A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF U.S. HISPANIC/LATINO MALE STUDENTS INTENDING TO TRANSFER

AND THEIR ACADEMIC COPING STRATEGIES

by

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ABSTRACT

The intent of this qualitative research study was to explore the academic coping strategies of male Hispanic/Latino community college students intending to transfer to the senior institution. Hispanic/Latino males have been enrolling and succeeding in community colleges at decreasing rates since the 1990s. A research review comprised higher education transfer and retention research, Hispanic college student retention and success, academic coping and stress, and historical and current constructions of masculinity. Utilizing an NW U.S. community college as the site, eight students were interviewed in a two-interview sequence. The study utilized the interpretivist paradigm of inquiry and semi-structured interviews. The interview data were analyzed utilizing this paradigm and a constant comparative method to identify secondary and secondary codes or themes. The Atlas.ti program was also utilized to confirm emergent themes. As this is an exploratory study, it was identified that the construction of masculinity might significantly influence male Hispanic/Latino student success. Although one's race may play a role in influencing student success, national identity is much more important. Implications for practice include greater development of resources supporting men in knowing how to express themselves and – tell the truth, the development of personas to aid in identifying the right type of support, and the importance of developing relational aspects of a course to ensure male Hispanic students feel heard, seen and understood.

KEY WORDS: Hispanic, male, coping, masculinity

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Over 42% of the students entering U.S. higher education start in a community college, and of that number, approximately 55% initially intend to transfer (Jacobs et al., 2004; Ma & Baum, 2016). Of that 55% intending to transfer, only 25% do so; an even lesser number transfer to the top 50 or select U.S. higher education institutions. Statistics from 1990, 1995, and 2010 indicate that the percentage of females and males who transferred were equal (Shapiro et al., 2018). Although, as predicted, men have dipped below women transferring at a rate of 37% compared to women at 40% (Shapiro et al., 2018). In addition, in 2003, men received 43% of the bachelor's degrees, less than half of the bachelor's degrees awarded at 65% (Hacker, 2003). As the U.S. approached 2020, men again received approximately 43% of the bachelor's degrees, while only 39% for associate degrees (IPEDS, 2018). Education statistics also predict that by 2027, men's share of bachelor's degrees will drop to 42%, and men's share of associate degrees will drop to 36% (Perry, 2018).

Among students of color, in the fall of 2014, while 16% of all undergraduate students were Hispanic/Latino, 22% of U.S. undergraduate students in community colleges were Hispanic/Latino (Ma & Baum, 2016). Although the proportion of Hispanic/Latinos who earn a bachelor's degree increased from 46 to 54% by 2014, Hispanic/Latino students lagged behind their White counterparts by 10% (Field, 2018). Thus, it appears that male participation and

completion rates are in balance with females; it is more likely that they are having a more difficult time completing their education than women. The most salient issue for this research proposal is that Hispanic/Latino men appear to be entering community colleges in sufficient numbers. Still, compared to females of any background and other males, they tend to have greater difficulty completing their course of study, earning sufficient credits, and ultimately transferring to the senior institution. The central problem for this study is the lack of U.S. Hispanic/Latino male students' persistence to transfer to the senior institution.

In this first chapter, I will provide a basis for the study, including the current context of the problem, the problem statement and introductory background to the problem, the research questions and purpose statement, an overview of the design method, and a definition of important terms.

CURRENT CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite increases in college enrollment, Hispanic/Latinos — especially men — lag behind other groups in earning a bachelor's degree. In 2015, 15.5% of Hispanic/Latinos over 25 held a bachelor's degree, compared with 22.5% of African Americans and 36% of Whites, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Additionally, men are behind women in Hispanic/Latino populations, earning 39% of all bachelor's degrees. This pronounced difference in male versus female attainment occurs universally at all levels of US higher education. However, it is most pronounced in community colleges and transfer student populations. Although older populations of Hispanic/Latinos — in the range of 40 to 55 and 60 years and older — have similar degree attainment rates, for contemporary students — in the range of 18 to 24 or 25 to 39 years — there continues to be a growing gap of degree attainment even between

2

Hispanic/Latino men and Hispanic/Latino women. And men are on the losing end of that comparison (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

Currently at U.S. two-year colleges, fewer men are not only persisting to their educational goals but are also less successful at transferring to a 4-year university than women. And unfortunately, many students get lost along the way — dropping or stopping out. According to one long-term U.S. Education Department study, 37% of traditional-age students who started at a community college transferred to a four-year university. Of those who transferred, 60% earned a bachelor's degree. Thus, there are growing efforts to understand the issues related to lower persistence rates for males of all backgrounds in the U.S. higher education system and for specific populations, whether they are a majority or minority.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND INTRODUCTION TO THE BACKGROUND

The central problem for this study is the lack of U.S. Hispanic/Latino male students' persistence to transfer to the senior institution. To explore this problem, several areas of knowledge must be addressed. Since the late 1990s, there has been a conjectured phenomenon concerning how well male undergraduates perform in higher education and if they are experiencing difficulty in completing a degree (Kellom, 2003). Several arguments have arisen in the last ten years to either support or reject the supposed difficulty. The arguments can be summarized into four areas: (a) males do not enroll to the same extent as females in a relationship to social capital (Klevan, Weinberg, & Middleton, 2015); (b) learning styles and strategies of college males are different than what is often provided for by a college that favor a women's style of learning (Gurian, 2011; Keri, 2002); (c) as purported by feminist and women's groups, the current higher education system is only now become more equitable and women

3

are present in greater numbers because this mirrors population statistics of more females (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2001); (d) and lastly, males are simply having greater difficulty completing their degrees than women (Rausch & Hamilton, 2006). However, within this paper I investigate the lack and difficulty of persistence associated with male Hispanic/Latino transfer student success and persistence. This lack and difficulty of persistence will be viewed through the context of coping strategies within the academic environment.

LACK OF MALE PERSISTENCE

Not only do national statistics forecast a continued decline in the percentage of males on college campuses, but the drops are seen in all races, income groups, and fields of study. However, the drops are most pronounced in Hispanic/Latino populations, especially those of low socioeconomic status (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). This dwindling of men on college campuses has been talked about since the mid-1990s, when policy analysts first raised the alarm in 1995 (Marklein, 2002). Mortensen (2014) reported that men, as a group, show up on college campuses to a lesser degree, go to class less often, and graduate in a longer time frame and with less frequency than women.

This gender gap first became glaringly apparent in the early 2000s but is still growing at campuses across the U.S. where men made up the majority of college students in the U.S. until 1979. As women have begun to make up the equity gap, it was expected that they might reach parity in college, which began to happen in the early 1980s. However, it was a surprise that men's enrollment in higher education has continued to decline since 1992. Males now make up just 44% of undergraduate students nationwide. Federal projections show men's share of bachelor's degrees dropped to 42% in 2010, and it is projected to drop further by 2% in 2020

4

and again by 1% in 2027 (NCES, 2019; NCES, 2000) — even though overall population statistics currently indicate there are more men than women in the United States.

There are 17 million men versus 16 million women between the ages of 18-24 in the USA, according to a Census Bureau estimate in 2018. But nationally, the male/female ratio on campus today is 43% men to 57% women, a reversal from the late 1960s and well beyond the nearly even splits of the mid-1970s. These trends have developed in plain view — not ignored exactly, but typically accompanied by some version of the question: "Isn't this a sign of women's progress?" (Mortensen, 2008; NCES, 2019). However, this issue is not so much an issue of women's progress as it is an issue of men having greater difficulty, struggling academically, finishing school later, starting school later, and several other factors that contribute to the overall male decline in higher education (Bass & McCann, 2016; Garcia & Weiss, 2017; Halpern et al., 2007; Marcus, 2017; and Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Furthermore, this issue is most pronounced among particular populations. Hispanic/ Latinos make up 22.7% of the higher education population, with Hispanic/Latino males making up 8%. Of that 8% of the total higher education population, 68% of Hispanic/Latino men attend a community college first (Bauman, 2017; Manning & Frye, 2008). Therefore, studying the Hispanic/Latino male "intent-to-transfer" student population is especially poignant as the total population of Hispanic/Latinos continues to increase. There are large numbers of Hispanic/ Latino males attempting to transition or make it through community college programs in order to transfer and graduate with a bachelor's degree. Part of this difficulty may be associated, in part, with difficulties associated with being a man, or with the ways that men construct and enact masculinity.

MASCULINITY

This study used a social and cultural construction of masculinity, gender, and appropriate gender-role behaviors. This perspective is consistent with the multiple theoretical paradigms of critical, cultural, post-positivists, and interpretivists that have consistently found gender to be socially constructed (Jandt & Hundley, 2007). It is, thus, believed that masculine behavior is learned behavior (Hare-Mustin, & Marecek, 1988). Masculine behavior is also taught to boys and men through language interaction, play, encouraged occupations, and appropriately supported behaviors (Jandt & Hundley, 2007).

Further, research also argues that hegemonic masculinity is strongly reinforced through socio-cultural means. And although the use of hegemony in this sense is connected to cultural construction, the dominant and suppressive nature of this influence mitigates the understanding that gender is constructed. Specifically, multiple studies demonstrate that boys are strongly supported and encouraged to perform aggressive acts during play, use appropriate non-feminine language, and avoid help-seeking communication and physical support. Some research specifically highlights the rewards associated with appropriate male behavior (primarily through one's father) and that young men and boys are often pressured to behave in gender-appropriate ways (Caldera et al., 1989; Fagot & Leinback, 1987; and Levy et al., 1995).

The lens and use of masculinity are foundational to this study as it is strongly believed that male behavior in an academic context is also affected by these socio-cultural influences. Although there are multiple perspectives about how masculinity is constructed, when combined with the issue of coping and stress, masculinity may dramatically affect student interactions with others as well as their ability to perform academically. To define the focus of

6

this dissertation more narrowly, the lack and difficulties associated with educational

persistence will be viewed through the context of coping in the academic environment.

COPING BEHAVIOR IN THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

This study also applies the complexities and contexts related to coping and stress.

Coping involves people's behavioral and psychological strategies to reduce or minimize stressful

events. Two general coping strategies are often used: (1) problem-solving strategies involve

doing something active to alleviate stressful circumstances (Sabourin et al., 2004), whereas (2)

emotion-focused coping strategies involve regulating the emotional consequences of stressful

or potentially stressful events (Carver et al., 1989). According to Folkman and Lazarus (1980),

research indicates that people use both strategies to combat most stressful events. The

predominance of one type of strategy over another is determined, in part, by personal style

(e.g., some people cope more actively than others) and the type of stressful event. For

example, people typically employ problem-focused coping to deal with potentially controllable

work-related and family-related problems. In contrast, stressors perceived as less controllable,

such as certain physical health problems, prompt more emotion-focused coping.

An additional distinction often made in the coping literature is between active and

avoidant coping strategies. Active coping strategies are either behavioral or psychological

responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it. In

contrast, avoidant coping strategies lead people into activities (such as alcohol use) or mental

states (such as withdrawal) that keep them from directly addressing stressful events (Weiten et

al., 2006). Several research studies investigate the impact of coping within the academic

context. In some studies, there is a review of overall academic impacts on success (Palmer et

al., 2009). There is more specificity to navigating and negotiating in academic spaces (Black &

Bimper, 2017). However, both of the above are focused specifically on African American

students. In a broad-based study of U.S.-based university students, the issue of academic

procrastination and subsequent grades is explored (Gareau et al., 2018).

Two additional studies focus more specifically on the Hispanic/Latino student

concerning academic strategies, success, or management of the learning environment.

Researchers looked at stress and academic success for overall Latina/o first-generation college

students (O'Neal et al., 2016). Lastly, a review of psychological coping and well-being of male

Latino undergraduates was also explored (Gloria et al., 2009).

Generally speaking, active coping strategies, whether behavioral or emotional, are

thought to be better ways to deal with stressful events, and avoidant coping strategies appear

to be a psychological risk factor or marker for adverse responses to stressful life events

(Holahan et al., 1995). Therefore, the focus is more specifically on the type of coping strategies

used with an emphasis on avoidant strategies.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH GAP

Although there are research studies on transfer populations, the literature is absent

concerning the use of Hispanic/Latino male transfer coping strategies at two-year institutions.

Consequently, the identified research problem in this project focuses on the absence of

available research and data regarding Hispanic/Latino male transfer student coping strategies

just before transfer to the senior institution. To provide an appropriate review, the following

research/knowledge domains will be explored: (a) masculinity and male student higher

education success/persistence, (b) transfer student behavior, (c) Hispanic/Latino higher

education student success/persistence, and (d) retention and coping of U.S. higher education student. These are briefly covered next.

First, there are greater numbers of male undergraduates not seeking higher education opportunities and also not succeeding at those same opportunities compared to women. For male student higher education success/persistence, I will cover the areas of (a) issues of the social construction of masculinity, (b) overall change in U.S. higher education population, (c) apparent shift or change in graduation rates of U.S. male higher education students, and (d) lack of appropriate strategies to achieve persistence in higher education.

Second, transfer students comprise a potential population of students who have been sold (the idea that success, jobs, and their future depends on obtaining a bachelor's degree (Brint & Karabel, 1989). However, even though up to 45% of students indicate an intention to transfer from a community college, only 15 to 20% of students do so (depending upon the state) (NCES, 2017). Transfer student behavior will be summarized into three main areas: (a) the general background on community college and the transfer function, (b) the issues of preparation and transition of students in the transfer process, and (c) the issues of transfer shock to the student.

Third, Hispanics/Latino students comprise an increasing sector of the U.S. higher education population. By 2050, Hispanics will comprise the largest majority-minority population in the U.S., with from 33% to 55% of the total population, depending on the state (U.S. Census, 2018). An accompanying increase of undergraduates will also be in the higher education pipeline. Hispanics/Latinos are projected to be the majority of undergraduates in some states (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Although we are aware that the population is increasing, most persons are not aware that college attainment by Hispanics/Latinos lags behind most other ethnic groups. And while most Hispanics/Latino students aged 16 to 25 agree that getting a college education is important — only 48% state that they plan on getting that degree, and an even further limited number complete the degree (Lopez, 2009). In addition, little is known about the contextual factors that play a role in the coping and retention of Hispanic/Latino male undergraduates. As Hispanic/Latino students gain greater access to and participation in higher education, questions about their success will be paramount.

Fourth, while there are many different models and perspectives concerning the retention of undergraduates, many new perspectives address the academic environment as the key to students' successful persistence. While not negating the other factors that influence the entirety of one's educational experience (including institutional factors, background, and out-of-class experiences, to name a few), I will focus on the stress and coping in the academic environment. And while previous research regarding retention of students has been studied thoroughly over the last 40 years, the issues of retention and coping for this population of Hispanic/Latino males with intent to transfer students provide a unique area for study. For the areas of retention and coping of U.S. higher education students, I will include (a) a review of retention and the rites of passage for higher education students, (b) psychological and sociological perspectives on retention, and (c) general coping behavioral strategies in the academic environment.

Early retention studies depended on mostly sociological models (Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1975; Pascarella, 1980). Some retention work from the 1990s attempted to add a psychological

component to retention work (Bean & Bogden-Eaton, 1995). Recently psychology, as applied to retention, was advocated in a seminal review of all retention research (Braxton, 2003). The idea of coping strategies has been used with a psychological model of student retention by Bean and Bogden-Eaton (2000). In a 2006 study, Tatum et al. discovered how students need and access faculty in the transfer process. The influence that part-time faculty have on students in the course of study and through the transfer process was reviewed by Eagan and Jaeger (2008). Lastly, faculty involvement in the transfer of Hispanic/Latino students was reviewed in a study that qualitatively assessed the impact of mentors in supporting the transfer student (Tovar, 2015).

Upon reviewing the general body of retention work for undergraduate students, the authors Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011) attempt to sum up the retention work from the prior 50 years — 1960 through 2010. Although there have many published studies, these authors still credit Vincent Tinto's theory of retention as seminal and important to the field of research. However, they conjecture that more positivistic-focused focuses on strengths and a general turn toward studies aligned with positive aspects of success should be conducted.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Given the absence of available research in the previously listed knowledge domains, this study's purpose was to understand the experience of coping in an academic environment exhibited by Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students intending to transfer using a qualitative design. I sought to understand these students' "lived experience" and how they make sense of the academic environment. I planned to conduct up to twelve individual interviews and qualitatively analyze these data (Charmaz, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ortiz,

2003, as cited in Stage & Manning, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). This approach and the

accompanying data analysis provides an in-depth picture of this population of male

Hispanic/Latino transfer students. This study presupposed that male Hispanic/Latino students'

understanding of their personal experience (and difficulties) may provide insight illustrative of

similar males with an intent to transfer.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I have one central research question that guides this study. The overall research

question posits: How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students — intending to transfer

— experience and manage the academic environment? There are three sub-questions as well:

1. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students intending to transfer experience stress?

2. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students intending to transfer use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)?

3. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male undergraduates intending to transfer student experience?

DEFINITIONS

The following glossary is provided to minimize confusion with some of terminology used

throughout this dissertation.

Adjustment is arriving at a balanced state between the individual's needs and

satisfaction. **Educational adjustment** means how individuals impart their duties towards their

education and whether they can get their goals or not (Bhagat, 2017).

Coping — The term coping is defined here as a person's ability to engage in a stressful

situation. There are a variety of coping strategies that people use – some are intentional, and

some are unintentional. For this study, I will focus on active and avoidant coping (Lazarus &

Folkman, 1984).

Hispanic/Latino — The terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* tend to be used interchangeably in

the United States for people with origins in Spanish-speaking countries. The term *Hispanic* has

become more pronounced in recent iterations through the U.S. census and modified upon each

successive census. The most current full 2010 census uses the category Spanish / Hispanic /

Latino. Still more recently, other research centers advocate for a definition that includes a

broader definition covering anyone who says they are Hispanic is counted as Hispanic (Lopez &

Krogstad, 2019). Additionally, the U.S. Office of Budget and Management defines *Hispanic* or

Latino as "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other

Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race" (NCES, 2019). For this research, I will define the

Hispanic/Latino student as those who self-define as a person of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

background non-specific to country of origin (US Census, 2010, 2018).

Liminality — The term is used in the literature when describing psychological processes

or passages, especially related to rites of passage. Liminality is defined as a state of being in-

between passages. This state is often of nothingness or ambiguity (Van Gennep, 1960).

Persistence — The term persistence tends to refer to student behavior upon re-

enrolling in a higher education institution. For this study, I will define *persistence* as student re-

enrollment into successive terms while at a two-year college (Tinto, 1975, 1993; Voight &

Hundrieser, 2008).

Retention — The term *retention* refers to the capacity of a higher education institution

to keep or retain a student from one term (or year) to another. Retention research and

statistics are often cited as one the more important indicators of institutional success.

Retention statistics related to first-year students are the most often cited higher education

statistics. Additionally, the term *persistence* may often be used interchangeably with *retention*.

For this study, I will be using the statistic of successful retention in successive terms of

enrollment while at the community college (Astin, 1993, 1997; Bean, 1983; Tinto, 1975, 1993;

U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Success — Success is often measured in retention research in multiple ways: (1) re-

enrollment, (2) increasing GPA, (3) and course-based success (Cuseo, 1998). I will define *success*

as student-perceived success in the transfer environment (Kuh et al., 2006).

Stress — Stress is the impact of situational issues — both external and internal — that

cause heightened sensitivity on the part of a person. This heightened sensitivity usually results,

in particular, in a conflict between the person and the environment wherein the person is seen

as taxing or exceeding resources and endangering one's well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Transfer Function — The term *transfer function* refers to a primary stated (and

sometimes unstated) purpose of community and junior colleges in the U.S. Originally,

community/junior colleges were established to separate the first two years of college, or lower

division from upper-division coursework. However, as many students enter a community

college with the intent to transfer to a university to complete the upper-division coursework,

the transfer function (and purpose) very often defines a portion of a community college — and

is often stated as one its core missions (Kane & Rouse, 1999).

Transfer Student — A transfer student is defined as one who has 12 or more

transferable hours from a regionally accredited institution. For this study, I will look only at

students who intend to transfer from a community college to a senior institution (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, 2008, 2018) and have 80% of their associate degree completed.

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The delimitations for this study are set to Hispanic/Latino male students transferring to a university and a single institution. Additionally, the focus is on coping in the academic environment and, thus, does not necessarily include issues related to the social interaction and social enhancements of the higher education environment. At the initiation of this study, no other demographic factors such as GPA, SES, parental background, or high school coursework were used to refine the population under study.

No attempt was made to compare males and females, and while many believe that such comparisons may be important, the looming crisis of male persistence guides this study. And focusing specifically on Hispanic/Latino males will allow for a much greater and more in-depth study.

The Hispanic/Latino population of this northwest region of the United States is just under 7% (Pew Hispanic/Latino, 2011). These recent shifts in the state and region (2% Hispanic/ Latino growth in the last 10 years) have also found their way into the research site. In 2010, the institution had only a 6% Hispanic/Latino population; in the 2018 academic year, that number was 12%. Although in some regions of the United States, there are multiple ethnic sub-groups associated with the U.S. Census-derived Hispanic/Latino category, at this institution, they are represented in the aggregate. This college does not use an explicit category for the sub-populations of Hispanic/Latino students. However, in a pilot interview process conducted in

2009 suggested (King, 2009), some of the most challenged students appeared in Mexican-American populations. The study's setting, NW community college, does not collect that statistic. Students were purposefully recruited from a dataset derived from the target institution as Hispanic/Latino. If information arises through the interview process related to national origin, that information has been incorporated into the findings and discussion.

There are several limitations to this study: specificity to a single population, limited comparison between genders, unique demographic features of this population, and perceived sociological/ psychological limitations of male students. This study was intended to be a single-site study. This intentional focus on the specificity of the method for this unique population severely mitigates generalizability.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, U.S.-based college-going behavior for men was greater than that of women at all education institutions (Goldin et al., 2006). During the 1980s and moving forward, women's access to and participation in higher education has steadily gained, surpassing that of men. In the community college environment, this gap is more pronounced, where participation rates of women are about 55%, with men at 45%. This drop in male attendance is more pronounced for men of color and most pronounced for Hispanic/ Latino and African American men. Lastly, college-going rates are now flipped for gender. The retention and success rates for Hispanic/Latino males are seriously lacking behind all other ethnic groups. For this study, I have framed the struggle of access and success for males intending to transfer from a community college to a university. This struggle has been explored through a cultural lens, a masculinity lens, and a psychological coping lens. Lastly, this study

16

explores the academic coping strategies used by male Hispanic/Latino students using a qualitative design that seeks to uncover the lived experience of these students as they navigate transfer to the senior institution / university.

