5	4	3	2	1
Food: breakfast and lunch	5	4	3	2	1
Reflective practice in Workshop II					
Individual writing	5	4	3	2	1
Sharing in small groups	5	4	3	2	1
Opportunities to share and discuss:					
personal experiences	5	4	3	2	1
share examples of the model	5	4	3	2	1
application of the model in your school	5	4	3	2	1
school-related issues beyond the model	5	4	3	2	1
Socializing during meals and breaks	5	4	3	2	1
Meeting additional members					
Susan Marks[3] from Search for Common Ground	5	4	3	2	1
Ambrosio Melendrez[4] from WestEd	5	4	3	2	1
Scenarios in Workshop I	5	4	3	2	1
Scenarios in Workshop III	5	4	3	2	1
Planning future steps after Workshop III	5	4	3	2	1

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[3] Susan Marks, originally from South Africa, attended our first meeting. Search for Common Ground promotes international conflict resolution.
[4] Ambrosio Melendrez is the Director of the Language and Cultural Diversity Program at WestEd, a federally-funded regional education laboratory.

Did you have any feelings about the videotaping? If so, what were they?

What worked well for you in the workshops? What suggestions do you have for improving the workshops?

What has changed for you as a result of the Bridging Cultures Workshops?

Will you use your knowledge of individualism and collectivism in your classroom? If so, how?

What role would you like to have in the future plans?
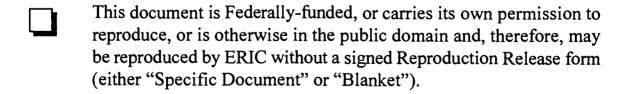
Overall, the experience has been....

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