As I move further into the interviews and analysis, in some ways I will need to let data speak for itself and, thus, follow a practical approach to what works best given the sample in context, the questions, and the outcomes. The next chapter includes an overview and in-depth look at previous research in four major knowledge domains: (a) transfer issues and student behavior; (b) masculinity and male students in higher education; (c) Hispanic/Latino higher education student issues; and (4) general perspectives on academic stress and coping.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers several general knowledge domains about this study. First is a discussion of my general philosophical orientation and theoretical perspective. I then address the issue of the transfer function in higher education. Next follows a general review of research focusing on male higher education student success, a review of literature regarding Hispanic/Latino student participation in higher education, emphasizing male students, and then a discussion of research focusing on the concept of masculinity related to education and higher education. Finally, the review explores research examining the issue of academic coping and stress for community college transfer students.

A GENERAL PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION

Symbolic Interactionism

The theory of Symbolic Interactionism (SI) has received attention (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 1998; Schwandt, 1994) as a relevant philosophical position and mode of analysis for qualitative applied to education settings. Blumer (1969) is considered a key theorist in developing ideas surrounding SI. There are three core principles to his perspective. First, a principle of "meaning" contends that people act towards objects (people and things) based upon the meanings given to those objects. Second is the principle of "language." Language provides the tools (symbols) to negotiate meaning, and through everyday interactions, meaning

is derived. Although the principle of language and interaction may be thought of as simple, they form the foundation of SI. Although there are multiple ways to interpret meaning, within SI, it is derived from interaction with an object, thing, or person and not from the object itself. Thus, SI distinguishes itself from a traditional realist or positivistic theories that imbue meaning within the object. The last principle is that of "thought." The idea here is that we interpret symbols in different ways. This last principle is best thought of as two steps: (a) orientation towards the thing that we wish to derive meaning; and (b) the interaction within our mind as we take on the roles of others and try to assume different points of view. In this last step, we rethink, revise, and reinterpret as we attempt to interact with those objects, persons, and things.

Additionally, in his work summarizing and reinterpreting Mead, Blumer (1969) also conceptualizes several issues that he refers to as root images. Although he indicates seven categories of root images, I will focus on two: (a) the nature of human action; and (b) the interconnection of elements of action. When Blumer discusses human action, he refers to the act that humans go through in almost all situations where they do not just act and react as if there are only behaviors, motivations, and scripts. It is more appropriate to think of humans as interactants within themselves, delving into their thoughts and engaging in self discussion. This act of self-discussion, balanced against external interaction, is what makes up the interpretive self.

Further, the interconnection of the action elements allows a person to extend what becomes known through the interactive internal-external dialogue and extend it into the external world. Through this external world, it is then that each person can interact with others, identify the group action, internalize group dialogue, and externalize group interaction and

behaviors. This process very closely aligns with this study's open-ended nature, which suggests

that, through coping and stress, these young Hispanic/Latino men struggle with internal and

external behaviors. This interaction is also mitigated or enhanced by internalized states and

then extended to behaviors and reevaluated in group interaction (Blumer, 1969).

Linking Symbolic Interactionism to Classroom Instruction

A considerable amount of general research (Heilman, 1976; Darling, 1977; Fine, 1981;

Curry, 1993) builds on the theory of SI. In that these are studies of various social groups, there

are obvious links of SI theory to classrooms, particularly through the notion of constructivist

learning (Brooks & Brooks,1993). Constructivists contend that knowledge is personally

constructed but socially mediated (Tobin & Tippins, 1993). Constructivist classrooms are social

places where actions and reactions to peers and their ideas, particularly in cooperative learning

environments (Johnson & Johnson, 1996) are conceivably predicated on the symbols that

players hold for objects in that learning environment. It seems clear that it is difficult to

embrace the ideology of constructivism (Taylor et al., 2002) without factoring in SI as a vital

component.

The use of symbolic interactionism was most appropriate to the goals of this study

because "symbolic interactionism emphasizes that individuals perceive situations differently,

that what's really happening in a social situation depends upon participants' perspectives at a

given time and the interpretative concepts they apply to what they perceive" (Frey et al., 1992,

p. 248). Additionally, Mead's (1934) focus on empathy and empathy in communication leads

him to his fundamental premise: that society is composed of interactions expressed in the

language of the community and that the individual's mind consists of their responses to these

interactions. This notion that people define their reality and create and maintain the self by

interpreting the surrounding social environment lies at the heart of symbolic interactionism.

This interdependence between the academic community and the self, and the central role

played by language (and symbols) in Mead's thinking, applies to understanding the experiences

of Hispanic/Latino male transfer students. The interpretive realm of SI is often used with and

intertwines the theoretical position of the social construction of reality. Prawat (1996)

emphasized the importance of SI as the social construction of reality: "The process of personal

meaning takes a backseat to socially agreed upon ways of carving up reality . . . symbolic

interactionism sees meaning as a social product that arises in the process of interaction

between people" (p. 220).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY

Berger and Luckmann (1966) extended the early work of symbolic interactionism and

the writings of Schutz (1970). Berger and Luckmann believed that humans create what we know

about the world through interactions with each other and come to understand and construct

what we know. Gergen (1985) best exemplifies what is currently known as the social

constructionist movement, outlining its four main premises. These include the ideas:

> The world is known through human experience and influenced by language; the
> linguistic forms appear in interaction that are specific to the participants and to
> the place; what is currently being communicated constitutes reality; and our
> reality is understood in terms of how we think and act in everyday life. (p. 266-
> 269)

> Only by thoroughly reflecting through both the medium qualitative interviews and

asking questions of the Hispanic/Latino male participants as they interacted would the

opportunity present itself to "know" how they construct their reality and perhaps what

boundaries they either live by or construct themselves (Hazan, 1994).

As the nature of this study is interpretive, and there is limited available research with

open-ended, participant-generated emergent interpretations, the nature of this dissertation

will take on this particular perspective. Although many may contend that coping skills and

behaviors associated with one's gender may be biologically based, my approach assumes that

the way males cope in the academic environment is largely impacted by their conceptions of

masculinity and cultural backgrounds. Thus, coping is socially constructed. Thus, the

perspective is interpretive.

Although symbolic interaction and social construction are my guiding perspectives, I am

open to what emerges. The very nature of this work is about how the male Hispanic/Latino

transfer students' experience and cope in the academic environment. Although I will attempt to

view my research through this lens, there is limited research from an open-ended perspective.

Therefore, the research review that I will offer predominantly covers the available quantitative

research and offers a limited perspective on previous qualitative studies. Next, I will present a

general overview of the transfer function in higher education and previous research in this

knowledge domain.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

The Transfer Function

Community Colleges in the United States were established to meet the educational

needs of a growing nation, discovering that higher education was an important part of the lives

and futures of an increasing portion of the population. Today, most commonly called

community colleges were originally established as junior colleges to separate the first two years of college or the lower division from the upper-division or the last two years (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 1996). These new institutions were focused on preparing students for transfer to the universities where they would be able to complete their bachelor's degrees.

In the past six decades, the role and mission of these institutions have broadened greatly. Now they are typically known as community colleges. Their focus is on providing needed education to students within their geographic service area in curricular areas such as job skills, vocational training, continuing education, and preparation for transferring to a four-year university to complete a bachelor's degree. These institutions enrolled only a small portion of the student population during the first decades of their existence. Still, that has changed dramatically in the last sixty years as the number of community colleges has increased significantly, and the demand for students wanting to enroll has grown exponentially (Bumphus, 2018).

The American Association of Community Colleges (2019) reports that there are now more than 1,100 community colleges and more than 5.4 million students enrolled in credit and non-credit programs (Community College Research Center, 2019). This extended time of growth began on June 22, 1944, when Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (or GI Bill), which provided much wider access to higher education through financial aid for veterans after World War II (Serow, 2004). The sheer number of students enrolling in higher education due to the GI Bill increased the population of enrolled students at virtually all higher education institutions, especially community colleges. However, there is also some contention that, in

some ways, this proliferation is more symbolic than real (Greenberg, 2004; Kowalski, 2016; Serow, 2004)

As a result of the education provisions of the GI Bill, 2.2 million veterans attended two- and four-year colleges and universities (Greenberg, 2004; Serow, 2004). This legislation opened the door of opportunity for millions of students, and many of them chose the community college as the right starting point for them (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). In the 1946-47 school year, 455,000 students enrolled in two-year colleges. Four years later, two-year college enrollments had reached 562,000, a 90% increase over the enrollment at the end of World War II (Diaz, 1992). In the fall of 2017, 34% of the undergraduate students enrolled in higher education were in community colleges (Community College Research Center, 2019). Throughout all of the changes and transitions, one of the most important functions of community colleges has remained the transfer function (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). As more students began to realize the value of higher education, community colleges provided a place for many to begin their studies, with the typical intention of transferring to a four-year college or university to complete their bachelor's degree.

During the latter part of the 1980s and 1990s, although the US was still emerging from a major recession, this was also a time of substantial growth in students choosing to start their educational journey in a community college (Dowd, 2003). McGraw (1999) noted that "more students than ever before are choosing to complete their first two years of school at a community college" (p. 73). College Board indicates that in the fall semester of 2014, approximately 7 million undergraduates were enrolled in community colleges (Ma & Baum, 2016).

In the latter 2010s, the enrollment in higher education has decreased, and the number of students transferring from one institution, although increasing in the early 2000s (Wawrzynski & Sedlacek, 2003), is now holding steady at approximately 31% (Shapiro et al., 2017). The transfer function continues to be tremendously significant for thousands of students enrolled in community colleges today (Taylor & Jain, 2017). Therefore, preparing students to transfer remains an essential function of the community college for students who could not go directly from high school to a four-year college, whether that was due to economic circumstances or due to their poor academic performance previously.

Bradburn and Hurst (2001) indicated that 71% of beginning community college students intended to earn at least a bachelor's degree. In 2018, the number intending to earn a bachelor's degree had increased to 81% (CCRC, 2018). In 2016, only 33% transferred to a four-year institution within six years; that number is approximately the same at 66% (Kolodner, 2016). So, each year, millions of students transfer from the nation's community colleges to four-year colleges and universities, both public and private. More importantly, students of color or low-income students transfer at lower rates and with lowered completion of bachelor's degrees (Shapiro et al., 2017). Further, of those that transfer, only 13% of the original cohort (those intending to transfer) complete a bachelor's degree. For students of color, this percentage is approximately 8-9% (Shapiro et al., 2017). This indicates a large gap between those who intend to transfer and those who do.

As the number of students transferring has continued to grow, there has been a great deal of research done to examine this function of the community college and how effectively it prepares students for the transition to the four-year institution. Often the community college is

seen as a "second chance" for students who do not start at a four-year institution, and in this way, they provide an important alternative route to the four-year degree (Berkner, He & Cataldi, 2002; Strikwerda, 2018). Some studies have suggested that community college can make it easier for some students to enter a higher-quality four-year university than they would have been able to enter directly from high school (Eide et al., 2000; Levesque, 2018).

However, many contrasting studies have identified a community college's limiting, not the second chance, function. This limiting function is often referred to as cooling out. In Clark's (1960) original work, the term "cooling out" was coined to describe the relative lack of access to higher education. His original work looked specifically at the structures that allow for a "… dissociation between aspirations and avenues in American education, specifying the structure and processes that reduce the stress of structural disparity and individual denial" (p. 2). Thus, he focused on the very systems in higher education that are supposedly put into place to assist in movement and access, but these systems seem to fail. Specifically, these structural effects limit community college students such that they are directed away from pursuing a bachelor's degree and toward an associate degree or a certificate program. In examining this effect, Pascarella et al. (1996) observed that enrollment in a two-year college led to a 20% to 30% increase in the number of students who reduced their aspirations for a bachelor's degree. Clark's work was further explored within the "cooling out function" in the mid-2000s (Bahr, 2008; Rector, 2017). In both cases, the role of advising or the truncation of the developmental math sequence had positive effects on "cooling out," with students succeeding more with greater advising assistance or a shortened math sequence. Lastly, the issue is reviewed again within the context of low-income or persons of color, relative to the issuance and access of

26

financial aid; through this research, it is again affirmed that "cooling out" as a process appears

to be pervasive through community colleges (Broton, 2019) where financial aid continues to

provide significant barriers to student success. One of the most significant observations of

students in the two-year college was that many of those who indicated a desire for a bachelor's

degree never transferred to a four-year institution (Berkner et al., 2002).

Berger and Melaney (2003) indicated that up to 80% of all credit students at community

colleges say they want to transfer, but 40% actually enroll in a track for transfer to a four-year

university, and only 10% eventually transfer. Further, although fewer students are entering

higher education (as a percentage) than in 2010, the rates for transfer continue to increase

overall. However, there are two exceptions to the transfer rate: (1) approximately 80% of those

entering the community college continue to indicate that they have a desire to transfer, but a

little less than 30% do so — with a little less than 12% earning a bachelors degree within six

years (CCRC, 2017), and (2) although the total numbers of transfer students have increased, this

is not true for Latino/Hispanic/Latino students, who have maintained the same number as in

the early 2000s (Handel & Williams, 2012).

In contrast, other research has shown that, while the number of students transferring is

much less than the number of students indicating a desire to transfer, those who do transfer

are as likely to persist to a degree as those who begin at a four-year institution (Adelman, 2006;

Cucccaro-Alamin, 1997; Piland, 1995). Several studies have indicated that this effect may be

because students who do transfer more closely resemble those who enrolled in the four-year

institution initially, they have been continuously enrolled, and they have experienced academic

and social integration at the two-year institution (Bradburn & Hurst, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Since the 2000s, several practical guides have been developed to address the transfer process. Predominately, these guides assist with articulation development, communication, and marketing, dispelling myths, ensuring clear pathways, developing strong advising programs, and providing clear support for disenfranchised populations (Wyner et al., 2017).

Transfer and College Adjustment

It is significant to note that college adjustment is very different from those related to the retention of students at a particular institution. The existing research on college transfer students presents three main perspectives in examining college student adjustment (Laanan, 1998). The first of those perspectives, and the most prevalent, is the psychological. The second perspective points to the environmental factors or the climate of the new campus as the key to the student's transition. The third perspective related to adjustment difficulties focuses on the structural challenges that transfer students encounter. More specifically, this perspective concerns the adjustment difficulties to the unfamiliar climate of the four-year institution's unique values, culture, and expectations. These perspectives have become important as the student demographics on the nation's college campuses have continued to change and diversify.

The psychological perspective on transition difficulty is built upon the idea that this transition creates psychological distress in the student. As an example, Smedley et al. (1993) utilized a stress-coping model in a quantitative study of the transition experiences of minority freshmen. The study encompassed a sample of freshmen found in freshman experience/inquiry

courses. Approximately 100 students were sampled after responding to an opt-in survey where

they disclosed their minority status. Although the study would have been more robust if the

sample had been randomized, the total size of the student population and the institution and

the subsequent size of the immigrant population would have limited that possibility. The study

utilized three different points of data collection. A different type of instrument was used to

examine the different types of stress that the students were experiencing. To gauge the events

in their lives causing stress, the Life Events Survey for College Students was utilized in the

summer before beginning classes. In the middle of the fall semester, the researchers

administered the Current Concerns Scale to gauge the strain placed upon the students,

especially in their many roles. Finally, the stress from their minority status was evaluated

through the Minority Student Stress Scale, which was developed for their research project.

Smedley et al. (1993) found in their resulting analysis of data from these three

quantitative instruments revealed a connection between the transition to the university setting

and the adjustment outcomes of psychological distress, feelings of well-being, and academic

achievement. Thus, the research pointed to psychological causes for students' reactions to their

new institution, especially for minority students who experienced additional psychological

pressures (Smedley et al., 1993). The model that Smedley et al. advanced indicates that the

students' adjustment to college is a function of their attributes, psychological and cultural

stresses, and the strategies students use to cope with those stressors. Thus, these researchers

concluded that stress comes from internal or personal factors as well as social and demographic

considerations and the environmental and structural factors of the specific college or

university. This perspective is represented in the conceptual framework for this study, which

considers both the student's academic background and their family background as factors in the adjustment model and treats the academic, social, and spiritual integration as separate but interactive systems.

Several environmental factors have been found to be related to transfer student persistence — such as faculty contact, campus climate, selectivity, and campus size and sense of community — that research has indicated are salient factors and fit within SI conceptual framework. The environmental perspective is reflected in the study by Hurtado et al. (1996), which indicated that it is essential to assess the structural characteristics and the climate of the four-year institution's campus and how those factors may affect the student's transition, either by making it easier or more difficult. The primary purpose of their study was to understand the factors that affect Latino populations and their subsequent adjustment to college life. Their study focused on a national data sample of one cohort of Latino freshmen entering a university in 1991. This study involved a two-phase outreach in inquiring students through a survey about their experiences and attitudes at the end of the first year and then through a second survey in the second year of their education. Students were asked to opt-in their freshman year. A follow-up inquiry was sent to the 487 students responding to the first survey, with 60% or 292 responding. Their study found that one of the most significant environmental factors in the college setting was the response of faculty members. These findings are similar to other studies on the traditional student at four-year institutions that points to the importance of quality time spent with faculty members in students' decisions to persist at a given institution and to perform well there (Astin, 1985, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Tinto, 1993).

The need for quality time with faculty is even more critical for transfer students from community colleges where they were accustomed to significant time with faculty and the availability of assistance. This was reviewed in a 2006 study as researchers discovered how students need and access faculty in the transfer process (Tatum et al., 2006). This was reviewed further to explore the influence that part-time faculty have on students in the course of study and through the transfer process (Eagan & Jaeger, 2008). Lastly, faculty involvement in the transfer of Latino Students was reviewed in a study that qualitatively assessed the impact of multiple faculty members, counselors, and advisors supporting the transfer student (Tovar, 2014). Although the impacts of faculty have been important, each of the above studies does not necessarily account for the interaction of support within the socio-cultural limits that men place upon themselves as interactants in the classroom.

The varied and different experiences that students experience in transferring can significantly influence the student's perception of the transfer experience. To have a complete picture of the adjustment of transfer students, it is essential to consider the time spent with faculty members. This perspective was also represented in the conceptual framework for this proposed study which included both formal and informal aspects of the academic and social systems and the students' integration.

The campus climate, outside the educational environment, is the second perspective that has a significant impact on the transition and persistence of transfer students. The campus climate can consist of such diverse factors as the multiculturalism of the student body, the interaction between students of different backgrounds, openness to new students after the freshman year, and students' perceptions of the openness of the campus (Hurtado, 1991).

Another institutional factor that can influence the adjustment is the perceived selectivity of the institution because transfer students will feel challenged to perform to the level of their peers (Laanan, 1998). This perspective was represented in the conceptual framework for this proposed study which included integration into the formal and informal aspects of the college classroom.

Finally, some studies indicate that the size of the campus may also be a significant factor that will affect the student's perceptions of community or isolation and influence the perception of their significance to the institution (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This effect can be seen in the student's social involvement at the four-year institution and the relationship between involvement and persistence (Ethington, 1997; Stoecker & Pascarella, 1991).

There have been many detractors to the development and subsequent empirical testing of Vincent Tinto's model of student departure since the early 1970s. Since that time, theorists such as Astin (1985, 1997), Bean (1983), Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 1998), and many others have developed their models of student involvement, retention, and departure.

In Tinto's later work, a major contention is that the models do not apply to the two-year or community college student nor transfer students. In addition, while Nora and Rendon (1990) developed additions to this model that apply to the community college student, they have limited application. However, even as there are detractors to Tinto's perspective and model, he highlights two key aspects that signify an appropriate theoretical retention fit for this population. His theory focuses both on social and academic factors — but specifically highlights academic factors. His perspective and theory were based on the early works concerning

departure from difficult/stressful situations and the issues of in-betweenness or marginality. Additionally, in many retention studies for two-colleges, researchers highlight the need for understanding the issues of academic attentiveness; and psychological issues related to the student's intent to persist.

Braxton et al. (1997) examination is an example of the critique of Tinto's model and the question of its relevance and applicability outside of four-year, residential university settings. These authors examined the tremendous number of studies that have utilized Tinto's model. They concluded that there were some significant shortcomings in the model, primarily related to its use in non-traditional settings. However, nine of the thirteen identified propositions in the model were supported. Braxton et al. (2004) presented this same line of investigation, who seriously questioned Tinto's model's academic integration component while affirming the social integration aspect.

However, one of the weaknesses of the Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004) study was their use of a box score type of approach in analyzing the studies that they included in their research review because it treated all studies as equal without respect to their sample size, methodology, or the effect size. Braxton et al. (2004) also failed to effectively repudiate the hundreds of applications of this model among traditional institutions. A meta-analysis conducted by Robbins et al. (2004) found that, in the 190 studies they examined, both academic integration and social integration strongly correlated with student retention, especially in institutions included in this study.

While there have been critiques of the Tinto model, it remains the most widely used and the most significant model in the understanding of student transition and attrition — with over

775 citations (Braxton, 2000; Braxton et al., 1997; Braxton et al., 2004). Tinto's (1993) model

also points to the importance of universities directly addressing the needs of students who

transfer to ensure that adequate opportunities for connectivity occur for these new students.

This model is especially relevant because each of the institutions studied was a four-year

residential university — exactly the type of institution that Tinto's model is most reliable in the

research (Braxton et al., 1997, 2004; Robbins et al., 2004; Tinto, 1993; Townsend & Wilson,

2009).

RESEARCH ON TRANSFER STUDENTS

While Tinto (1993) indicated student departure to be "value-neutral" (Tierney, 1992, p.

609), Tierney (1992) asserted that the anthropological foundation associated with this concept

does not apply to all individuals in all settings Tinto suggested. Tierney's exception to the

inclusion of the term "departure" suggested Tinto's limited understanding and appreciation of

the minority element present in American higher education and how these groups tend to be

alienated by the mainstream identity. Despite the criticism, Tierney noted Tinto's awareness of

his theory's imperfections: Tinto recognized that specific segments of the student population

were ignored, including adults and students attending non-residential campuses.

The increasing enrollment of students in community colleges, and their subsequent

transfer to four-year colleges and universities, has led to many research studies on transfer

students and their success in the new four-year institution. These studies have shown great

diversity in their approaches, including quantitative studies (Berger & Melaney, 2003; Umbach

et al., 2019; Wawrzynski & Sedlacek, 2003), qualitative studies (Gard et al., 2012; Stewart-

Hattar, 2016; Tobolowsky & Bers, 2019), and studies of national data sets (Dougherty, 1992;

Grubb, 1991). Sample sizes have ranged from seven or ten in qualitative studies to thousands of students in quantitative studies. Most of these studies have focused on the academic success and persistence of a bachelor's degree of students who transfer to the university (Astin, 1971; Dougherty, 1992; Hinshaw, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini; 1991; Piland, 1995). Few studies have examined the actual transition experiences of transfer students (Flaga, 2002; Green, 2001; Hinshaw, 2003; Laanan, 1996, 2001).

Transfer and Social Adjustment

In 1998, Laanan undertook the task of explaining the difficulties of transfer students from a broader perspective than simply the academic transition and "transfer shock." To obtain the information needed for the study, Laanan created a new survey instrument, the 304 item UCLA Transfer Students' Questionnaire, which used rating scales and categorical scales to collect information from three areas: social demographics, community college experiences, and UCLA experiences. The survey instruments were mailed to the students' home addresses in the third week of the fall quarter of 1996. The target populations for this study were students who had transferred from a California community college to UCLA in the 1994 or 1995 school years.

Laanan (1998) received useable surveys from 717 transfer students of the 2,369 who received surveys. These students provided information about their experiences and their academic and personal transition experiences coming to UCLA from the community college in this combined quantitative-qualitative approach to studying transfer students. Laanan examined their responses to questions about the academic and social adjustment process (dependent variables) related to the social demographics, community college environment, and

the UCLA environment (independent variables). This study examined the extent of transfer

students' previous and current experiences of coping and stress in the academic environment.

Laanan (1998) conducted a between-group analysis based on three factors: age group

(traditional versus non-traditional); student status (participation or non-participation in UCLA's

Transfer Alliance Program - TAP); and a racial/ethnic category. The age group analysis

concluded that students in the two age categories were likely to have very different

experiences at the university. Still, both were likely to have a similar adjustment experience.

Both TAP and non-TAP students were also similar in their transitions and satisfaction. The

racial/ethnic analysis indicated that Caucasian and non-Caucasian students were likely to have

very different experiences at community college and UCLA. Specifically, it was found that the

experience of non-Caucasian students was that they were more limited in interactions with

others and had general feelings of less inclusivity.

Laanan (1998) found that social and academic involvement on the UCLA campus were

significant factors in predicting a positive transfer experience for community college transfer

students. The weaknesses of Laanan's study began with the inclusion of transfer students at

only one institution — UCLA. This institution was also a highly selective research institution with

a national reputation, which may have influenced both the students who transferred there and

the study results. Also, the questionnaire used was very long, and its length and the lack of any

incentive for students to complete it may have contributed to the lower response rate.

Although I indicate that this is a problem for the generalizability of his study, I will be focusing

only on one institution as well for this study. However, I am still focused more on perceived

academic coping issues/strategies related to unique populations, and thus a small sample to uncover the experience is the intention.

In a study identifying the impacts of orientation and freshman experience on transfer students, Mayhew et al. (2011) identified necessary key supports for student success. The authors conducted a qualitative study of 10 students enrolled in a freshman experience course after orientation. The students were from a cross-section of the student population and drawn from opt-in as a part of the course. In some cases, the students were collected through snow-ball sampling, where some students emerged from the recruitment of others. Compared to new first-year students, transfer students were significantly more likely to agree that orientation was successful in helping them adjust academically but not socially. Other results showed that, compared to White students, students of color were more likely to credit orientation programming with helping them socially adjust to the campus environment.

U.S. MALE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Males in Higher Education

Across the country, at both two- and four-year colleges, males are underperforming both to previous indicators of male success and female success by almost every measure available. They are entering college at lower numbers than in the past, earning lower grades, dropping out more frequently, transferring less successfully, and graduating at lower rates. At the same time, females are making remarkable academic progress, outpacing men in all of these categories, making up the majority of graduates in many disciplines, earning more doctorates overall than men, and quickly catching up to men in graduating with degrees in disciplines that have traditionally been male dominated. There is a danger in assuming that

37

increased opportunities for females translate into disadvantages for males. However, while celebrating female successes, we should be quite concerned about male declines. Although many scholars today disagree on the factors related to male difficulty in higher education, most acknowledge that it is an issue that needs greater definition. This section intends to offer a brief overview of male participation and success in higher education, the current synopsis of the research, and options for consideration given the context of this study.

Early developments in U.S. higher education strongly favored males. As early as the 18th century — upon the founding of Harvard and Yale — male participation in higher education was much greater than that of women. Men had access to leave home earlier, a greater degree and expectation of independence, and — it was believed — a greater capacity for the depth of intellectual study and rigor associated with higher education. And although women entered higher education in increasing numbers during the 18th century, the main impetus for women's entry was to place importance on their effectiveness as mothers, which soon transformed into importance as women as moral guardians and teachers (Green, 1978).

However, upon the foundation of teacher's colleges in the later 19th century and further redevelopment through the early 20th century, women's participation in higher education began to match pace with men's (Goldin et al., 2006). It was not necessarily the same type of participation, as women were more often in technical seeking — often two-year degree programs — but the attendance rate was similar. And although there have been fluctuations since 1930, due to several wars and the GI Bill (or Servicemen's Readjustment Act), the gender gap in college enrollments had effectively disappeared by the 1980s (Goldin et al., 2006). Additionally, upon gaining parity, equal participation would result in a balance similar to that of

U.S. college-age populations — 49% women and 51% men (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, this parity has not been achieved as men have continued to lag behind women — even in the standard subjects of math and science. This lag has been conjectured for multiple reasons — many of which attribute success to women's idealized notions of education, women's expectation of economic gain, and women's rising age in marriage. Lastly, this gap is wider for specific populations, especially ethnic minority populations — especially Hispanics/Latinos (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, the focus of this study is on Hispanic/Latino male participation and success; therefore, the focus will remain on male difficulty/success. This review suggests that an increasing male educational disengagement, especially pronounced in Hispanic/Latino populations, potentially has serious social implications.

Male Difficulty and Success Summarized

The arguments concerning male difficulty in higher education can be summarized into four areas: (a) males do not enroll to the same extent as females (Reeves & Smith, 2021); (b) learning styles and strategies of the college male are different than what is often provided for by colleges which favor a women's style of learning (Reeves & Smith, 2021); (c) as stated by feminist and women's groups the current higher education system is only now become more equitable and women are present in greater numbers because this mirror's population statistics of more females (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2001; Sperling & Winthrop, 2016); and (d) and lastly males are simply having greater difficulty completing their degrees than women (Rausch & Hamilton, 2006).

Male Participation

The statistical changes for participation and success in higher education by gender have changed dramatically over the last 50 years. According to data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), between 1970 and 1996, male bachelor's degrees awarded in traditionally male fields decreased substantially while the female share increased exponentially. If one were to look specifically at the sub-categories of degrees, these changes also appear. And while most degree areas for males showed limited increases, most experienced decreases. In the degree areas of business, agriculture, and architecture, there were marginal increases in male participation, but there were extremely large increases in female participation. In business, the share of male degrees increased by 21%, while the shares of female degrees increased substantially by 994% and the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded to males shrank from 91.3% to 51.4%. In agriculture, the male share increased by 12% compared to the huge female increase of 73%, and the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded to males shrank from 95.8% to 63.2%. In architecture, there was a 37% male increase compared to a very large 88% female increase, and the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded to males shrank from 94.7% to 63.9%. Overall, males earned only 44.4% of the bachelor's degrees awarded in 1997 (NCES, 2000).

While in greater numbers during the inception of U.S. higher education and through to the 1980s, Males currently matriculate less often than females into higher education careers. This is especially true for males of lower socioeconomic status. In 1995-6, males with family incomes of $30,000 or less (low income) comprised 44% of the population, but ten years later, for the income level of $30,000 to $70,000 (middle income), males comprised 50% of the

40

1995-6 higher education population versus 44% in 2005-06 (NCES, 2005). And for incomes

greater than $70,000 (high income), males comprised 51% of the sample in 1995-96 versus

49% in 2005-06. Thus, for all income levels, males continue to matriculate less often.

Additionally, the data for Hispanic/Latino students convey a sharper decline, from 43% to 39%

for the low-income group, 46 to 42% for the middle-income group, and 50% to 49% for the

high-income group, respectively. This is compared to Asian and Black ethnic groups that have

experienced a slight increase in the college-going rate (NCES, 2005, 2015).

The irony is that men's general social power may underwrite the choice of some boys

and young men not to devote themselves to schooling and learning. In the past, this may not

have been a special problem for young men because of the labor market structure; that is no

longer the case in many localities. More generally, with such difficulties around education and

employment, father absence/distance, crime, violence, and so on, young men have been

increasingly defined as a problem category (Hearn, 1998). This trend continues in U.S. higher

education but is also prevalent in advanced, industrialized nations worldwide. Projections for

U.S. male participation were expected to be approximately 40%, compared to women at 60%,

as early as 2020 (Vincent-Lancrin, 2009).

However, male educational disengagement also appears concerning degrees at all

levels. And this gender shift as a whole is even greater among associate degree recipients.

While the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded to males decreased from 56.9% to 44.9%

between 1970 and 1996, the proportion of associate degrees awarded to males declined from

57% to 39.5% (NCES, 2015). If fewer males are graduating with associate degrees, fewer

Hispanic/Latino males are transferring as well. Although you do not have to have an associate

41

degree to transfer, having one provides a smoother transition to the university. Completing an

associate degree in most systems allows students to block transfer a set number of lower-

division credits.

Additionally, block transferring assists the student so that they typically are waived out

of most of the university requirements for lower division. Lastly, students who aim for and

transfer with an associate degree are typically those who are more successful at completing

their undergraduate degrees. This lack of attainment is even more pronounced in Hispanic/

Latino populations with associate and bachelor's degrees. For Hispanic/Latino populations, the

proportion of participation in two-year colleges and associate degrees has risen faster than any

other minority population. However, the greater proportion has been awarded to females. The

associate degrees awarded to Hispanic/Latino males declined from 45% to 29% between 1970

and 1996 (NCES, 2015). And dropped further to 22.7% for Hispanic/Latino students in 2015

(U.S. Census, 2015). Although the difference/gap between Hispanic/Latino men and African

American men had been the same in 2000, in 2015 compared to each other, African American

men are closing the gap faster than Hispanic/Latino men when both groups are compared to

Caucasian men (U.S. Census, 2015).

Hispanic/Latino Male Difficulty/Success

In recent years, Hispanic/Latino entry into higher education has been rather steep.

While there has always been a percentage of U.S. citizens of Hispanic/Latino backgrounds, this

population has grown tremendously over the last 25 years. It is projected to grow tremendously

over the next 40 years. Hispanics/Latinos comprise 18.3% of the general population but only

11% of total postsecondary enrollment (NCES, 2010). These differences are more pronounced

in public universities, where the Hispanic/Latino population percentage is 8% of the total (NCES, 2010).

Additionally, Hispanic/Latino higher education participation tends to be focused at the community college, about 58% (NCES, 2005; Hagedorn & Maxwell, 2004). As a population, 25% of Hispanic/Latinos attend college, but that still does not match the overall Caucasian participation of 41% (NCES, 2015). Completing a bachelor's degree is often seen as the larger hallmark of success and is often the base criteria to get into the working world. However, even though one of the central missions of the community college is the transfer function, many students experience tremendous difficulty transferring to a senior (4-year) institution. Educational attainment levels continue to be substantially lower for African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Americans than Caucasians and Asians. In 2000, only 11% of Hispanics/Latinos and 17% of African Americans in the U.S. population age 25 and older had attained at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 28% of Caucasians and 44% of Asians (Pew, 2011). Again, this issue is especially pronounced for Hispanic/Latino students, specifically for Hispanic/Latino male students.

Laker (2008), upon writing a seminal report, *College Males: Keeping Them Engaged on Your Campus*, indicates that although the male difficulty is becoming more pronounced, the greatest difficulty is encountered by male Hispanic/Latino students. Again, this difficulty is restated as one that is most pronounced in community colleges — where Hispanic/Latino men are prevalent compared to their attendance and percentage in four-year universities. Further, this disparity is also consistent with several seminal works on the difficulties of the Hispanic/Latino male in North American education.

In a seminal work reviewing research on Hispanic/Latinos in higher education, Saenz and Ponjuan (2009), review the latest issues and concerns of Hispanic/Latino male participation and access. Most prominent among these issues is the general lack of knowledge regarding the effect of male learning styles upon attainment, the issues of college aspiration, the issues and impacts surrounding family's affect on higher education participation, and the lack of appropriate Hispanic/Latino mentors for this growing population of students (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). The authors further reiterated a lack of available research for each of the stated issues. The authors believe that we have reached a crisis point for this population and that higher education leaders should no longer remain silent about the issue. Further, Saenz and Ponjuan stated, "There is a pressing need to address this issue because Hispanic/Latino males represent an untapped resource in our intellectual marketplace" (p. 84).

Masculinity

In this section, I will cover the following: (a) the definition and concepts related to hegemonic masculinity, (b) the social construction of masculinity and discourse of gender, (c) research on men and masculinity, and (d) research related masculinity in education and enacted masculinity in the classroom; and in higher education.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Almost universally, many Western world proponents of masculinity are defined in the hegemonic sense. Hegemonic masculine ideology often connotes men as strong and not "sissy," men striving for achievement and success, men showing no weakness, and men as thrill-seeking and somewhat violent (Connell, 1995). It is also the contention that this heavy masculine influence affects and often frames the college classroom experience. Therefore, for

this study, I am positioning the issue of academic coping for Hispanic/Latino transfer students

as defined by the participants within the masculine environment. This line of inquiry is in

keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of the interpretive and emergent intent of the

study. I seek to understand how these young men experience and explain coping within the

context of the college classroom; and, specifically, how they see themselves as masculine

within this context.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

This study uses a social and cultural construction of masculinity, gender, and

appropriate gender-role behaviors. This perspective is consistent with the multiple theoretical

paradigms of critical, cultural, post-positivists, and interpretivists that have consistently found

gender socially constructed (Jandt & Hundley, 2007). It is thus believed that masculine behavior

is learned (Hare-Mustin, & Marecek, 1988). It is also taught to boys and men through language

interaction, play, encouraged occupations, and appropriately supported behaviors (Jandt &

Hundley, 2007).

Further, it is also argued that hegemonic masculinity is strongly reinforced through

socio-cultural means. And although the use of hegemony in this sense is connected to cultural

construction, the dominant and suppressive nature of this influence mitigates the

understanding that gender is constructed. Specifically, multiple studies demonstrate that boys

are strongly supported and encouraged to perform aggressive acts during play, use appropriate

non-feminine language, and avoid help-seeking communication and physical support. Some

specifically highlight the rewards associated with appropriate male behavior (through one's

father) and that young men and boys are often pressured to behave in gender-appropriate ways (Caldera et al., 1989; Fagot & Leinback, 1987; Levy et al., 1995).

The social construction of gender and masculinity is further explained through the concept of a reiterative discourse about gender. In other words, masculinity is constructed through the conversations in which men and women play gender prescribed roles and then explore those roles (Davies, 1989). These enactments are thus not just socially constructed — enacted because others demonstrate it — but also through conversation and the repetition of previously prescribed, remembered, and modeled other conversations. Thus, being male, especially in the classroom, is enacted and discussed in particular ways. These ways are important to one's stability and self-identification with one's proscribed gender — and to not enact this could be considered social suicide. Thus, in keeping with a typical social order, boys and men reenact, converse, and behave in a manner associated with being a man (Davies, 1989).

RESEARCH ON MEN AND MASCULINITY

To a large extent, the research conducted on men has studied men as males but not defined them as men. Moreover, men have often been studied as having no gender (Kimmel & Messner, 1989). Previous research has generally fallen into one of two domains. The first consists of trait domains that posit male sex-role identity and view masculinity as biologically constructed. The second area consists of normative domains that posit male identity as a socially developed construction with inherent ideological scripts (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). These distinctions are important because research involving these two domains has often been mixed (Levant & Pollack, 1995), and this mixing essentially mixes two different ideological/

paradigmatic perspectives about research. As my research is from the interpretive perspective, the dominant theme will be understanding masculinity from a perspective of social construction and not predetermined biological/psychological identity. Further, this study aims to understand the concept of masculinity as defined by men within the context of the classroom and about men. Thus, the questions and interpretive lens will be on men's definitions of masculinity, their behavior, and their behavior concerning other men, and not about men as a contrast to femininity or through a feminine perspective.

It is further reiterated that most research involving men posits and emphasizes men within a single dominant role (taking us back again to hegemonic masculinity). However, research has borne out that this single unambiguous role is often just a social construction that does not fit the dramatically changing roles of men, does not fit variations within cultures, and does not fit with the changing generational roles of men (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Additionally, it is posited that these multiple roles of men are dominated by one form that exerts greater power than others. Although different masculinities can be, and are, produced across multiplicities of each social realm — there are still levels of dominance and submission within each of these social systems. Therefore, within each system, some forms of masculinity — or masculinity positions — take power over others, just as most forms of masculinity take power over forms of femininity (Archer et al., 2001).

The contention of authors Archer, Pratt, and Phillips in their 2001 article, "Working-class Men's Constructions of Masculinity and Negotiations of (Non) Participation in Higher Education," is that such levels of dominance often lead to discursive patterns of domination. And as they stress in their research, this discourse prevents men from entering higher

education as it is not seen as masculine. However, it is also their contention that the discourse about masculinity continues to shift over time within the person. And in time, the dominant masculine themes do change for oneself.

In research looking specifically at masculinity within marginal populations, Abalos (2002) described marginalized Latinos who cultivate personal borderland spaces where they feel misled about what it means to be masculine. Struggling to redefine masculinity, they reinterpret cultural stories, standards, and expectations, striving for gender, race, and ethnicity consistency. Additionally, while challenging generations of repressive, culturally based identities, they simultaneously defend their fathers' and grandfathers' disappointments related to loss of economic prosperity, abandonment, and a persistent assault on U.S. culture. Abalos refers to this inherited frustration regarding Latino's feelings of worth, primarily in terms of what they can produce and purchase; becoming a capitalist commodity; and generalized notions of Latino life that become abstractions of male life or just ethnic life. In this process of renaming manhood, boys challenge iconic archetypes, acquiring tools that help them address their sense of loss and despair common to marginalized people, even within their marginalized groups. Those tools are useful for establishing and maintaining relationships, addressing complex gender issues, dealing with daily dilemmas, and identifying their places in society.

RESEARCH ON MASCULINITY IN EDUCATION

There is a great lack of information and research related to masculinity in education and, more specifically, in higher education. Although, as conveyed in both Chapters One and Two of this dissertation, there is a much greater awareness of male and female differences, access, and participation in higher education — there is still limited research on why there are

fewer men in the higher education system and why men do not perform (academic output of completion of degree or GPA). Specifically, there is very limited research on the concept of masculinity and higher education.

Kimmel (2007) discussed, not only the everyday concerns of our current gendered classroom, but also the limitations that masculine structures place upon learning. These structures have their roots in early male-dominated education; upon women's greater entry in higher education, they were met with challenges that the men would become more feminized and the women more masculinized. Kimmel believed that the very structures of our classrooms are fraught with gendered structures and argued that most differences that are observed are simply the products of gender inequality.

Kimmel (2007) cited the recent concern over boys' lack of participation and experience in education. He strongly believes that male students' limitations are not due to a lack of appropriate male learning structures but more the result of allowances for masculine behavior — such as boisterous play, hyperactive communication, and posturing — that lead young men to further develop masculine behaviors solely for other boys to observe and evaluate. For boys, this posturing leads to a mask of ability, one in which true feelings about their environments cannot be communicated. And further, in putting on these masks of ability, they also build further frustration, shame, and concern over their reticence to communicate their deficits in understanding.

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) found various issues influencing male behavior in all forms of education. They explore the issues of construction of masculinity and hegemonic issues of masculinity within the ideological sense. Additionally, they also focus on participation rates

(where are the boys?) and patterns of achievement. What is particularly poignant from their work is that they not only debunk the myths of biological determinism of maleness and masculinity but also discuss how the current construction of masculinity limits male interaction in the early years of schooling. Specifically, they highlight how the domination of discourse, attempts at verbal sparring, and inattentive/inactive listening skills all act as barriers to male student participation and achievement. While this research is specifically focused on male participation in the early years of schooling, this directly affects later male student participation, performance, and success (achievement) in higher education.

Additionally, in their research regarding primary teacher education in England, authors Younger and Warrington (2007) have found that gender identity dramatically impacts student performance and achievement. And given the heightened concern over the lack of attendance and participation of males in education, they call for reinvestment of teacher education programs that emphasize the construction of gender and incorporation of gender identity frameworks for teaching.

In research regarding the construction of masculine and feminine, Paechter (2005) highlighted how cultural constructions of gender build up over time and through each interactive community in which young people engage. Paechter goes further by explaining that school systems directly impact the variety of developed gendered beings we become. Paechter stated, "School systems, both nationally and within particular institutions, are not passive monoliths against which identity is constructed, but instead play an active role in constructing the communities which are found therein" (p. 112). For Paechter, the classroom represents a microcosm of society in which each person must balance the interaction of self and others

through both communication and the body. A young person will develop ideas about gender

and expectations of performance to enact the accepted heterosexual norm or

heteronormativity. While in early years, or the early years of schooling, these enactments and

performances are not as strongly reinforced (or at least not as strongly defined against non-

compliers) as in later years of schooling. Students suffer greatly if they do not perform

appropriate masculine and feminine roles. Although Paechter emphasizes restrictions related to

the body, e.g., manner of dress, manner of the walk, and non-verbal behavior, these gendered

restrictions directly impact the student's perception in the classroom.

More importantly, masculine and feminine behaviors, beliefs, and expectations are also

found within, and enacted in, the classroom curriculum. School subjects have long-felt

associations with gender orientation (Paechter, 2005). Paechter cites how the subjects of math

and English both come with gendered aspects. Given these gendered preferences, experiments

were conducted to set exclusive teaching styles to limit the feminine approach to English — or

the masculine approach to math. However, even though the attempts were genuine, simple

reinforcements by instructors to offer English "…in cool, tough guy style" limited the capacity

for students to understand how to construct a non-feminine English course or a non-masculine

math course (Paechter, 2005, p. 120).

In research concerning the effect of masculinity and involvement in sports, Dempster

(2009) identified various factors that strongly suggest hegemonic forms of masculinity that

dominate university student identity development. Dempster built a case for the social

construction of masculinity, citing Connell (1995) as they frame masculinity around a man's

ability to construct a sense of self through the domination of other men and women. Further,

he states that sports help further define the masculine self and, to some extent, may represent the pinnacle of masculinity. Therefore, a study identifying student participation in sport, student level of masculine behavior, and student identification with the integration of identity with a strong masculine self has great relevance to understanding university student experience.

In a two-part research project at a small English university, Dempster (2009) first examined male student participation in hegemonic masculine behaviors (HMB) and the implications on successful participation in higher education. In the first part of the research, he solicited 180 questionnaires inquiring about participation in typical masculine behavior, including overdrinking, extreme physical activity, participation in naked events, and a variety of other "typical" masculine behaviors. Although it was conjectured that students with either mathematics or science majors would exhibit a stronger amount of HMB, the researcher found this not to be true. Instead, hegemonic masculinity was found across all academic disciplines. The researcher then identified an appropriate cross-section of the 180 students to participate in a 90-minute interview. Nineteen students, with 11 labeled as HMB and 9 as non-HMB, participated in the interviews.

The Dempster (2009) study indicated that students strongly identified with HMB behavior — both the previously identified non-HMB and HMB students. They performed HMB activities, such as drinking, highly active and often dangerous games, and overt sexual behavior, to maintain and establish relationships with peers and be "seen" appropriately as men. For Dempster, these results highlight how students frame the construction of their identity within strong masculine ideals, behind a veil of group participation, and within a hive mentality.

However, although they often performed HMB, these performances were often only in front of many others. When these young men interacted one-on-one, they often challenged the inauthentic masculine presentations and acted peaceably and appropriately.

Additionally, through the second round of interviews, almost all 19 students cited how these behaviors were non-genuine. As stated by Dempster (2009), "the interviewees… consider[ed] it a bogus self-presentation by males anxious to demonstrate 'appropriate' masculinity in an unfamiliar environment" (p. 494). For this researcher, although negating the strong masculine behaviors of aggression, drinking, violence, and overt sexuality, these statements still reinforced the firm belief that males had a particular role to play. They suggested a preference for independence, strength, and personal responsibility of the man instead of the hegemonic strong, aggressive man. These results suggest that the students struggled with the presentations of strong, aggressive, physically active men against educated, attentive, and responsible men.

In research concerning male students' transition to higher education, Warin and Dempster (2007) found that, although young students initially posture and build appropriate male performances, they are not the only classroom identities they form. Warin and Dempster conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with Caucasian undergraduate male students at a small university in England. All students were between 18 to 22, from a range of majors/ disciplines, self-selected through an opt-in question in a previous part of a study, and predominantly in their final year of undergraduate study. Their research focused not on generalized notions of coping; their concern was over the discourse and limitations of conforming to masculinity as a delimiter to the ability to interact and successfully negotiate the

academic environment. Thus, the study has great application to this current dissertation. The interview data were analyzed to identify themes related to transitioning to the university, emphasizing masculinity, and the performance of masculinity and identity formations related to those performances.

Warin and Dempster (2007) emphasized that young men may retreat to traditional notions of identity and gendered identity when going through particular moments of stress. A transition into higher education, or in the case of this dissertation, a transition from the community college to the university, may elicit a retreat to early identified HMB gender roles. Thus, these roles provide opportunities for a great deal of posturing by male students. More importantly, these researchers believe that this retreat is only a temporary measure in which male students coordinate their identity through negotiations with the physical environment, others in the classroom, and themselves (Warin & Dempster, 2007). However, their true focus is to uncover how these young men allow the reassertion of the dominant, hegemonic form of masculinity in times of stress.

Warin and Dempster's (2007) findings indicate that male students easily retreat to HMB when faced with difficult transitions. Additionally, while not entirely mitigating the attention to academics, the amount of behavior associated with masculine posturing distracted students' ability to attend to their academics. Specifically, they found that many students demonstrated avoidance of effort, consistent with other recent research (Warin & Dempster, 2007). This avoidance of effort, while not present during their entire academic experience, was often communicated and observed in highly stressed academic periods of student classroom experience. Interestingly, the authors also contended that students voiced a belief that these

early performances were just that, performances. Only through consistent interaction in the academic environment did the students believe that their authentic selves would emerge. Both the early performance and the later emergence of authentic self have great applicability to this set of male Hispanic/Latino transfer students, from the early-performed presentations to the later expectations of the authentic, academically engaged student.

In his work exploring masculinity in higher education, Harris (2008) identified socially constructed masculinity and gender performance conceptions. Harris posits that although the discourse on male success and participation is becoming more prevalent, it has focused on issues such as males and violence, males and alcohol use, and males and health behaviors. Additionally, he identifies that the primary focus has been consistent with much of the research conducted during the mid-twentieth century, which has been upon Caucasian, American, heterosexual men. Harris was more concerned about the social construction of gender and its discourse within marginalized populations. He conducted a qualitative study to examine the conceptions of masculinity and gender performance of 12 culturally diverse undergraduate men.

Harris' (2008) sample was derived from approximately 16,000 undergraduate students enrolled at a Western Research University (WRU). The institution has multiple traditional student programs that emphasize male roles. The institution has an almost 50/50 split of males to females, with most students being of traditional age. Students were recruited through a nomination process by the respective student and academic departments. Student demographics were mixed, with 50% Caucasian and heterosexual, and the other 50% non-

Caucasian or non-heterosexual. Students were interviewed in one 90-minute session following a semi-structured interview protocol.

Harris' (2008) results indicated that while students are aware of the concept and enactment of masculinity, they are still hard-pressed not to involve themselves in the same self-identified acts. Further, participants easily identified acts related to hyper-masculine performance. These participants noted that aggressive verbal acts, overuse of alcohol, and verbal dismissiveness of women and non-masculine men were all expected. Harris highlighted that his findings closely mirror Hong (2000) and Harper et al. (2005). Students suppress appropriately understood masculine behaviors in favor of expected traditional hegemonic masculine behavior due to gender role conflict. Although Harris specifically sought out young men who were expected to be marginalized, with the assumption was that they would not marginalize others, they did so anyway.

In other research, Harris and Struve (2009) found a somewhat different result exploring how male students experience gender, specifically how they learn about masculinity. Harris identified sixty-eight undergraduate men at a selective private research university in the western United States for this research. He conducted a series of focus group interviews and individual interviews with these students. The participants came from various socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, academic majors, and levels/years in university. The university was well-known for its fraternity life and very competitive sports teams.

Universally, the participants reiterated the strong competitive and patriarchal-based campus and culture (Harris & Struve, 2009). Most students engage in strong male behavior, such as feats of strength, boasting, overt sexual behavior, and acts of aggression. However, the

56

participants also strongly reinforced the importance of the diversity of the campus. Although challenged by traditional ideals and performances of masculinity, this diversity allowed the students to experience and understand the difference. Of strong relevance to my study was that the competitiveness extended to the classroom and academics. This set of participants engaging in academic feats of strength was also seen by comparing heightened course loads, the intensity of class assignments, and the rigorousness of one's major. While the level of competitiveness was especially heightened for this population, Harris and Struve were heartened by the student's understanding that diversity was important and relevant in their lives. This result lends credibility to the idea that students can find their way through the strong masculine self, even those with strong masculine ideals.

Summary of Masculinity

Although student populations have various perspectives and beliefs that assist them with self-identification and functioning, the issue of masculinity may be more a matter of what is unknown rather than what is known. Student expressions of masculine behavior are not always perspectives they understand. Part of becoming educated is not only about subject content knowledge but also about process, reflection, and student change. As intent-to-transfer students come to understand themselves better, they must negotiate with each environment they encounter. Students may experience ease or difficulty in each of these environments depending upon several factors. The anticipated transitions that a student may undertake upon transferring from a community college to a university can constitute such stressful periods. One such factor is the amount of stress and coping, which plays a significant role in student development.

ACADEMIC STRESS AND COPING

This section aims to explore the concept of coping as it applies to the context of academic stress. More specifically, this review is focused on how Hispanic/Latino intent to transfer male students cope in the academic environment. Before exploring this concept, it is important to review the extant literature regarding coping. This section will include coping behavior related to stress, coping related to academic stress in transfer students, and gender differences in coping. This section will explore the various concepts related to academic stress and coping.

Stress and Coping Behaviors

The experience of stress is universally familiar to people from all backgrounds (Perrez & Reicherts, 1995; Jones & Bright, 2001). The experience of stress has been categorized as a two-stage process. The first stage of this process begins when a person is faced with a stressor or can understand and assess the stressor. The second stage of this process begins when the individual chooses a way to deal with it. Although, in general, this process is universally experienced, specific patterns are manifested in unique ways for different types of people under different conditions. Of central interest, then, for this review and the purpose of this dissertation to understand these dimensions of coping include the following: (a) the nature of the stressors facing a person, (b) the way they cope with those stressors, and the success of coping, and (c) ultimately how to use this information to promote healthy adjustment for that person. Accordingly, the present study examines the process of stress and coping for a particular group of people, male Hispanic/Latino associate degree transfer students at a large public university.

The Experience of Stress

Stress can be experienced in various ways: a person is sideswiped while driving, a student needs to study for a test, conflicts occur among neighborhood friends, or even making daily life choices such as where to eat, what to wear, or how to manage relationships. These events are easily recognizable as realistic, if not common, experiences. Each of the persons in these scenarios can be identified as experiencing stress.

In addition, stress and coping can be seen both as the pure joy of randomly winning a prize or could just as accurately be labeled a stressor, such as the negative feelings one has when one's gets a flat tire. Both of these events place a demand on the psychological self so that it disturbs its stillness and requires a response. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) provided a commonly used functional definition. They identify psychological stress as a "particular relationship between the person and the environment that the person appraises as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering their well-being" (p. 19).

Stress, Coping, and Transfer Students

Overall, my goals were to understand the experience of stress and coping and the accompanying expression in the lives of male students intending to transfer. What behaviors might we be able to identify by understanding their status as potential new students? Because many community college students live at or near home while in school, it can be assumed that these young people are leaving home for the first time and, as a result, are faced with both a new sense of personal freedom and a need for personal responsibility (Pennebaker et al., 1990). They can also find themselves immersed in a sort of social and academic bubble whose rules can be seen as distinct from the rules of the "real world." Even less-traditional students

might live at home with their parents or work full time while attending school, and encounter, to a large degree, a novel setting that makes new demands on mental resources. Cobb (2002) pointed out that adolescents transitioning into college also face new cognitive challenges that lead to the development of new cognitive skills when successfully met.

A review of the literature revealed that most research in stress and coping focused on adults. More recent studies have focused on children and adolescents with increased recognition of the need to locate psychological phenomena within a life-span developmental context (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 1999). A smaller subset has focused on stress and coping in the unique period of life during which adolescents first start college. To piece together a picture of the experience of stress and to cope for these students, research from all three of these areas will be reviewed. The transition from childhood to adulthood is, among life experiences, a unique one. To say that adolescents are "stressed out" is an understatement, and to talk to a student in their first session of college is to talk to someone faced with a barrage of new challenges. What are the stressors that adolescents face during these two transitions?

Early research paints a picture of the experience of stress and coping in college that might seem familiar to us today. In the early 1960s, Coelho, Hamburg, and Murphey (1963) studied the problems faced by high-school students transitioning to college, the ways they coped, and the growth experiences that resulted in having successfully met new challenges. The sample consisted of 14 highly socialized, high academic achievers selected from an affluent suburb of Washington, D.C. and followed from the second semester of their fourth year in high school through the first semester of the first year in college. All of the students left home to

attend college. Besides the affluent community from which they were drawn, other indicators

of the students' high SES are the overwhelmingly professional and business backgrounds of the

fathers (13 out of 14) and the relatively high educational attainment of the mothers (11 having

attended college and five having completed graduate work). Those at-risk students with poor

college performance and who seemed to have "disturbing symptoms" were excluded from the

study. The authors isolated seven socio-academic challenges that face students as they begin

college through directed interview techniques. The stressors found including dealing with the

new subject matter in unfamiliar fields of knowledge, heavy course loads, work that was more

intellectually demanding than in community college, having to master new ideas under the

pressure of examinations and deadlines, assignments that require a higher level of initiative and

organizational ability than in community college, being faced with new fields of knowledge that

seem to have no immediate application, diverse responsibilities as a new student that require

new time management, and the general cumulative demands of being a college student that

requires new commitments. While the student's transitions for this study consisted of both

high school to university and community college to university, the transitional stress factors are

also highly relevant to the projected population of Hispanic/Latino males with intent to transfer

students for this study.

A picture of stress in college was further enhanced by an understanding of the actual

role in the lives of students. Felsten and Wilcox (1992) and later Felsten (1998) found through a

quantitative assessment of 240 students (survey administration) that stress was associated with

increased psychological and somatic distress as well as with a decrease in grade point average.

Supporting this concept, Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) demonstrated in their study of 672

freshman students through a survey that the effective handling of stress contributed to increases in student self-esteem and college adjustment. Outside of specific chosen coping strategies or defense mechanisms, the negative impact of stress on a student's health has also been shown to be buffered by such factors as perceived social support (Zaleksi, Levey-Thors, Schiaffino, 1998; Jones & Bright, 2001) and personal spirituality (Zaleksi et al., 1998; Young et al., 2000).

Within the literature devoted to understanding how adolescents cope with stress, a portion of this research more specifically explores how they cope once they get to college. Because community college transfer students tend to face both the entrance into adulthood (as adolescents) and the matriculation into a new school setting, it will again be useful to understand both perspectives when considering the coping response for male Hispanic/Latino with intent to transfer students. Pizzolato (2004) highlights the experience of 27 first-time college (FTIC) students regarding their adaptations to change and experiences coping with conflict. This unique qualitative study focused on students' ability to self-define or self-author their ways of knowing and comfort with the transition to the university. Although focused on the FTIC, this study remains directly applicable to my proposed study because students in this study were in transition, often struggling, and were of similar socioeconomic/cultural background to my proposed sample. Pizzolato (2004) focused on high-risk students and their coping skills when used in a high-stress, alien environment.

Additionally, a primary focus of the Pizzolato (2004) study was to identify how coping skills are adjusted when students seek to learn new material (academically) and when they seek and develop interpersonal skills. Lastly, this research focuses on the balance between students'

comparison to others' skills and attribution of interaction abilities. Both issues directly impact

student connection to both their academic pursuits and their interaction with others.

Pizzolato (2004) found that stress and coping were mitigated in high-stress situations.

Additionally, students' abilities to self-author as a means to cope were also limited in particular

situations where students identified that they were marginalized. This was particularly poignant

for my proposed study. This retreat and limitation to coping were often found when students

were faced with the imbalance between the need to relate their internal perspectives, yet a

non-supportive external environment challenged them.

Coping, Stress, and Gender

In the literature regarding coping and gender, multiple studies look at how men and

women cope differently. Most research indicates that men have a variety of responses or

coping strategies; men take problems head-on, or they retreat; men exhibit direct, problem-

confronting coping; men do not use emotion when coping; and men do not use social support

systems when coping (Tamres et al., 2002). Additionally, in further studies regarding coping

behaviors in the classroom, Derlga and Chakin (1976) found that when using self-disclosure to

connect to others, male disclosers were not seen as proficient and capable as males who did

not self-disclose. This outcome furthers the belief that men do not often disclose as social

issues inhibit male self-disclosure and help-seeking. This is especially relevant as I expect that

students — males — will perform in a particular manner based on their role in the classroom,

their actual position in the room, and the other genders and ethnicities in the academic

context.

Additionally, two positional hypotheses are used when discussing gender and coping. The dispositional hypothesis posits that differences in coping between males and females are related to something either innate or learned in their life. Thus, each makes coping choices based on their disposition (Tamres et al., 2002). The situational hypothesis posits that the differences in coping behavior are based on roles that males or females have learned or assumed in each situation (Tamres et al., 2002).

West-Anderson (2004) presented research concerning a small sample of eight male college males in a qualitative study of undergraduate reentry males and adjustment to academic coursework. The men were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. The data was coded and analyzed by hand using QST NUD*ST. This unique qualitative study focused on three defining categories for these men, and these include (a) men defining the amount and extent of stress with their academics (coursework); (b) men defining their general beliefs or perspectives about what it meant to do or be involved with academics; and (c) men defining the strategies they used to complete their academics (West-Anderson, 2004). Additionally, West-Anderson's findings on the stress of personal struggle, the understanding and integration of the necessity of academic coursework, and the ideas about the use of coursework to regulate and focus one's life may have direct applicability to the males for my proposed study. Although focused on the reentry males, the West-Anderson study remains directly applicable to my proposed study because the students were in transition, often struggling with both personal and academic issues, and were specifically discussing issues related to gender-based coping and stress.

Stress, Coping, and Hispanic/Latino Students

In 1997, Solberg and Villarreal conducted a study of Hispanic/Latino-American and

Latino-American college students that sought to identify the determinants associated with

Hispanic/Latino students' college adjustment and retention. Solberg and Villarreal's sample

consisted of 100 Latino males at a southeastern research university. Students were

administered the College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI), the Social Provisions Scale (SPS), and the

College Stress Inventory (CSI); they concluded that self-efficacy (personal power or

effectiveness) and social support were critical factors in reducing stress among Hispanic/Latino

college students and were determinants of their adjustment. The most common student

responses indicated that these Latino males most often actively sought strategies, took action

in difficult situations, and drew upon past experiences. However, they were least likely to seek

advice or consult with authority or religious figures. There were some limitations to this study

as the information all came from self-report measures, and there was no random sampling.

Summary of Academic Coping

The experience of stress has been categorized as a two-stage process. This process

typically includes acknowledging the stressor and methods for attending to the stressor.

However, in many cases — and especially in new contexts — people do not understand how to

or lack the coping mechanisms to attend to stress. As it relates to marginal or ethnic

populations, that context further complicates stress and coping in the academic environment.

Often this is expressed with further periods of exclusion, removal from the academic context,

and general non-involvement in coursework and other outside-of-class activities. Additionally,

Latino/Hispanic students face other specific challenges that may not be considered when

developing research protocols and tools. Given the nature of Hispanic/Latino unknown otherness — the open-ended, guided interview that I propose for this study — may have the best possibility to uncover academic coping and success strategies of Hispanic/Latino males with an intent to transfer.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Nationally, the number of students intending to transfer to colleges and universities remains high. As both two- and four-year colleges seek to serve these students, there is a tremendous need to understand them, their needs, and how to retain them at each point in their educational journey. Hinshaw (2003) observed that "a substantial body of research has been developed regarding the first-year experience in general, but there is a real need to focus specifically on community college transfers" (p. 23). This need is especially true at institutions with high transfer populations. This study will take these necessary steps by looking more closely at the experiences of male community college students as they prepare to transition to a large public university.

This study will extend a similar, but unique method by looking at a specific set of students as they prepare to transfer to a senior higher education institution. The next chapter will cover my general methods proposed to study this unique population.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

There is a critical juncture in U.S. higher education — the success of male students in the educational pipeline. Specifically for Hispanic/Latinos, who have accounted for most of the nation's growth over the past decade, statistics show they are more likely to drop out of high school than other groups. This problem is particularly pronounced among Hispanic/Latino men, who have lower rates of attending and completing college than their female counterparts. Further, this crisis is most particularly pronounced among lower socioeconomic male Hispanic/Latino students (Ponjuan, 2011). In addition, it has been noted that the most particularly difficult juncture for any student is engaged in the academic setting (Astin, 1997; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 1991, 1998). However, attendance and persistence in the academic environment are often difficult for Hispanic/Latino male students. They are also a group with one of the lowest recorded higher education participation and success (U.S. Census, 2015; Vincent-Lancrin, 2009). This qualitative study aims to explore how Hispanic/Latino male students with an intent to experience and understand the academic environment just before transferring to a senior institution.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

One central research question guides this study: How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students (intending to transfer) experience stress and manage (cope with) the academic environment?

The three additional research questions are as follows:

- How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate (intending to transfer) students experience stress?

- How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate (intending to transfer) students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)?

- How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate (intending to transfer) student experience?

This chapter describes the study's design, the participants, sampling procedures, the interview protocol, the data collections procedures, and finally, the data analysis methods. The properties of trustworthiness will also be discussed. The design of this study is directly linked to the paradigmatic and philosophical orientation of this study that follows.

SUBJECTIVITY STATEMENT (THE RESEARCHER AS INSTRUMENT)

Unlike many quantitively-based research projects based on objective measures that include surveys, data extraction and comparison, scales, and use of statistics, qualitative researchers' methods may not appear to have the same objectivity. And the difficulty in this qualitative research study is that the researcher is integrally involved in many subjective phases of the project. The influence on the participants and data received and analyzed can heavily sway the objectiveness and outcomes. To achieve a reasonable sense of the trustworthiness of data, the researcher must question their subjective sense related to all phases of the study.

The subjective stance must consider two factors: (a) how well I know this audience and subject matter, and (b) how well my theoretical orientation and perspective match the study. As a researcher in this environment, I know several things about these Hispanic/Latino male students. I understand male difficulty and coping through my personal experience. This experience comes through teaching college skills courses to community college and university students and interacting with new students in the student affairs environment.

However, I have limited experience with Hispanic/Latino students. Although I have worked in some areas of the United States that are heavily Hispanic/Latino, I currently live in a location where Hispanic/Latinos make up only approximately 7% of the population (12% for this northwest state). However, there is only a 9% Hispanic/Latino student population at the specific university site of my research (Northwestern College Office of Sponsored Research, 2018). I will be using the current northwest United States location as the general setting for my research site. This setting can be found in numerous places where I have worked extensively with various student populations; in community colleges, medium-sized public universities, and medium-sized private universities. In each, I have encountered great diversity and, in some areas, almost none. And in this general setting, I find that there is some similarity to the general population of the United States — if not slightly lower. Therefore, the selection of the site — while fortuitous to my current location — is also ideal because it mirrors the growing Hispanic/Latino population of the United States (US. Census, 2018; Pew Research, 2011).

As it concerns the subject matter, I have had extensive experience reviewing and using the general body of retention strategies with new and transfer students. And more specifically, I have worked with students having difficulty in the academic environment and assisted them

with strategies to improve their attendance and performance. This experience has been extended to understanding and applying the general body of student retention literature as it applied to community college students and to their coping strategies and adjustments in higher education. Additionally, in terms of the study's focus on male students with intent to transfer student, I have a bias as personal experience mirrors these attributes. However, my experience prior to transferring was atypical. I did not need much assistance, but as stereotypical male behavior, I did not ask for input or assistance until my final quarter before graduation. Lastly, my experience studying and understanding marginalized populations is limited. I do not believe that I hold any bias other than the assumption that because Hispanics/Latinos tend to be marginalized in society, they are equally so in higher education. And previous research at least indicates that they do not have equal access, nor do they achieve the same outcomes (Gloria et al., 2005; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Libassi, 2018; Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010).

I have had multiple experiences as regards the research strategy. I have had extensive experience conducting qualitative interviews, life history interviews, and focus groups. In addition, I have analyzed open-ended qualitative data for all of the above methods through a triangulation of observations, interviews, inter-rater comparisons, and computerized data analysis.

My subjective bias might lead me to believe that a qualitative approach is better than conducting either an objective survey or a mixed-methods study. A survey alone would not be able to convey the lived experience of this subset of undergraduate students. The primary purpose of this study is to uncover the lived experience of these students' academic struggles as they intend to transfer from a community college to a university. Additionally, not enough

research has been conducted about male Hispanic/Latino transfer students within the qualitative tradition (Gloria et al., 2005; Rendon, 1994). Therefore, using objective measures, such as a survey, may presuppose a series of statements and perspectives on this population.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative design will highlight Hispanic/Latino males with an intent to transfer students, which will add valuable meaning to the study of this population's experience as it concerns their status as males and as students of ethnic backgrounds. The participants consist of Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students intending to transfer to a U.S. university. The study sought to answer how Hispanic/Latino male community college students with an intent to transfer experience and manage the academic environment. Additionally, for this study, I sought to understand how these students view the concept of masculinity and the impact of masculinity on the academic experience.

Setting

I currently live in a location where Hispanics/Latinos make up approximately 12% of the population at the state level and 7% at the county level (Pew Center for Hispanic/Latino Research, 2011). Additionally, this region had a 4.4% Hispanic/Latino population in 1990, 8% in 2000, and 12% in 2016. Thus, the general setting and region are somewhat similar to prior periods of U.S. history in that the ethnic make-up of the region is experiencing growth. Therefore, the selection of the site — while fortuitous to my current location — is also ideal because it mirrors the growing Hispanic/Latino population of the United States. The state is considered in the middle 50 in terms of size/percentage of Hispanics/Latinos. And although there is a growing Hispanic/Latino population in the region, this state has one of the smallest

growth rates for Hispanics/Latinos in the latter decade from 2010 to 2020 (Population

Reference Bulletin, 2019). There is approximately a 9% Hispanic/Latino student population (NW

College Office of Sponsored Research, 2018).

A Northwestern U.S. community college was selected as a setting for this study. There is

one central campus, maintained in a suburban environment. The college opened for classes in

1968 as a comprehensive community college. At the time, the primary emphases were transfer

and professional-technical programs. During the 1980s and 1990s, the functions of basic skills

acquisition, continuing education, and workforce education became more prominent.

In 2019, the institution had approximately 10,000 students, almost 130 full-time faculty,

and more than 15,000 alumni. The community college offers more than 100 programs and

certificates that lead to associate degrees, professional technical degrees, and some licensure.

Of those 10,000 students, the approximate split between male and female is 42% and 53%

respectively (and 6% unknown); 9% are Hispanic/Latino, and approximately 13% are

international. Of the 10,000 students, approximately 729 students per year are transfers from

another institution, with 325 male and 404 female. The population of Hispanic/Latino students

is estimated to be approximately 900 students (NW College Office of Sponsored Research,

2018).

Population, Sample, and Participant Recruitment

The population of this study consisted of Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students

intending to transfer to a university. According to the U.S. Department of Education,

Hispanic/Latino students currently account for approximately 11% of the U.S. higher education

population (NCES, 2019). This represents an increase from 9% in the mid-1970s. However,

during the same period, the percentage of Hispanic/Latino low-income high school students enrolled in college fell from 50% to 35%. Many nationalities comprise the category Hispanic/Latino. However, most of the research often noted that the Hispanic/Latino students who struggle, lack access, and do not finish their undergraduate degrees are those of Mexican American backgrounds (Barshay, 2018). Additionally, in previous interviews by this researcher, it was found that Mexican Americans appear to have the greatest amount of difficulty demonstrating success in their academic endeavors.

There are differences observed in the success of students of varying Hispanic/Latino backgrounds on a national level, but this institution does not collect information about national backgrounds. In many respects, the institution's demographic statistics do exceed those of the local community, where the Hispanic/Latino population is close to 6.6% but is expected to multiply by one and one-half times in the next ten years for this region of the United States (NW County Statistics, 2018). NW Community College is considered in the middle of the pack for fall-to-fall retention related to four other community colleges within a 25-mile radius of our service area. NW Community College has had fall-to-fall retention rates ranging from a low of 45% to a high of 52% starting in 2016 to 2019. The community college is considered on the bottom/low end for this same set of regional partners for graduation rates. NW Community College's graduation rate has ranged from 19% to 22% from 2016 to 2019. NW Community College has a varied age population (typical categories and ranges within normal college-going, adult re-entry, etc.) and a slightly more commuter-based local transfer population (NW College Office of Sponsored Research, 2019).

Given the limits of this population but the necessity for studying this specific set of students because of their specific knowledge and relationship to the larger U.S. population of struggling Hispanic/Latino students, the sampling frame for this study consisted of male community college students with the intent to transfer from various Hispanic/Latino ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, the sample was small and purposive, and nonrandom. The research plan was designed to include 10-12 students. The sampling process included three steps:

Step 1. With the college's office of data management, I identified a pool of students who identify as male, intend to transfer, declare as Hispanic/Latino, and have more than 80% of their associate degree complete. After the initial contact, a viable pool of participants was derived to determine eligibility and interest. Students were asked about their willingness to participate in an interview process.

Step 2. Interested students were contacted by email or telephone. During this interview, the students were further screened to confirm that they met all of the criteria for participation. Because I am an administrator at the study site, I may have interacted previously with potential participants; if so, those students were not contacted as potential research subjects.

Step 3. If the above steps 1 and 2 did not result in a sufficient population, the researcher again contacted NW Community College for additional students meeting the study criteria.

As an administrator at NW Community College, I initially obtained necessary institutional permissions to conduct this research. This approval highlighted the nature and purpose of the study and encouraged all participants to answer as honestly as possible.

74

Students were notified throughout the contact of the voluntary nature of the study and assured that their anonymity would be protected.

Interviewing

The primary data gathering tool consisted of interviews. Although there are multiple methods available to the qualitative researcher, the unit of analysis for this study consisted of student perceptions about their interactions with others and their professors in the academic setting.

Interviewing can be seen as the best mode of inquiry, a mode in which humans use language to symbolize their experience. The interview is akin to and supports observational efforts to understand another person's perspective and experience. However, as we cannot ever know what is in another person's head, we cannot know all about another person through observation. The long interview (McCracken, 1988) and the modified long interview (Seidman, 1991) were considered the best option to uncover the potential openness needed for insight into male Hispanic/Latino experience in the classroom setting. Each interview was guided through a protocol but was also structured to allow for open-ended questions and responses, like a friendly conversation (Seidman, 1991).

The intent was instrumental (more than intrinsic). I was guided by a purposive intent to identify certain individuals who may (or may not) represent differences within the intended sample population. Stake (2000) distinguished between intrinsic and instrumental participant study in the following manner: "Intrinsic designs aim to develop what is perceived to be the participant's issues, contexts, and interpretations, its thick description. (Whereas)…the

methods of instrumental participant study draw on the research illustrating how the concerns

of the researcher and theorists are manifest in the participant" (p. 448).

Seidman (1991) proposed a three-interview sequence to ensure participants have time

to convey initial understanding and, later, more thorough reflection. The three-interview

sequence used by Seidman includes (a) the focused life history interview, (b) the interview to

gather details, and (c) the interview for reflection. Although it would have been advantageous

to use life history as a part of the process, the emphasis of this research was about the

interactions of the student in moments of stress and within the classroom environment.

Therefore, only the last two interview structures proposed by Seidman were used for this

study: a semi-structured interview guide and the subsequent presentation of the transcript and

initial coding to the participants. The emphasis of this research was on personal interviews with

single individuals. The semi-structured interview method allowed me to follow up with

questions to clarify any unclear data. Semi-structured interviews also allowed me to explore

relevant topics that appeared during the interview (Merriam, 2009). The majority of the

protocol questions were written with Merriam's (2009) suggestions for semi-structured

interviews, including experience and behavior questions, opinion and values questions feeling

questions, and demographic questions. Before each interview, the researcher discussed the

informed consent form given to the participants. Hence, they were aware of the study goals

and their right to disengage from the study.

The interview structure has also been referred to as a guided interview (Patton, 1990). I

began with a general protocol in the guided interview but changed or altered the questions

depending upon the interviewee's responses (Berg, 2009). The balance of some structure with

the open-ended free flow provided opportunities for both the participant and me. As a

researcher, I could ensure that I would follow and get to the primary questions for the study.

For the participant, the open-ended nature provided many opportunities to convey their

experience truly. Lastly, this balanced approach was expected to assist in the data analysis

phase, where the structure enables greater efficiency in analysis. Still, the open-ended nature

also allowed for the true experience with unanticipated themes (Patton, 1990). Therefore, as I

was concerned that the Seidman three-step interview might result in overly long interviews,

and that a single interview may not provide time for reflection, the interviews were conducted

in a two-part sequence. This process could also be identified as serial interviewing. Serial

interviewing is best utilized when: "This method is appropriate when studying complex or ill-

defined issues when interviews are subject to time constraints, when exploring change or

variation over time when participants are reluctant to share valid information, and when

working with critical informants" (Read, 2018, p. 4).

For this study, I was interested in the loosely constructed, co-authored opportunity to

create an understanding of the complexity of coping for men when interacting in the classroom.

And more specifically, the concept of masculinity may provide a challenge to elicit valid and

well-formed ideas. Thus, the two-interview sequence proposed follows these assumptions: (a)

men will not be as disclosive in an interview sequence, and (b) interview probes may provide

better guides to cue or key areas and enable participants to focus their thoughts.

The interview protocol focused on three keys areas: (a) the general classroom

experience; (b) the coping mechanisms used by males intending to transfer to Hispanic/Latinos

to deal with the stress while in the academic environment; and (c) the concept of masculinity

and their interpretation of the academic environment within the context of masculinity. The nature of the interviews included open-ended questions to elicit varied and experience-based responses and also included many targeted questions (often as probes within other questions) to elicit heightened responses as necessary. Additionally, because the issue of masculinity may be somewhat challenging, the questions about masculinity were less open-ended and more focused. They may be repeated or rephrased to gain clarity in the student's responses. The intent here is to identify the intent to transfer students who may represent unique aspects of the academic experience within the population of Hispanics/Latinos.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected over one month. Those choosing to participate were identified using the two-step sequence introduced earlier. The final outreach to each participant clarified the study's intent and how the data may be used and indicate the expectation for a two-interview sequence to last no more than two to two- and one-half hours (in total). The interviews were conducted during the last 80% or last quarters/semesters before the student's transfer to a senior institution or university.

Conducting the Interviews and the Setting

Based on study invitations, 8 male Hispanic/Latino undergraduate transfers members were selected from the sample population. Interviews were conducted during hours conducive to high participation in the college setting and close in time to the participants' classes. To avoid built-in distractions, efforts were made to find the most convenient place for all participants. Because the interviews occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interviews were not permitted.

The researcher directed each interview, establishing rapport immediately by thanking the participants for coming and creating a non-evaluative environment where participants feel free to express their concerns. I, as the researcher, provided clear descriptions of the research questions and obtain signed consent forms before the interview begins. Furthermore, as the researcher, I explained that any notes taken will be kept confidential and that pseudonyms will be used in place of real names (Gibbs, 1997; Homan, 1991).

The interviews involved a two-interview sequence. My primary interview involved a general background and the full use of the interview protocol. The primary interview was expected to last approximately one to one-half hours. When conducting qualitative interpretive research, it is important to remember that an interview protocol or guide should be a guide. The participant should be allowed to expand upon and may develop their themes. While it may be important to keep the interview on track, guiding in a too structured manner may completely take away from the interpretive perspective. It will be important to hear what the participants state and intends (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This hearing enabled the interview flexibility to (a) stay on track with the interview protocol, (b) let the interview stray from the interview protocol as needed, or (c) provide clarifying questions for the second interview.

Therefore, the secondary interview consisted of follow-up questions, clarification of answers from the primary interview, and questions or probes from the participant. Thus, participants may be able to reconstruct their own experiences (Seidman, 1991). Additionally, it is also important that this second interview allows the participant to develop rapport and comfort (McCracken, 1988). Lastly, the second interview may also allow the interviewee to retrieve complex information, reconsider initially vague or misleading answers, or even have

time to follow up on thoughts not fully expressed in the first interview (Read, 2018). The second

interview is expected to last one-half hour to one hour.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol (see Appendix A and B) was developed using several data

sources. As seen in Appendix A, the primary research questions and sub-research questions are

mapped against each question or probe found within the interview protocol. When considering

the use of an instrument to guide the collection of data, an interview protocol can be

developed in a manner ranging from no protocol, or tell me your story (Moyle, 2002), to semi-

structured (loose), to very tightly structured (tight) (Miles et al., 2014). Further, in developing

the interview protocol, the following need guided my perspective to use a loose, semi-

structured interview: the need for a rich description, co-authored opportunities, focused

exploratory research, non-emphasis on comparability, and descriptive intent for overall

analysis. A key source of information for the interview protocol came from the Santos-Laanan

transfer student questionnaire (TSQ) (Santos-Laanan (2004). The TSQ questionnaire was

developed and used on a transfer student population for students in a large mid-western

campus. The questionnaire covers both quantitative and qualitative scales of coping and

adjustment.

Additionally, the interview protocol is also a combination of questions derived from the

TSQ and personal experiences with students in higher education. The sub-sections of the

interview protocol are derived from experience working with students in higher education and

a general orientation to the academic classroom (McCraken, 1988); from the Santos-Laanan

TSQ survey and questionnaire; and experience and interactions with students; from the Santos-

Laanan TSQ survey and questionnaire (Santos-Laanan, 2004). Finally, many questions

concerning the concept of masculinity were formed from two sources: (a) the available

research about U.S.-based (western), Hispanic male influenced, and heteronormative structures

of masculinity; and b) a prior pilot completed with a Hispanic male intending to transfer in

which concepts of masculinity surfaced significantly related to classroom interaction and

behavior. As stated earlier, the protocol is a combination of directed questions intended to

elicit responses from the participants specifically; and with probes or guides as participants may

need prompting.

DATA MANAGEMENT

The following steps were taken for all interview sessions:

1. All interview sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed by a selected transcriptionist. The data were downloaded and saved to an external USB file and printed.

2. Coded pseudonyms were selected for each participant for identification purposes and to protect the anonymity of the participants. These were coded on a simple excel sheet, matching the original participant to code.

3. I reviewed each audio recording and transcript to check the accuracy of the transcriptionist.

4. In preparation for data analysis, I listened, processed, and reflected on the data as it was being collected. This reflection included writing down and processing the information internally and ensuring that basic information for each participant and notes from each interview was recorded.

5. After ensuring that each interview is accurate, the coded pseudonyms were attached to each interview with original names (and abbreviations) replaced throughout each interview document.

6. The coded interviews were placed in a Word document located on a password-protected computer. These were used for continuous analysis for the completion of the research.

7. The original data were placed on a USB drive, printed out, and placed in a securely locked file drawer in the researcher's office. No other person had access to the file.

8. The original code sheet matching the original participant to the coded pseudonyms were kept in the researcher's home office.

DATA ANALYSIS

After data were compiled, the anonymized interviews were reviewed to begin analysis. I identified overlapping categories and connections from all interviews. Themes were identified and classified with an emphasis on student experiences in and out of the classroom. When analyzing the data, I practiced a comparative method approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The comparative method approach allows the investigator to immerse himself in the data and identify themes from the data analysis process.

After the interview data were obtained, the first data analysis strategy included a process borrowed from Charmaz (2006) to identify primary or overarching themes: remain open, stay close to the data, keep your codes simple and precise, construct short codes, preserve actions, compare data with data, and move quickly through data (p. 49).

Further, data and interview transcription will be loaded into the Atlas.ti program. Secondary data analysis emerged using the Atlas.ti program. Using this computerized process, four steps were taken to identify the interview categories or themes. First, the text was crunched using the word cruncher function of the program. Second, categories were created based on the predominance of particular words. Third, the text was manually coded through a paper and highlighter process. Fourth, the codes were then entered into the program to allow comparisons using the Atlas.ti program.

I compared the output from the comparative method approach with the output using

Atlas.ti. As I coded, certain theoretical propositions emerged. Some of these identified links

between categories or a core category, all of which were central to the study. As the categories

and properties emerged, their links to the core category provided insight leading to higher-level

interpretations. I collected many notes, often called memoing. This memoing is complimented

well by the Atlas.ti program, which provides the capacity to write and attach notes to data

segments. As the data collection and coding proceeds, the codes and the memos accumulate.

When most of the data had been coded, then themes began to emerge.

The next step involved comparing data sets within and across the population of

participants. As themes emerged, interpretations began. From the initial or primary analysis,

the process developed further, higher-level analysis. In short, data collection, note-taking,

coding, and memoing occur simultaneously from the beginning, with writing occurring after

sorting (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Primary interpretation was, then, conducted upon the initial

accumulation of codes, with secondary and tertiary interpretation following as themes were

developed and compared against initial coding. Additional units of data were considered if they

appeared multiple times yet remained elusive in terms of categorization. In some cases, these

elusive pieces remained uncategorized until the end of the analysis process when they were

grouped into a miscellaneous category, considered for incorporation into existing categories, or

thrown out (Ortiz 2003, as cited in Stage & Manning, 2003). This process continued until

interpretation yielded similar insights.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

The interview data were tested for trustworthiness by comparing the responses of all

participants. Although many early qualitative studies highlight the need for trustworthiness,

these same studies refer to validity and reliability, typically reserved for quantitative studies.

Regardless, when validity and reliability have not been used, the methods of achieving

trustworthiness match those of traditional quantitative methods, and epistemological

distinctions are lost. A rich, thick, detailed description was used to ensure external

trustworthiness and credibility. These detailed descriptions were used to review the interview

experience with each participant and, further, were compared among and between different

interview participants. To heighten the possibility that the data may be considered transferable,

comparisons were reviewed between participants through the quantizing of qualitative

interpretation and by comparing thick descriptions. Additionally, I identified an external "spot-

checker" to assist in spot-checking the coding of the first interviews and then conducting

random spot check.

Johnson (1997) attempted to develop a qualitative descriptive framework that

encompasses the following: (a) descriptive validity or the accurate factual account given by the

researcher; (b) interpretive validity or the accurate interpretation of the participant's thoughts,

feelings, or beliefs; and (c) the extent that the theory used accurately represents what has

occurred and thus the study can be deemed credible. Using Johnson (1997) as a loose guide,

several procedures were used to evaluate and document the data quality. Data source

triangulation was achieved by interviewing multiple participants to validate each piece of

information against at least one other source. To increase the credibility of the data, interview

transcripts were reviewed with the participants to assure the accuracy of language and meaning. Furthermore, the interview data was constantly reviewed after primary, secondary, and tertiary analysis. This cross-comparison ensures that the qualitative data was analyzed thoroughly on its own and compared and triangulated to the original non-coded data.

To avoid jeopardizing the validity of the interviews, every effort was made to encourage a free flow of discussion without too many leading questions. While qualitative research may often be thought to be non-generalizable and transferable, in many situations, it may be possible to use the data to compare to other populations. It is expected that the combination outcomes from the participants would provide further insight to study similar populations at other like institutions and other like higher education student populations.

Protection of Human Participants

Participants in this study were advised of the voluntary nature of their participation and guaranteed of complete anonymity. Participants were notified that their participation would not affect their role and status as transfer students. Before data collection, appropriate approvals were also obtained from the key administrators in the institution.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant before participating in the interviews. The participants were advised that their participation in the study would benefit all future male Hispanic/Latino with intent to transfer students dealing with coping in the academic environment. In addition, the participants were assured that there would be no risks or discomforts expected by their participation in the study. Furthermore, the participants were informed that all data would be reported with pseudonyms to avoid identifying individual responses. All data was also protected by storing in a secure place accessible only by me. All

lists and code sheets that connect actual participant names with pseudonyms were stored in a separate locked location from the transcribed data. All data were kept secure in a locked cabinet within a locked office at the institution where the study took place. Any coding sheets identifying the original participants were stored in a private office offsite.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the qualitative design used to conduct this study and illustrated the data collection and analysis of the process of the study. This study conducted eight individual interviews administered to Hispanic/Latino male students intending to transfer to a university. The two-interview sequence will follow a modified Seidman interview process: Step 1 covered general background information and the coping experiences; Step 2 provided additional reflection and clarification of information derived from the initial interview.

The qualitative data were coded and analyzed for themes, patterns, and frequency of responses. The concept of bracketing and the need to remain objective were kept foremost in mind during data collection and analysis. To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation or multiple methods of data analysis were used, which will also strengthen credibility (Merriam, 1988). The next chapter presents the data derived from the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings of the data collected from the interviews. The primary source of data is from semi-structured interview protocol and is also supplemented by research. The results will be presented in relation to the research objectives stated in the study. In this chapter, there may be a limited comparison between participants and nominal interpretation. The data from each participant was extracted from each interview by identifying common themes and then grouping them within the categories of the questions being asked. Data, or passages of texts, were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

The data are presented predominantly within the structure of the interview protocol. Each participant's data is presented and included within the following areas: background information, expectations of the professor, attending and avoiding coping behaviors, the concept of masculinity, being Hispanic, the experience of stress, and general interpretations. Integrated throughout each participant's presentation are related quotations from each participant. This chapter also includes limited thematic interpretive analysis for each participant. A discussion of key study conclusions follows in Chapter Five.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Sample: The study design indicated that up to 12 participants would be contacted to identify interest in the study. Initial outcomes of the research population included 172 potential

participants that were culled using the following criteria: male, intending to transfer, Hispanic/Latino, and 80% of their transfer degree complete.

Number of Participants: Out of the intended 12, eight participants were interviewed, each providing two-interview sequences.

Age: Participants' age ranges varied from 19 to 26 years.

Place of Origin: One interviewee was born in the southeast part of the US, two were born in Mexico, one in Columbia, and the remaining four were born in eastern or western Washington.

Major in School: Participants' majors varied across all disciplines.

Family: Participants' backgrounds varied in terms of family size.

Socio-Economic Status (SES): SES was not a predominant issue, although in some cases, the participants noted the family's economic status.

GPA/Academic Ability: In some cases, the participants indicated their GPA (high/low) and their achievement status (high/low). These varied, and not all participants included this information.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURED

It is not atypical that there may be a point of saturation when collecting data, reviewing interviews (data), and identifying early themes. This means that the researcher sees a similar pattern in the interviewees' responses. A further collection of new data won't necessarily contribute to a discovery or issue. According to Ritchie et al. (2013), it is best to simply to gather data until theoretical saturation is reached. There is a point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample — as the study progresses, more data does not necessarily lead to more

information. The participant's background and other characteristics may not demonstrate

sufficient comparative features for this study. However, the intent of this study is exploratory

and emergent. Themes may emerge from the review and presentation of the interview data.

Thematic Development

As described in Chapter Three, several steps were taken to review the data, begin the

initial analysis, gather data again, and see and develop themes. I took several steps to review

the data that assisted in thematic development. One, I scanned each interview transcript

immediately after the interview to clean up language that the auto text generator might have

misinterpreted in the Zoom environment. After each review and clean-up, I reviewed the

transcript using the general categories of the interview guide and started to code responses

accordingly.

Two, I placed each of the interview transcripts into the Atlas.ti qualitative software

analysis system and conducted a word count or word cruncher. After eliminating extraneous

word counts were reviewed for each participant, then aggregated into one file, and checked

again. The most significant frequency of words used by all participants included (1) masculinity,

male, or man; (2) school, classroom, classes, or college; (3) coping — including stress, paying

attention, asking, focus, homework, sleep, avoid, and drop; (4) professor — including

expectations, good, bad, friend, count on; (5) friends; (6) their ancestral place of birth (Mexico,

Spain, Columbia, etc.) and Hispanic. While a helpful tool, these word counts reaffirmed that I

either guided the participants to the higher frequency in the use of the words, or the

participants used the words as conveyed above in higher frequency as an outcome of their

individual experience and in response to the questions. In either case, the frequencies

predominantly reaffirmed the themes. Again, per participant, the data are presented in the

following themes as an organizing principle. The presentation of data within this exploratory

study is carefully done by ensuring a substantive use of participant's voice or using their words.

This data, including the substantive use of participant text, is presented next.

INTERVIEW RESEARCH FINDINGS

Participant One

Participant One was a twenty-year-old male of Columbian background. He and his

mother had been in the United States since they immigrated in the mid-2010s, and they

originally lived in South Miami but moved to eastern Washington when he was a teenager.

Additionally, many of his family moved with them, and he now counted many aunts, uncles,

and cousins as family in eastern Washington. This student was a recent transfer from the

closest community college in the U.S. and NW region service district. He finished an associate of

arts (AA) degree, began to transfer to a local university, then changed his mind on a new degree

path, and at the time of the interview, attended NW Community College. He was not the first in

his family to go to college, as both his mother and father had college experience. The family had

(student self-reported) mid to high socioeconomic status (SES). Additionally, regarding his

family and support structure, he reported that he had an extensive family of aunts, uncles, and

grandparents. Although she did not work in her chosen field, his mother lived locally and

comfortably. Although his father, in the participant's words, "passed some time ago," when the

participant was a child, he felt that he had tremendous support from his extended family.

Participant One did not work as he had chosen to focus on his studies. He had worked in

the past and made statements about how his car was lacking, but still, he maintained his belief

about being focused on his studies. He stated, "I mean, I have a car. I'm working on it. it's a little beat up right now because I haven't really like spent that much time on work; I don't want—I don't want my mother to give me the money to actually fix my car."

At the time of the interview, Participant One's GPA was self-reported as 3.96, and he had completed 80 of the potential 90 units intended for transfer. The student was recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW community college research office.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

Depending on the situation, the types of stressors, the previous learning patterns — and frankly, a host of other factors — all people tend to experience stress and use various coping strategies to manage the stress. It is generally assumed that active (attending) strategies are often used by persons with high goal orientations, previous experience in a similar setting, and/or previous experience with similar stressors. For this project, attending strategies would be asking questions for clarification, making phone calls, emailing the professors to clarify issues/questions, setting group meetings, sitting closer to the professor, or staying after class to visit with the professor, etc. At the same time, persons with limited goal intention, lack of focus, and limited experience in a similar setting tend to use avoidant (passive strategies). Specific avoiding strategies would include avoiding professor eye contact, falling asleep, sitting in the back of the class, beginning other disruptive conversations, making no attempt to engage in classroom activity, missing tests, and missing assignments.

Additionally, participants often vary in their overt use of a coping strategy when it comes to coping in this environment. In the literature "coping" is typically defined as a

conscious use of strategy applied to an external situation to result in a reduction in a stress level. Conversely, coping unconsciously is more often referred to as a defense mechanism (Thompson et al., 2010). Repeated use of a defense mechanism, and unconscious use, will often lead to changes in a person's internal sense of self or well-being (Thompson et al., 2010). For this study, attending strategies or coping could be classified as described above and are more often done consciously; conversely, avoiding strategies (behaviors) could be classified as described above as defense mechanisms and are more often done unconsciously.

Again, for the presentation of data that follows, the word "coping" will be used for both attending and avoiding behaviors. Additionally, upon reviewing each participants' transcript many attending behaviors were described by the participants, but they were not always aware of them. This could have been more a matter of rote or learned behavior over repeated classroom performance instances. However, unconscious use of an attending behavior was often exhibited in limited situations and not stated frequently. For most participants, repeated use of a strategy often rose to a level of awareness or conscious use.

For Participant One, avoiding strategies were often used both unconsciously and consciously. Students often come to higher education indoctrinated and know the inappropriate or avoiding strategies. And while it may be argued that all avoiding strategies are wrong, it may just as quickly be noted that for some students avoiding may serve an appropriate purpose for a period until readiness is achieved (Gloria et al., 2005). Additionally, participants may use this set of strategies as they move through the developmental stages of being a college student. For students returning or repeating, the use of an avoidant behavior may be seen as a return to an earlier state of development that has more to do with the

92

manual development of tasks for competence and the use of instrumental independence to

solve their problems (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Participant One used both avoiding and attending strategies in many classes, and he was

aware of when they were incorrect. However, the indoctrination of appropriate behavior and

knowing the correct behavior does not mean that Participant One had a reflexive awareness of

why these behaviors may have been wrong and why the behaviors may have limited his long-

term growth.

Participant One did not convey many instances of avoiding behavior throughout the

interview. For this participant, the greater sense of stress conveyed — with accompanying

avoiding strategies — was when I questioned him about previous experiences being in an

overwhelmed state. Participant One took some time to reflect and then recounted his

experience with college algebra, stating "I had to take that class in the summer because I didn't

do as good at first, but not because of the level of difficulty, but the level of involvement that I

did, because it was 8:00 a.m. and I used to go at 8:30... you know. I used to go late. I wasn't

really like focused on my getting a career as I am now." For Participant One, this backward

reflection allowed him to think about his development; it allowed him to think about the

difficulty of the course more appropriately (it was "not difficult") and focus on attending to his

involvement at the time. He noted that he was not involved, frequently going to class late, and

was not focused on his future career.

There were two other mentions of avoiding behavior for Participant One. One was the

issue of cheating (although not explained thoroughly), and the other focused on the students

balancing the amount of work necessary to be successful. As it relates to the student cheating,

he set up his description in the following manner when questioned about his focus. He

described a problematic professor at the community college: "He was from the Middle East….

Pretty old…he would [overwrite] on the board and then on to the wall… it was business

calculus, so imagine the real stress. I managed to pass that class in an unethical way, per se."

However, the student quickly left the topic and did not return to it. This revisit of an earlier

educational period highlighted some significant avoiding behaviors and blaming. Moreover, this

reflection suggested his continued awareness of avoiding and inappropriate behaviors.

However, while acknowledging the issue, he did not recognize and elaborate on this as a

problem.

Participant One's only other mention of an avoiding behavior dealt with the balance of

studying (attending) when beginning each course. As I already mentioned, interacting and

socializing were of great importance for this student. Thus, it made sense that upon taking the

time to establish his social place in the classroom — an attending social function — his focus on

his academics could wane. The student explained:

> Sometimes I need a wake-up call between the term to succeed and excel... like in
> the first exams, I would not do as good. But it's a way of like, I'm going to test
> and see, okay, if I invest this much time, like what results I'm going to—am I
> going to get? So, like if I say, I will invest the time that I have not invested and
> achieve good results. Like you can see, like, for example, in your class, at first, I
> was like, "Okay, I'm going to test to see how it is." And then as I saw, "Okay, so I
> have to pay a little bit more attention in the book and whatever, during the
> quizzes," and I managed to raise my grade.

Given this student's reflexive abilities, his statements were very limited as they regard

avoiding behaviors. This is exemplified when I asked the question, "Did you ever feel

overwhelmed in that class or any class?" He then stated, "…overwhelmed? No. Challenged?

Yes. Because I manage challenge, but I never feel overwhelmed."

94

For Participant One, his experiences with stress and attending focused strategies were very thorough and often extended beyond the typical — pays attention, does homework, etc. For this student, he appeared to be much more conscious of his attending behaviors and moreover the importance to not only negotiating his success in the classroom, but also giving the appearance that he is engaged and successful. The following passage sums up his focus and orientation:

> I consider myself pretty successful in all my classes… mostly it depends on the material that I'm working on. But I actually like, as I said, I'm very goal-oriented and I have—I focus on whatever—whatever I'm responsible for. If I have to turn in a paper, then I will make sure that I turn it on the deadline. Sometimes I find myself like in a little—in some trouble when like—like, for example, when I have two tests on the same day. It is a little stressful.

> Participant One appeared to be slightly further along with his personal development such that he was not only attempting more attending coping behaviors and academic activities associated with the course, but he was also successfully using them. Moreover, the behaviors appear to be integrated into his very experience. For Participant One, the interrelationships with professors, other students, and his own goal orientation are interwoven into the fabric of the classroom and into the fabric of his success in the classroom.

The relationships with key individuals, mentors, professors, or other associated academic personnel have been found to be a key to student's later-in-life success, connection to a major in college, and more timely progression to graduation. For Participant One, I expected that his heightened sense of integration would not only enable him to be successful in each course, but also help him maintain good connections with professors for later references, good connections to the material presented in each course, and good connections to application of learned material into his later career.

At the beginning of the interview sequence each participant is asked, "…you're starting [school], so what do you think or feel about the upcoming term: your work, the tests, interactions or completing a class, before you ever begin?" For Participant One there were definitive expectations of the professor. Participant One had expectations of an almost-performance by a professor, a high level of interaction, and with limited necessity for notetaking. However, Participant One's perspectives included second order interpretations as he made claims about the responsibility of learning resting with the learner.

For Participant One the social interaction perspective was of the utmost importance. His first concerns were about the classroom setting and size. For large classrooms he stated, "they are a little challenging on the fact that you don't have that interaction with the professor." Conversely, he conveyed the small class experience when he stated, "and I also like the small class experience because you have the teacher interaction." While these two passages don't necessarily convey student initial expectations of professors, they clearly define the most important element for him, which is setting the stage for interaction.

As it regards the specifics of expectations of professors, he stated both current and past expectations. Participant One's first statement about interaction was somewhat telling of his development, and moreover, his emphasis upon interaction. When asked about typical interactions with friends or professors, he stated:

> Well, I don't really have that much interaction with the professors, except with yourself that I've been interacting quite recently. But with the peers, it depends, you know, because my—if I use a culturally diversity that, you know, I cannot escape my culture.

The student then immediately entered statements about his relationship issues with

peers and concerns of culture. This limited description conveys Participant One's perspective

and reliance upon interaction with his peers. However, with a further interview probe ("tell me

how you communicate with your professor?"), he then stated, "well I always conduct myself

with respect towards a professor or a mentor. Always, always, always, always." This statement

emphasized the respect the student had for the role of the professor, which was then

reiterated when he discussed his preference for using email as a medium of communication

with a professor. He stated:

> Whenever I have a doubt, or whatever, when I probably go in to inquire about
> my grade or the problem in the class, I'll probably send an email. You know, I'll
> take advantage of the electronic mail. And, you know, I don't really like to phone
> a lot, because I understand that professors give lectures where they're actually
> busy doing some other things, and they constantly receive phone calls.

This reference to respect is a further iteration of several factors for this student; he has

been indoctrinated into "general classroom experience," he relied more on peer interaction,

and he continued to develop his abilities to interact and get to know his professor.

Participant One made a significant shift in expectations of the professor in several parts

of his interview. For this participant there was a much greater emphasis on the student role and

expectations that students will take part of the effort for their own learning. Two passages

detail this shift and stated expectation. The first details the student experience with strong

belief in student lead/peer lead learning. Participant One stated:

> The professor actually encouraged us to participate, and as he gave the lecture,
> he would actually post the questions [and] ask, what do you think? And
> sometimes the discussion would like change from teacher-student interaction to
> student-student interaction, and the professor would actually encourage that.
> You know, we had to do some presentations and everything... but it was just a
> peer discussion.

In another passage, Participant One indicated the requirement for student participation and student learning is dependent mostly upon the student. The participant stated, "success in the classroom is actually achieving good results through hard work. You cannot have everything handed to you. And you have to invest your time and actually be actively engaged in like the course work."

However, even as this participant highlighted the need and expectation for student-dominant learning, it was juxtaposed with traditional notions of professor expectations. In a final passage related to success in the classroom, the participant quickly switched from expectations of student participation to statements about performing when the professor tells you so. He stated, "you know, like whatever the professor says, hey, you know, like touch your ear and raise — like raise your left foot, or whatever, you know, it's going to be — it's going to reflect on your performance." So, while it appeared that the student understood and expected heavy student involvement, there was still an expectation that the professor may act somewhat capriciously, and students must perform accordingly.

Participant One further explained interactions and expectations of the professor when he explained the difference in easy versus hard classes. An easy class meant you didn't have to, as he stated, "consider a need to come into the professor for anything at all." However, if the professor was cool then the student could develop a higher-level interaction. In one case he did so, as he relates his personal experience getting to know professors at the community college. He conveyed, "I actual had some pretty cool professors… who allowed me to have a real-world experience and it was considered to be excellent." Almost all of Participant One's reflections about professors conveyed similar statements. He was concerned with respect for the position

and conveyed this through language, although two general types of statements reflected his

limitations in the setting. The first general set of statements had more to do with his concerns

for interaction. The second set referred to his concern over cool factors associated with the

professors. While not considered the domain of the male — or masculine side — both types of

statements reflected Participant One's sense of the masculine and how it frames the language

he used and his interaction in the classroom.

MASCULINITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Multiple questions explored the masculine classroom, perceptions of masculinity,

masculine language, and how masculinity was enacted in the classroom. While many young

people may not have the language to explain in detail their own internal and external

deliberation about their behavior, the general orientation/focus on the participant's responses

to this set of questions gave an indication about the lack of a student's ability to understand

their own maleness and how it was enacted. This line of questions was therefore very much

guided and less emergent. Nonetheless, Participant One's perceptions of masculinity in the

classroom were still his own.

Participant One conveyed several traits that may be considered particularly masculine.

Additionally, he also conveyed a sense of self that reflected that he understood his masculine

side but appreciated his limits. I will categorize his perspectives into three general areas:

statements about being masculine, communication related to masculinity, and his identity and

masculinity. Upon his first definition of masculinity Participant One very clearly stated his

beliefs about what is means to be a man. He stated, "men, in my culture, is [are] a provider,"

and goes on, "I associate it with power." He then went on to describe both activities and

99

behaviors associated with his masculinity. He listed things that men will acquire "money, homes, cars" as well as "done [doing] hard work...I've bent my back." Additionally, while he noted that he is very masculine, he just as easily contrasts his masculinity with behaviors/labels in opposition. He stated:

> I don't know, like I'm very masculine, but I'm also very analytical. And so, I can be very versatile. I can be the jock and actually like sports and whatever, but I can be also like the philosopher or like the mentor, or like to think, and think about philosophy and stuff like that, you know. I apply myself in different settings.

> The above statement may have reflected this student's limits to define masculinity: he appeared to hold to an idea of the man as a strong jock, separate from a man who could also be analytical. However, these concepts did not need to be opposites or contained with different spheres of a masculine self. He appeared to have a perceptive that others saw notions of traditional masculinity, separate from and/or limited from being or becoming intellectual.

Participant One's connection to masculinity was defined in several instances by the term "aggressive." Additionally, as he further defined masculinity and compared it to behavior, he conveyed his beliefs about how women could be seen as aggressive. He stated how women perform in the classroom:

> I've seen like some women actually become actually aggressive and try... tend to have little masculine characteristics. You know, like for some of the aggressive things, and the way they conduct discussions or like ambition. I admire that and I don't care if you're like your gender, your sexual inclination, or whatever. You know, you're achieving and for high results, do it.

> Moreover, because he used the term "aggressive," he appeared to limit a woman's ability to be appropriately attentive in the classroom. It is interesting that he appeared to contrast men and women in the classroom, and even went as far as

100

defining what men do and what women do. His perspective appeared very traditional,

very hierarchical, and clearly within the domain of hegemonic masculinity.

When asked about masculinity in the classroom he first began with a passage

differentiating men and women. He stated:

> Like in many Hispanic cultures the man works, women take care of the children.
> In recent times, women have also had the opportunity to succeed, so sometimes
> the women might provide, and the men might nurture. But they see masculinity
> or man, it's … I associate it with power. You know, I associate it with being in
> control.

Although there are several other statements regarding masculinity, Participant

One indicated that this was not only his belief about masculinity, but also how he

communicated in a masculine manner.

The concept of communication in masculinity is important to discuss, because it

represents the manifestation of the Participant One's perception of how to be

masculine. For Participant One, this was conveyed in one simple passage when asked

how someone might be seen being a man. He related, "like in my case, I actually am a

little bit aggressive in discussions." He further stated his belief about both the

appropriateness and inappropriateness of masculinity in the classroom. In class

discussions highlight a particular masculine enterprise for Participant One, and in some

cases, inappropriate behavior. He stated, "like the male is territorial, you know, and

when you see two personalities that are territorial and clash together… there's going to

be some arguments and I mean, this guy, 'Hey, so F-U, or whatever,' and you're going to

have a fight in the classroom." Although he did highlight the importance of discussion

methods in the classroom, he was just as easily conflicted as this method presented an inherent conflict (non-masculine) structure, one that he could not seem to fully absorb.

This last issue of absorption was interesting as this student challenges his own beliefs about masculinity and his own identity. He indicated typical traits that associate with strong masculinity, "yes, I am a bit aggressive," but also noted just as easily that he can be seen as the nerdy type. As stated in the first part of this section, he had some difficulty holding the idea in his mind that a masculine man could be both a jock and be analytical. Although the language he used to describe his sense of self was so strongly masculine, it was not surprising that he was still somewhat challenged these conflicting notions. When he stated, "You know, so hey, capitalize on my resume. Acquire assets strategically. Take over the world, right?" and he did so with such vehemence when considering his aggression in the classroom. However, he easily contrasted this perspective with his perceptive of how his masculinity can change when he stated, "in discussions. And actually, I think my masculinity like slides, like around that area [in class discussions]."

These two contrasting notions of behavior, both surrounding the issue of masculinity, do not appear to be fully incorporated for Participant One. When asked a question about the volume of homework and learning, the concept of being overwhelmed emerged. For Participant One he commented about the use of the schoolwork in a manner that suggested he was challenging the thought that he could be overwhelmed. He stated:

> I take overwhelmed — like if something overwhelms me, I consider it a challenge, and I actually try to find, you know, a way to solve it. You know, I don't let anything like come in between me and my goal. You know, if it's a barricade, I'm going to find a way to destroy it, you know, bring the wall down,

102

per se. So overwhelmed, that I cannot properly function? Not really. I mean, it's going to be — it's very challenging, you know, a very challenging experience I've had before, but not that has had — impeded me into actually achieving good results.

In some cases, he saw and spoke about being masculine and did so with such strength that he seemed to be both enacting a perceived sense of masculinity and one that is culturally defined for him, as he had described his Columbian culture as being highly masculine and patriarchy based. However, he just as easily contrasted these ideas and statements with issues that in his mind are not so masculine: being analytical, sometimes the note-taker (nerdy), and the ability to slide away from masculinity in discussions. This ability on his part suggested that he was taking steps to think about these two opposing ideas.

BEING HISPANIC/COLUMBIAN.

Multiple responses from Participant One related to being Hispanic. For this participant, in some cases these responses were elicited when I asked him about his background and/or speaking Spanish. He was very quick to point out that he was Hispanic, but really preferred defining his national identity as being Columbian. For this participant, there also appeared to be a pecking order or ranking of national identity within the Hispanic realm. In this first section he went to some length to describe being Columbian and compared this to other national identities. The following was his third response to a question about how he communicated with professors or peers. He stated:

> And, for example, us Columbians are going to have something to say about Cubans, and Puerto Ricans, and Peruvians. You know, it's not really like all happy

103

and dandy. You know, there's going to be some friction between cultures because, "Oh, hey, the Columbians are the drug dealers," or whatever. Pugh! And "Hey, the Cuban's loud," and, you know, they're going to have some negative perspectives in regard to each and everyone's culture that causes barricades in our general communication.

You know, for example, I'll be with some Columbian guys and then this Cuban guy comes in, and then they're like, you know, like what is this guy doing? You know, sometimes it happens, you know, and I don't care. You know, I don't care if you're from China, I don't care if you're from Pluto, or whatever, you come here, you bring good ideas, you bring like in a good way, and you have good personality, I don't care where you're from, you're cool. Like it doesn't happen like that.

I mean, like, as I said, as I perceive we Columbians who are here in the United States are very ethnocentric, and about Columbia in particular. I mean, in Columbia, in our country itself, you have frictions in between different regions. I mean, I come from like a mountainous part, you know, and it's a couple of — you know, it's like 400 miles southwest of Bogotá. You know, and from where we're from, we don't really like people from Bogotá, and we don't really like people from Cali, and we don't really like people from the coast, and we don't really like people from here.

This passage was very interesting for several reasons. One, it appeared to emerge unsolicited from the line of questioning, but it was important enough that he continued for some length. Two, it reinforced his connection to his national identity. And three, there appeared to be some considerable connection to his constructed notion of masculinity and his own understanding that he is among those who are ethnocentric. At the level of secondary or tertiary interpretation, one might surmise that he is quite linked to his culture, his national identity, and his notions of being a man within those contexts. Although the issue of masculinity is somewhat an inappropriate extension from this passage, understanding the foundation would require further inquiry with the participant.

Additionally, through other sections of his narrative, he also noted about being Columbian and being social in the classroom and being able identify/connect with

others more easily. In the following section, he commented about how he engaged with

others in the class. He stated:

> It's like I tend to be inclined a little bit into my culture. I mean, it's not that I
> prefer to, but like you cannot escape it... it's the thing with Columbian culture. It
> tends to like, bring you in, even if you — like I came and I didn't know — like
> when I was just a recent transfer, and I didn't know anybody. I was sitting in a
> classroom I wear a shirt. And the shirt said… it was a brand of cigarettes that is
> Columbian, right? And it was like an Indian guy. So, we immediately clicked. Like
> one time I found myself surrounded by Columbians, and they were talking, and
> they included me ...and I was in.

> When he states that he is "in," and that he is a "little bit into" his culture, he did

appear to know how and when to fit in, when to connect, and how that ease of

connection perhaps afforded him a level of peace or comfort. Although we discussed

several strategies to ease comfort (coping strategies), he did not specifically refer to his

connection to other Columbians. So, although he appeared aware of the importance of

finding that connection, he didn't necessarily do so in the context of understanding how

this might also help him in the course.

A final comment about his positionality on being Columbian within the context

of North American culture. Participant One was asked a question about how he engages

others in the class, and he first began commenting about culture. As his answer became

more expansive, he went on to indicate that being Columbian in North American culture

did not exactly fit. He stated:

> So, it's really interesting, you know, because I actually try to conduct myself in a
> very similar way in different cultures, but it's not possible because Columbian is
> different that, for example, the American culture in general. I mean, we do share
> some characteristics because we're Americans, right? But in terms of the
> Columbian culture, I might do something different, or like I'll perceive something
> a little bit differently than like if I was in like in, for example, an Anglo

105

environment. But, yeah, I mean, other than that, you know, I'm cool to everybody.

This response was interesting in that he appeared to be ready to discuss how it might be different if he weren't in North America, or that in a different setting he might act differently. However, the participant had gone on in quite a bit of detail regarding his performance of interacting with others in the long passage on previous section. The prior passage gave better details than this response to how he interacts with others — for him being Columbian is part of the enactment of self in the classroom. He might be "cool with everybody," but this participant makes sure that he is aware of who is in the classroom, what their backgrounds are, and if they have something in common, he finds outs and connects with those other students.

THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

Each participant was prompted to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year." This allowed the student to explain in their own words how they began courses, what they expected, and how they set up the course term. This student experienced a variety of stressors in relation to the activity of in-class performance. For Participant One, stress was encountered when entering the classroom, when engaging others, and when interacting with the professor; however, this was seen as a challenge and one that this student welcomed. For Participant One, it could almost be stated that each act in the classroom was part of a performance, one in which he had set the stage of performance early in the term and then set about enacting it each day.

As he considered the opening question, this participant's first comment was, "it's all about the challenge." His concerns were more about how and what he could learn. Additionally, he pre-planned by identifying and mixing his classes, "I try to get really hard classes and try to level them with easy classes." For him, the experience of stress was managed by various attending and interacting strategies. He continued by adding, "oh it's great. It's a challenge, and yeah, well sure, I find my friends, I sit with them, I engage them in conversation. And you might even find me standing among them as they are sitting. That is, until the professor comes in." For this student, he made sure to place himself in a socially interactive context, and even stated, "yes, I look for social interaction, not just to talk because it is a classroom, but because I like engaging people. But the professor always comes first, and I will be the first to quiet everybody down."

Additionally, this general sense of interaction was not only tied to the act of stress reduction, but also to this student's ideas about performance and masculinity. He placed himself in situations where his comfort was assured, he noted his own difference from others in classes when he stated:

> See, they're self-conscious about themselves, so they don't want to raise their hand because a bunch of people are going to turn their heads and look at them. I don't care. I raise my hand and give my opinion or ask a question if don't understand.

However, more important than this man's sense of place and comfort is that he found a place, then he often took the next step, and concerned himself with the act of learning. This was reinforced by his statement that, "I like the auditorium experience. And I also like the small classroom experience because you have the teacher interaction. I am very versatile in my tastes. Either way, I always learn a lot."

107

Lastly, Participant One's general sense of stress was often mitigated by his goal setting. No specific question was asked about the experience of transferring from the community college to the university, but this student spoke to his sense of making the transition — and moreover, his goal orientation while doing so. He explained, "It's different, the preparation you have at NW Community College, versus the interaction that you have at the university. But the way I like to look at it, is that the university is preparing you. You're like one step closer to the real world." This student's ability to consistently focus himself in this direction could be one measure of his potential success.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of Participant One's avoiding and attending coping strategies, expectations of professors, his sense of enacted masculinity in the classroom, his descriptions of stress, or being Hispanic. For Participant One, stress was a term that he even used, I defined it when I asked the question. In the latter part of the interview, he conveyed his beliefs about stress by describing how he looked at stress in school — as a challenge. Although he made several statements that could be considered taking a step back or being consumed by the challenge, these were made when reflecting about his first experiences upon entering higher education. This participant suggested that these issues may be present, but they are part of the challenge: the challenge of discovering a new subject, a new professor, and a stage to interact on and perform for others. This perspective suggested a much more involved view of the importance of becoming self-engaged in one's own education.

Participant One understood and deliberated avoidant and attending strategies suggesting he was aware of coping strategies. Participant One appeared to perform the appropriate behaviors — seemingly because they have become instilled in him. For this student, the value of learning and engaging in the learning experience was not only tied to finishing coursework and finishing the degree, but also appeared simply to be about becoming engaged in a learning experience.

This connection to learning was stated several times when he conveyed his own expectation of performance. Participant One had the perspective that a professor is a performer, but held that with high regard, while contrasting the higher expectation of the student to perform, to interact, and to engage in his own learning. As stated by this student, "the professor should not just hand you the grade, nor should you just get the degree." Additionally, this student was highly attuned to the act of performance in the classroom. While more research would be needed to understand where this perspective comes from — for this student this sense of performance may be because this student was more fully emotionally and culturally developed — but it could also be his own personal style. However, this potentially heightened sense of interaction allowed him to be very highly involved and engaged in general classroom activity, in discussions, and more fully capable of working with and engaging the professor.

Finally, the line of questioning concerning masculinity suggested interesting contrasts for this student. His ideas of masculinity appear tied to a very traditional upbringing: strong male figures in his life that suggest a connection to sports, to labor as work, to aggressiveness and assertiveness, and idealized notions of male roles. However, as he pondered his own

interaction in the classroom — he can be a jock, but he can also be the note-taker — he was

beginning to struggle with a strongly framed dualism of masculinity. The one side of masculinity

suggests ideals of his traditional upbringing, whereas the other side suggested the development

of knowledge, being the smart one, being the note taker as holding tremendous value. He

stated:

> You know, and I would be the only guy taking notes…. they actually might be called quote-unquote "nerd." But, you know, like how can a nerd — I mean, I could consider myself a nerd…but I like to study, I like to actually like fill my head with knowledge and everything. And I like to be knowledgeable in many things. Like my group [Columbians] we'll do anything in the class. They will copy off of me. It's going to reflect sooner or later in your [their] career. You know, I know I'm going to be successful; are you going to be successful, like cheating all the way through college? So that's their problem…

> For this participant his concept of masculinity was one that did not challenge his

potential success. He appeared to know that he wanted a non-traditional classroom experience

and an engaging professor. He even saw that professors can be somewhat capricious when he

conveyed that sometimes "you just do whatever they tell you." However, it appeared that his

sense of masculinity may be presenting a challenge as he discovered his place in the learning

world, in the classroom, and moreover within his own culture. On some days, he saw himself as

strongly masculine and dominant, and on others, more educationally focused and nerdy.

Additionally, as he was currently struggling with these notions, even the interview process

allowed him to further reflect on the issue of masculinity in the classroom. When I asked the

final question regarding anything that he might add, he shared the following:

> It actually made me think about how I would — I actually conduct myself in the classroom, you know, I actually — in retrospect I was looking at… I had a shift, and I actually looked at myself in a classroom from the back. And I was like, "Hey, I like that guy. You know, this guy's going to be somebody. He's going to conquer the world." You know?

This participant struggled — and occasionally slips into such a strong dominant

role (possibly not just masculine), that it could be conjectured that his current

educational setting may have been the strongest determinant of his vacillating notions

of masculinity. And it may be that any particular educational setting will not be enough

to counter his strong masculine sense.

Although these considerations of masculinity can be interpreted in other ways, I

strongly believe that this participant displayed both typical and some atypical masculine

approaches to problem-solving and academic performance in the classroom. Certainly multiple

other factors could contribute to this participants' sense of style and behavior in the classroom,

which could include general coping strategies and personal development, contributions from

culture, and the general stress related to his intention to transfer.

Participant Two

Participant Two was a twenty-year-old male of Mexican and Cuban background. His

family emigrated to the U.S. in the late 1990s with his parents, grandparents, some aunts and

uncles, and cousins all moving to eastern Washington. At the time of the interview, the

participant lived in the urban city region of this NW U.S. city, with his extended family still in

eastern Washington. This student came directly from his high school in eastern Washington to a

community college near NW community college. His experience at the other community college

was, as stated by the participant, "not good," but he didn't want to move home again. He came

to NW Community College where this researcher recruited him into this study. He self-reported

that he had some Running Start (early college) credits, but no AP (advanced placement) credits.

He reports doing well in most subjects, but preferred math and science to any other subject.

He is the first in his immediate family to go to college, with some of his first cousins attending a community college close to their home in eastern Washington. The family has (student self-reported) low- to mid-socioeconomic status (SES). His family and support structure include an extensive family of aunts, uncles, and grandparents. His parents both still live in eastern Washington. He feels that he has tremendous support from his extended family. Participant Two is employed part-time, in two different jobs. As he reflected on his work and school balance, he noted that he often feels stressed to make enough money to ensure he can live, have a car, and still do fun things.

At the time of the interview, Participant Two's current GPA was self-reported as 3.45, and he had completed 75 of the potential 90 units intended for transfer. The student was recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW community college research office. Participants were offered a modest stipend, Participant Two accepted the stipend.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were often used both unconsciously and consciously. And he appeared to use both avoiding and attending strategies as it relates to the questions asked in the interview. In the aggregate, strategies about attending were used at the start of each course and in response to knowing what is expected of him. He commented about his preparation regarding the first day of class:

> Whoa! The first, obviously, is go to school, go to my first class... Then I would have to go to my second class, and then my third class. So, by that one (the third) it's already a little bit — you've already tired from the first two classes, and that being your third class, then you have to start over, and take a lot of notes—a lot of notes, because the professor had — took a lot, a lot of notes.

112

This description was one that, while using attending coping strategies, was described in a manner that appeared to elevate his stress. This behavior was also exemplified in the opening of the interview when he commented about professors that do not help you and instead — just talk. Additionally, this level of stress was emphasized even more when he then linked going to class with taking notes, and then having to take an exam. The exams appeared to be at the highest level of stress when he indicated, "especially when you have other things to do, and you don't really have a long time to study for them because they might give you a week before class start." The stress was further highlighted when he commented on the balance of work and life. Although work was important to him and allowed him to be able to afford school, the level of comfort he appeared to feel with work is not conveyed in the same manner as when he describes school. He stated:

> I mean, it's different from work when you go to school — it's home and at school. And when you go to work, you leave work there and you're out of work. But school follows you, because studying for tests, homework, assignments, essays, anything, school follows you.

He consistently commented on the importance of school and its relationship to his future, but similar limiting/high stress comments appeared throughout his interview. These comments taken in the aggregate suggested that Participant Two had a strong awareness of appropriate attending strategies and practices them but did not have the awareness that the strategies are often used because when doing so they mitigate stress. Like Participant One, this participant does not appear to have reflexive awareness of why these behaviors may not be helping him develop as a student.

Throughout the interview, Participant Two conveyed multiple instances of avoiding behavior. For this participant, a greater sense of stress and accompanying avoiding strategies were conveyed when I questioned him about how he communicates, follows up, or seeks clarity. Participant Two was somewhat perfunctory in his responses to questions related to avoidant behaviors. When asked about seeking help or if he emailed professors, he stated that, "writing takes too long." When asked about doing homework to stay focused, he responded, "No (this is not a strategy I use)." When asked about taking notes, he stated, "No" again. He did note that attendance helped him stay focused and be successful, but also readily provided that if a professor focuses on themselves and their talking, then he just shuts down and stays quiet. He commented about one professor who told him, "Be quiet. I am the one speaking," when the participant attempted to ask a question. Although conversely, he noted that when he feels overwhelmed in school, he readily does not take notes, does not read ahead, and falls asleep in class. In some cases, this all feels "Frustrating, you want to drop the class. You actually want to leave school, period, just 'cause of one class."

There was one additional mention of avoiding behavior for Participant Two. For this participant, his question asking was nuanced. He felt comfortable speaking up in class, especially if a professor allowed it. He felt comfortable raising his hand if the professor called for answers. But in a particular way he did not view question-asking as a means to gain clarity or seek new understanding. In one passage he described a successful class as one where a student would be "on point, understanding everything that is happening, and not having many questions. And if you have questions, make sure you have the answers." For this student, it appeared that he would only ask a question if he knew or had assurance that the answer would

provide clarity and not open another line of inquiry. For this student, one might posit that

learning is not about the critical development of thought and an exploration of ideas. This

appeared to be more a matter of knowing facts. And if a person does not ask questions, then

the possibility of getting a vague answer is diminished. Thus, it appeared that Participant Two

uses avoiding coping strategies to hold on to what is comfortable or known.

Participant Two appeared to be at a stage with his personal development where he did

demonstrate attending and avoiding coping behaviors interchangeably. However, these

appeared to be more in reaction to an emotional moment in a course, not cognitive moments.

Attending coping strategies, when used at the wrong time for this participant, seemingly served

to shut him down: he stopped reading, stopped going to class, fell asleep, and/or stayed quiet.

This student commented on a major course that had him stuck — College Algebra. He

commented that he used to be good at math in high school but was not doing well in this

course in college. He had already taken the course three times in college and, of those three

attempts, had dropped the course before failure set in, each time resulting in a failing grade or

dropped before receiving the failing grade. This repetitive sense of failure appeared to make

the student feel hopeless and he commented that he knew he needed the course to graduate,

that it was frustrating, but ultimately when asked what his strategy was, he stated, "I wish I

knew. I wish I knew. It's…," and then just stopped talking.

For Participant Two, I expect that his limited sense of integrated cognitive coping

strategies may mitigate his success in courses where his social interaction strategies are not

validated, or there is a lack of relationally based professors.

For this participant there were definite expectations of professors. As students convey thoughts about their teachers, they often take the traditional view and want them to lecture (but not too much), to be supportive and open to inquiry, and to be engaged with students. Additionally, there is a very performative feature that students expect, an expectation that appeared to be much more about entertainment. In the view of the Participant Two, regarding one professor, he stated, "the professor was a bust, never was I bored in that class." Thus, it appeared that the manner of the professor for Participant Two was one that allowed others to enjoy the class — and for this student also to relax. The professor for this course was a woman, but the student did not differentiate if this style of teaching presentation was a more masculine or feminine feature.

Participant Two had a general sense of expected performance by the professor, but more importantly, expected that the professor would create a connection, listen to the student's needs, and appreciate the lives of students. Participant Two's statement near the end of his interview is perhaps the most telling of his perspective. When asked if he had anything to add, he stated:

> That is most of the problem — time. Professors….obviously if you have other things to do, if the way you really feel outside of class, like something might have happened to you. For example, my uncle passed away, and that made me not want to go to school for a while. The break-up with my girlfriend made me not want to go to school as well. It was like you're not up for it, you don't want to go do that this time.

In other sections of his interview, it is more apparent that although this participant had expectations of the professor, these were less about learning and more about relationships. In a previous section I had already noted that this student had a perspective that the professor

116

should be open and balanced in their reactions to students — to not appear to rule over them. This is reiterated throughout this student's interview, and it is exemplified by two statements. First, Participant Two commented about a concern related to being right or being wrong. He noted that in some cases his professors have stated something incorrectly, but no one says anything. He commented about a time in class that he questioned a response about its correctness, "hold on, isn't this that? And then the teacher's like, 'Oh, you're right.'" Then Participant Two continued, "So obviously if you don't stand for something, then everybody else thinks that they're wrong." Second, later in the interview, Participant Two commented about his general perspective of how a class should run and the role of the professor: "I want it to be a free, open class. I don't want anybody to stay quiet just because of the professor."

Finally, Participant Two made clear his expectations of the professor in a passage while discussing what makes a successful course. For this participant there is a much greater emphasis that the professor be responsible. Participant Two stated:

> I think professors are the number one — I mean, if a professor can keep your attention, at least in my case (and maybe other students see it differently). In my case, if a professor can keep my attention and actually make me want to go to class, then I see me passing that class without a problem.

The predominance of responses from Participant Two related to the professor had more do with the role they will play in conveying information within a balanced, interactive, and supportive class environment. Moreover, much like Participant One, Participant Two had an expectation of a performance of sorts. For this participant, the notion was introduced that the professor, "is (be) a bust" or be quite funny. And although the student acknowledged he, himself, must take initiative for his own learning, the statements of expectations appear to leave most of the onus on the professor.

117

Participant Two conveyed, through several responses, very traditional westernized notions of masculinity. Additionally for this participant, there appeared to be both a hesitancy to comment about this, but also clear declarations when he does respond during the interview. I specifically asked a question about what being a man means, or to define the word "masculine." Participant Two was asked both questions but responded to the latter question. He stated, "I'd say it's a pretty hard definition. I mean, masculine. That would be like basically taking an approach, taking charge of something." As the questions turned to his sense of self as related to being masculine, he stated, "I stand for whatever I believe in. I don't put my head down for nothin'."

In a similar manner to Participant One, Participant Two conveys his sense of masculinity as tied to his identity. As a relationship to his prior statement, "not putting his head down," he went on to describe his role in the classroom. He stated, "I've taken this class enough times that maybe someone else will just be like, forget school. But I'm going stay, I don't care. I'm going to continue because that's the major I'm going for, and I'm going to do it." For Participant Two, being a man and "standing up," also included continued persistence toward his goals. For him, even though he continued to repeat his concerns about failing a particular course and his tenaciousness about sticking with his major program of study, being a man means that he does not give up.

When asked about demonstrations of masculinity in the classroom, he used contrasted male behavior to female behavior, stating that men are slightly more loud, more demanding, and more insistent in general — and specifically in the classroom. As he thought about his own

118

behaviors, he again made a comment about not stopping until he got what he wanted; essentially, to persist no matter what. The above statement may reflect this student's limits to define masculinity; he appears to hold to an idea of the man as a strong and persistent, never giving up. His connection to masculinity was defined in several instances by his perspective on interaction and performance in the classroom — be overly communicative and be ready to speak, but also know what you are saying is correct.

Participant Two's perspective on masculinity was interesting and potentially limiting. He had definite ideas about what is appropriate and not but discussing the issue did not necessarily come easily. In many cases when he provided examples, he seemed subtly aware that he should not sound too forthright in his opinions about what a man does or how a man should act. His responses were a bit quieter; he looked downward and almost sheepishly, as if he was aware that giving his opinions about masculinity may not be liked or met with opposition. Unlike Participant One, this participant didn't vacillate on masculine scale: being a man was about speaking up, standing out, being vocal, and being right.

This strong central notion of masculinity appeared to be limiting to Participant Two in that he did not necessarily see that many of the attending behaviors to cope could assist him in navigating information, understanding why he might still struggle (especially in College Algebra), and how he might find his way to more successful interaction in each class.

Being Hispanic/Cuban

Multiple responses from Participant Two related to being Hispanic. This participant was often quick to express himself regarding his background and his language. He did speak with a

119

slight accent; he described learning about this/doing this because he spent time in Miami with

his extended family. There were moments in the interview that he would respond in a more

heavily accented manner, and occasionally punctuated his responses with an emphasis word in

Spanish; for example, family became familia; school became colegio, or man became hombre.

He identified quite a bit with his Cuban background and the proud heritage of his family. And

although he and his immediate family are quite removed from their Cuban roots (living in the

state of Washington), he was keenly aware of the importance of his identity for him and his

family. At one point when discussing being Hispanic he stated, "it isn't so much about being

Hispanic or even speaking Spanish, it is about the connections that we have for being proud

Cubans."

Just as with Participant One, there also appeared to be a pecking order or

ranking of national identity within the Hispanic realm. Participant Two was less overt in

his statements, but for him Cubans are the best. He stated:

> It is something that Americans [North Americans] don't understand. Others here
> have this sense that all Hispanic people are the same and even speaking Spanish
> is all the same. It takes away so much when we all get lumped together. And you
> know, Cubans have this shared story together of the struggle. The struggle in
> Cuba, the struggle to come to America, the struggle in loving our country and our
> leader. But for Americans, they just don't understand. It is often very hard to
> discuss with others.

Like Participant One, this specific interview response came about just by asking about

his Hispanic background. And, like Participant One, for this participant the response was also

strongly is tied to his sense of and connection to his national identity. However, unlike

Participant One, for this participant, notions of masculinity and being Cuban do not appear to

overlap in ways that came through in the interview. For this participant, his masculinity did not

appear to overlap with his background as a Cuban man. According to the literature, in fact, although many believe that all Hispanic cultures are highly masculine, the Cuban culture is one that is also known as collective and feminine (De La Torre, 1999). So, although Participant One may not appear to see his enacted masculinity or traditional or normative, for Participant Two his sense of masculinity may very well be cultural and not enacted in a typically heteronormative manner.

<small>THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS</small>

Each participant was asked to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year." Participant Two commented in two general ways. His first response was about reviewing RateMyProfessor.com to review his potential professor. His larger concerns were about professors who appear too insular and focused on transmitting information (one-way transactions). In his mind, these attributes indicated that the professor may not pay attention to or help his students. His second response was about how he engaged in the course socially and the friends he had or people he would meet. In this second response, he appeared to demonstrate a stance that was free of stress when encountering new situations or when entering the classroom and engaging others/peers.

Although he commented about his comfort upon entering the room, when he thought about his schoolwork and the volume of it, he appeared to demonstrate growing concern. His concerns were more about how and what he would have to do, the number of courses, the time it would take, and the pressure to do all of it. When questioned about pre-planning his courses for the year, he seemed even more concerned. He commented about developing his educational plan and knowing what he needed to take, but there appeared to be trepidation in

his response. For him, the experience of stress appeared to be accumulating, and he began to get quieter in his responses, even though this question occurred at the inception of the interview. Conversely, when he commented about entering the classroom, his positive engagement in the interview intensified as he talked about walking into the room, described how he looked around for a seat, for people he knew, and for a place to start talking with others. Coupled with this intensity, he appeared to visibly relax when he described this situation.

Lastly, Participant Two's general sense of stress continued to wax and wane through the interview as we discussed the variety of potential interactions. The interview questions that were focused on coursework, studying, attending behaviors, planning, etc., seemed to elevate his level of stress, so much so that his responses seemed less fluid, more stilted, and limited. At one point in the interview, the subject of transferring to the university emerged; this topic appeared to create the highest level of agitation, as he appeared quieter, seemed to struggle to find words to express his thoughts or feelings, and looked down away from the camera. Conversely, each time he discussed connecting with his peers or contributing to discussions in class, he appeared to open up physically and be more orally expansive, and his general mood lightened. Although his physical responses and reactions appeared to vacillate as he described his strategies to navigate stress, he did not appear necessarily to understand or know he might be able to manage his stressors by using attending or avoiding strategies.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of Participant Two's descriptions of stress, avoidant and attending coping strategies, expectations of

122

professors, and his sense of enacted masculinity in the classroom. For Participant Two, while "stress" was not necessarily a term that he used, he did use many similar words, described avoiding behaviors, and even appeared to become physically diminished when thinking about stressful situations. When asked about stress, he seemed clearly troubled by navigating the complexity of learning and challenging the professor through questioning or sounding unsure. Unlike Participant One, he did not look at complications (such as non-success in a class) as challenge, but almost as inevitable failures.

Participant Two did not appear consciously to navigate the complexities of avoidant and attending strategies. Participant Two appeared to perform the appropriate behaviors in classroom interaction but did not necessarily place an importance on learning the material for his own later benefit. His efforts in schooling appeared to be more a matter of going through a process — a transactional one at best. The professor delivered and performed, the student then followed by listening and asking in class. In these enactments, there appeared to be a sense of some rote performance. For this student, the value of learning and engaging were not linked to independence in learning; a course may simply be a means to an end to finish the degree.

Finally, the line of questioning concerning masculinity suggested interesting contrasts for this student. This participant's concept of masculinity may be one that challenged his potential success. He appeared to know that he wanted: a helping-based learning environment that was not too challenging. His masculinity in these moments was not prevalent, and instead enactments of what a student or professor should do were emphasized.

Although these considerations of masculinity can be interpreted in other ways, I believe that Participant Two displayed both typical and atypical masculine approaches to problem-solving and academic performance in the classroom. However, his strongest perspectives are those that are related to performative features of the teacher and student role in the classroom. These appeared to limit him in that he sought to get through (College Algebra), to not challenge too strongly or speak out. And in many ways these behaviors did not appear to be focused on learning the subject in each course.

Participant Three

Participant Three was a 26-year-old male of Mexican and Columbian background. Both of his parents were immigrants who met in Los Angeles, California, in the 1990s. He has two siblings, and although he mentioned his extended family, they do not live in the northwest region of the US. Both his parents have college degrees; his mother has multiple. His father served in the military for a long period of time and then transitioned to police work, and then transitioned back to the military. His parents split up when Participant Three was in his early teens. Both parents live in the northwest region of the U.S., within 200 miles of the participant. He and his two siblings all graduated from college. The participant indicated that he had no intention to go to college as his high school experience was, in his words, "not great and I was very unmotivated." He also stated that no one knew or understood "about being Hispanic."

Although Participant Three had initial apathy about college, he did end up attending two local community colleges, then transferring to a major university in this same region. He graduated with a degree in engineering, but after some work in the field was now changing his major/career. His self-reported high school GPA was 2.6; his early college GPA was 2.5, and

then improved to 3.5 when he finished his first bachelor's degree. He came to NW Community College and his primary emphasis was to take prerequisite courses with an intention to transfer into a medical program, most likely a physician's assistant (PA) program.

The family has (student self-reported) mid to high socioeconomic status (SES). His family and support structure include his mother, siblings, and a small set of friends. He felt that he had tremendous support from his mother. Participant Three was employed part-time, but with two different jobs. Like Participant Two, as he reflected on his work and school balance, he noted that he often felt stressed about making enough money to ensure he could live and do things instead of just work and school. This participant was very focused on his coursework and his plans for the future.

At the time of the interview, Participant Three's current GPA was self-reported as 3.8, and he had completed 45 of the potential 60 units intended for his second bachelor's degree. The student was recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW community college office. Participants were offered a modest stipend; Participant Three did not accept the stipend, indicating that his primary interest was to support others who could learn about success stories in higher education.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were discussed both unconsciously and consciously. However, for the most part, this student appeared to know which strategies to use and when to use them, often doing quite a bit of attending early in his courses. He did note that he prepares, reads ahead (when possible), and reviews the syllabus. When I asked about his

preparation for the first day of courses, he commented mostly about exam taking when he

stated:

> Every time that I have an exam, I make sure that I eat... breakfast. It's really
> important to me that I wear the clothing that particularly feels good… there's like
> certain clothing. I'll try my hardest to have caffeine one to two hours beforehand
> [and] start studying to kind of, like, get that ball rolling. Have it fresh in my head.
> And then when I start an exam, I'll listen to music, like a certain amount of time
> before, and it sort of gets stuck in my head.

This description is one that, while using attending coping strategies, was described in a

manner that did not appear to elevate his stress. In fact, by his account, this approach was

explained as a method learned from a professor (a psychology professor) who discussed the

best ways to think about preparing for school, lectures, and tests. Participant Three continued

to focus on attending strategies when he commented about listening for appropriate content,

understanding how the reading material was useful, and identifying the right things to study.

For this participant, there appeared to have been a process where he learned how to be a

student who knows how to find and study the right things. He reflected on his early schooling

and stated:

> I think that that's something that just, like, easily made its way into my brain
> since I was a kid. When people would teach you how to study in our elementary
> school, I was continuously asking, "why are they showing this to me on a slide
> show? Why is this something that they made into a bullet point?" As I kept going
> through college, you know you listen… [wondering] "why is that something that
> they thought to share with us?" It's like, "I bet that's going to be on an exam!"

This participant appeared to have identified the most appropriate strategies to read

material ahead and attend/being prepared for each lecture. For this participant, it was a skill

that he had to learn. Although, interestingly, he did comment that some of this behavior could

be associated with not being a good student, but for him, it meant being efficient. Participant

Three noted, "I will skim. I'm not a good student in terms of the grand majority of the time. But I've had to do a lot of work while I've been in school and so it's more of an efficiency method. I have to make my time worth it."

Lastly, Participant Three conveyed a rather interesting way that he attends to his courses, and in particular, lectures. He commented several times about being prepared enough to be ahead of the professor, of competing to be ahead of him/her in lecture, and even identifying and completing math/computational problems in his head that are posed in lectures. He started first with, "I was racing the professor. I couldn't [do this] when he was talking about theory, but if he was doing an example, then I would race him, and I would try getting to the next step before him." For Participant Three, this type of behavior was one that he learned, applying his strongest skill — problem solving — and then creating and using this strategy when listening to other professors. He did note that he would sometimes "check out" and look out the window, but he would then remember and use his racing strategy when he'd notice that he was becoming unfocused. He continued to discuss his strategy and noted:

> And so, this like continuous movement ...[and] my brain had to keep asking, "What is the next step? What am I going to do next? What is he going to do next?" It forced me to stay on it, and to listen to everything that he was doing. And in this way, I also found a way to focus on the stuff that I didn't find interesting or that was boring.

Much like Participants One and Two, throughout the interview, Participant Three conveyed some instances of avoiding behavior. For this participant, it wasn't necessarily about a greater sense of stress was being conveyed, but almost came across as boredom — as with the examples he noted above: "theory" [was being discussed] ...and he "looked out the window," not reading the full text but only the important parts, and sometimes checking out

when listening to boring professors. But for each acknowledgment of this avoiding behavior, this participant then turned this behavior into an attending one. He noted that in some cases, certain professors raise red flags for him in that they aren't doing the right thing by students. For Participant Three, he might check out or not use attending behaviors regarding the class, but he does not do so for long.

Although Participant Three noted several instances where he was avoiding issues, in two cases he mentioned avoiding behaviors turning into attending behaviors. In each case, it was because of an error on the professor's part. In one case he commented that a professor stated, "if you are asking me this question, then you are stupid." Participant Three's first reaction was to look away and to check out, but then he couldn't hold himself back and noted, "like red flags going up like. I need to ask questions. So I will literally raise my hand, even though I'm the quietest person in the room…and I was like, 'What is going on?'"

A key area that this participant seemed to be inclined to avoidant behaviors was related to group-work assignments in courses. This type of learning appeared to minimize the individual efforts that he made and, in many cases, simply did not appear worth his time. He noted that you either end up doing, "too much work with no learning," or "you [or others] ...do no work and just tag along with others." In either case, the output seemed very limiting and was noted by him, "as disheartening to learning." He avoided these types of classes if group work was listed predominately in the syllabus.

For Participant Three, he appeared to be at a stage in his personal development where he predominately demonstrated attending coping behaviors, and was aware of, and limited, avoiding coping behaviors. Attending coping strategies were used to successfully navigate most

128

courses. Although he noted several unsuccessful courses for him — psychology and sociology courses, he also noted that he had learned things from these courses and had applied his understanding of how he was learning (and attending) courses and subjects that he found conceptually more difficult or boring. Participant Three appeared to have a high level of self-awareness of appropriate strategies to make him successful in a course. The expectations of a professor and the idea of developing a relationship with a professor are explored next.

EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSORS

Much like the other participants, Participant Three had definite expectations of professors. However, for Participant Three, his expectations were more about being, in his words, "more human and understanding." In the view of the Participant Three, there is great importance to a professor creating a connection to students (knowing them) and as such, he had much higher regard for each instructor who showed this. He even went on to comment about the ones who created an impact so that he continued to go back to visit them at different (but close by) colleges. He noted:

> For me accessibility has been huge... Like when a class is difficult, and I like when I'm struggling to understand something. But if they give me what I need for it. Then, I will appreciate them even more. I have multiple professors that I am willing to still go back to. I've seen them since I graduated...and [they] have given me all the necessary tools.

For this participant, much like some of the others, while there is sense of the professor conveying information, it was mainly about connections to the material learned and the application of this learning to his future that he cared about. He did not necessarily see the professor in some of the prescriptive performative manners as some of the other participants in this study had indicated. For example, there wasn't an expectation that the professor delivered

a lecture, was more discursive, or was funny. For Participant Three, there was an almost utility

function to the professor, and he appeared to use them as he navigated listening, taking

extensive notes, and "racing" each of them.

For Participant Three, there was also a level of respect that he demonstrated to the

professor. It was not conveyed in a manner that suggests it was related to a role or the

professor, but he did appear to be more careful when interacting or asking questions. When

asked about how he connected with his professors, for him it was about understanding a finer

point in a class lecture or missed question on a test. He noted, "I try and just be respectful so

just wait until the end of the class when no one's bothering them and catch them on the way.

I'm like, 'hey, really quick question.'" In this way, he appeared to demonstrate a more

traditional respectful approach related to the role of the professor.

Finally, Participant Three made clear his expectations of the professor in a passage when

discussing what makes a successful course. This participant continued to provide specifics that

were unique. The following passage illustrated this perspective when he commented about

something a professor did that "he loves." Participant Three commented in the following

passage about what he gained:

> At the beginning of the quarter, he would give us these equations and say, "no
> matter what, in this class you will always be able to succeed if you know how to
> use these equations." And it was the way that he was and what he was trying to
> get across to us... And so, I think that that's always been something that I really
> to hold on to.

A predominance of responses from Participant Three related to the professor's role of

conveying information and being on point. However, unlike Participants One and Two, there

was limited expectation of the act of teaching being a performance. This participant appeared

to seek an opportunity to engage with each professor, build a relationship, and learn by interacting with them.

MASCULINITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Participant Three conveyed, through several responses, very mixed notions of masculinity. Unlike Participants One and Two, this participant appears to have very developed notions of masculinity and even connected my first inquiry to concepts of gender theory. He then went on to comment about two different ideas about masculinity — one from his family (especially his father) and another that he had developed for himself. He stated his father's perspective:

> My father...is very traditional and [feels that] a man is going to be able to provide more than half a family income, is going to be trustworthy, and that… men are prideful. I guess like tough [and] don't express emotion.

He then went on to convey his own perspective about being a man when he discussed men's use of emotion. He stated:

> Men are supposed to be emotionless. But I know that, especially because of research, the experience that people who are willing to express emotions rid themselves of the bad emotions through health and tactics. I think that they're happier people; they live longer lives.

Participant Three appeared very capable of engaging in thoughts and discussions about masculinity and/or being a man. He appeared aware that his ideas may not fit more common definitions, yet he was still comfortable enough in the interview setting to open up to a person he did not know about his perspectives.

When questioned about the nature of the classroom and whether it had a gendered orientation, he went on to describe his experience in classroom settings with men and women,

131

and where there was a predominance of one or the other. For him, these discussions were important because he appeared to be highlighting the incongruence between what we believe to be true versus what is true. For him, more women are showing up and being successful in the science-based programs that he was interested in. He stated, "there's a huge chance that I will end up being one of only two men in a new class of 50 total people." Conversely, he also appeared to maintain traditional ideas about masculinity — or at least he conveyed traditional views, when he stated,

> I try my hardest to kind of figure out what's going on... I try my hardest not be aggressive. I have seen very aggressive male students that are way over the line, and it never made sense to me.

Finally, when asked about whether he believes that how he sees himself is considered traditional or the norm within the context of masculinity, he did not appear to believe that he was out of the norm. He stated, "I think that I'm probably closer to the norm," but then went on to give his response some context by adding, "Unfortunately, I really only know men out of my engineering schooling," suggesting that while being reflective of his sense of self compared to others, he may not have a broader context of male behavior to make an appropriate general statement.

In a similar manner to both Participants One and Two, he conveyed his sense of masculinity and a connection to his identity. However, this participant commented about his nuanced sense of gender, about not fitting in, and about finding ways not to interact as a "typical man." Much of this disclosure occurred early in the interview process when he identified "a partner," then used the pronoun "she" to describe the partner; then later in the interview sequence, he commented that he is queer. For this participant, this statement

seemed to allow him to express more fully why he had developed "a fluid sense of gender, that does not identify as strongly, traditionally masculine," and that he experienced not only the classroom this way, but also the world.

Throughout Participant Three's interview when he commented on how women interact and how men interact, he commented about behaviors as potentially hostile, and he commented about interacting and question asking in relation to typified notions of gendered norms. When commenting specifically about men asking questions, he elaborated more about why a man would or wouldn't ask questions. He stated:

> And you don't want to be embarrassed so you're not going to do that... but, I mean, I think that it can produce that type of emotion like if you... If it's something that's not relevant, and you know the professor calls you out on it, then you're there for everybody to see and its an embarrassment. I think that at the very least, me — but also many men — might be prevented from speaking up. Whereas, I guess, and that may be at the core of it and why I do hear a lot more females [asking] questions.

This passage illustrated and contrasted some of his earlier comments about gendered norms and his sense of self. He appeared to be aware of the stereotypes of men in interaction — aggressive, having a fear of embarrassment, sometimes being quieter — yet in conveying this, he apparently still finds himself behaving in this manner to some extent. His comments throughout the interview began to tell a story of a mostly quiet, careful, personally- and privately-motivated student who did not convey either strongly typified notions of masculine or feminine behavior in the classroom.

When asked about demonstrations of masculinity in the classroom, he commented as above, but at no time did he indicate that this behavior limited his success in the classroom environment. There appeared to be a strong sense that he could navigate each classroom

experience by being prepared and listening, notetaking, asking limited questions, and using a set of particular skills that he had developed to stay attentive, learn, and get good grades. Any sense of formalized, traditional masculine behavior was acknowledged, but mostly did not appear to limit him.

BEING HISPANIC/MEXICAN/COLUMBIAN

Multiple responses from Participant Three were related to being Hispanic. For many of them he overlayed being Hispanic with speaking Spanish. And for him, this was different than being Mexican and Columbian. This participant was quick to comment on this when prompted, but being Hispanic did not overlay most questions/responses during the interview with his background and his language. At the time of the interview, he spoke with a typical local North American accent. He described his early learning where Spanish was spoken at home and noted that when he "started kindergarten, I didn't know English." Then his parents split, and his use of Spanish diminished. Then as he moved into middle and high school, he began to lose his knowledge and use of speaking Spanish. This resulted in his parents' interest in sending him to Spain during eighth grade, "because I was starting to forget [the language and have an accent] …to kind of bump up, not only my Spanish ability, but also give me a chance to go to Europe."

In several passages, he commented about being Hispanic and then quickly commented about the connection to the Spanish language. Early in his life, when they moved from Los Angeles to the northwest U.S., he noted that being Hispanic meant he was not understood at all: "They knew us as the only Hispanic family in town." Over time, this appeared to change as the family became more integrated into the local culture and his accent diminished. In his

words, "I am very white passing." This comment appeared to be intertwined with his mother's sense of her national identity as being Mexican.

Participant Three claimed Mexican as his national identity, and he appeared to be very proud of it; however, two passages during the interview projected mixed feelings about his background. For his mother, being Mexican was not something she was necessarily proud of, and he stated, "yes, Mexican is descriptive about where she came from [but] she didn't want to be Mexican. But [if asked] my mom will comment that it is her background, especially as she does work in this field" (she's a diversity officer). In a second passage, he commented about his extended family and noted that the language connection had been useful when they connect because they are all able to speak Spanish together. However, he noted that his mom, "split off from the family," and that he now had very limited contact with cousins and grandparents living in southern California. He explained that, for his mother, this split was necessary as a part of getting away and starting new; he described his mother stating, "I knew that if I didn't leave right when I did, I would never make it on." The combination of his mother's transition from a strongly focused Mexican national identity, the influence of family events being conducted in Spanish, and his transition from a heavily accented Mexican boy to that of a "white passing" young man who "speaks both languages interchangeably and fluently" captures the complexity of his own identity.

As Participant Three reflected on his identity as Mexican and Spanish-speaking, he also noted two interesting aspects of this background. As he was finishing high school and moving into college, his mother, who had previously pushed away her own Mexican identity, then began to encourage him to seek scholarships using his Hispanic/Mexican background.

Participant Three was confused and conflicted by this behavior and reflected on it several times (as noted earlier in this participant section about masculinity) and never sought out scholarships using those identifiers. In multiple other sections of the interview, he commented not only about being proud of the fluidity of his identity and language ability, but of the necessity of it in his work environment. He noted, "I'm a clinician, and I speak with — and it's a lot — I speak with people in the area who need dialysis, and no one on staff speaks Spanish. I'm the only one." He commented on the value of his ability to speak Spanish multiple times as he considered the changing demographics of the U.S.: "Every day I turn around there are more and more Hispanic students/people," and "[I] find the ability to speak Spanish is absolutely needed in the health community."

Lastly, it appeared that as this participant has gotten older, this awareness of the value of his fluency speaking Spanish and his Mexican identity have become more and more important and intertwined. He reflected on his childhood and the tension between his mother not wanting to be Mexican but holding on to the cultural items of that past that were clearly laid out in his childhood homes: "It [language] is tied, very, very, closely to my identity as a Mexican and Hispanic man." He also commented about his cousins who live near the border, are darker skin toned, but in some cases do not speak Spanish at all.

Two incidents that he related demonstrate how this intertwined identity was fraught with complication. In both cases, his utility in speaking Spanish was diminished, yet he was still able to reflect on why it was important. In the first example, he commented about speaking Spanish in high school:

> ...a white teacher...heard me. And we were just chatting and talking about
> Mexico. The next thing I know, it was reported to the principal, and I was called

into the office. But I will tell you, my mother got pulled in to this one, and she talked to them. After that they rescinded the comments and apologized. That was huge for me to see my mom. [She] did a huge thing.

He went on to comment about how proud he was of her and of his background. In another part of the interview, he commented about being at work and talking in Spanish to a fellow technician, who was also Mexican and who understood Spanish better than English. And although the conversation was much easier and simpler in Spanish, the other person noticed someone watching them and told him to "stop speaking in Spanish. People are watching, and we should not do that."

The Experience of Stress

Each participant was asked to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year." Participant Three commented in multiple ways. This participant has had a longer period to reflect related to his schooling. He recounted his high school years when he participated in band, was not focused on school, didn't have a great GPA, was good at test taking, and had no interest in college. He stated, "school was just boring. We moved a lot, and I tried to fit in but didn't always work." It said it was stressful in that he didn't feel like he fit in, and that his experiences were mostly boring. His early community college years were like high school in that it was just mediocre, and that he only went to college because his mother was such a strong advocate and offered him funding. In his words, she kept asking him to go, "she was like, 'please, I'm begging you,'" and offered to pay him if he earned good grades. Again, much like high school, these early college years were stressful in that he did not care for traditional subjects and lectures. For him, the stress was caused by trying to stay awake during boring lectures and not disappointing his mother.

137

Through the first part of the interview, Participant Three commented about transitioning to the university and finding his rhythm or stride as he finished his first undergraduate degree and was now into his coursework at NW Community College. For him, the stress was no longer about being bored, it was learning how to navigate each classroom environment: Could he be on the top of the reading, could he be ahead of the professor, and could he speak/add to the classroom discussion?

Unlike Participants One and Two, this participant was focused on the challenge that each class presented, although early overall stress for him was about finding personal connections (such as playing in the band in high school) and at this point in college. And stress was also keeping all the commitments aligned — his focus on prerequisites, holding two jobs that he needed as part of his physician's assistant program (and his application), and to some extent enjoying his life, his partner, and his family. For Participant Three, it was staying ahead in the reading, staying ahead when listening to a lecture, and staying ahead of the professor.

Lastly, Participant Three's general sense of stress was less about external events or products impacting him. Through multiple years of schooling (eight years post high school), he appeared to enjoy navigating the complexity of each class environment, each new professor, and each course's materials. Any seeming escalation in stress was related to issues that this participant willingly took on related to how he navigated each course. And unlike Participants One and Two, this participant appeared eager to discover what might be in front of him, and eager to face the challenge. He stated, "school is interesting now. I figured out that we (most of us) are all in the same situation, navigating complex issues. And I think we all are…were a little nervous. Once I understood that, it helped me relax a little bit more." For this participant, the

most frequent sign of stress in the interview — when he was quieter, less interactive, less sure — came when we discussed interacting with peers, group work, and friends in school.

Participant Three disclosed that he had a very small circle of friends, limited his interactions in class with others, and worked very independently. His quietness and discomfort seemed to appear mostly when he discussed group work or required in-class group conversations. Although he appeared to understand his strategies in navigating stress, and even the types of behaviors associated with avoidant or attending coping, he did have some responses in which he appeared not to notice his emerging discomfort related primarily to social interaction in the classroom. However, he did not show these behaviors when there were important personal connections that motivated him.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of Participant Three's avoiding and attending coping strategies, expectations of professors, his sense of enacted masculinity, descriptions of stress, and being Hispanic in the classroom. For Participant Three, "stress" was not necessarily a term that he used, and while he certainly experienced stress, he had many strategies to mitigate it. The highest level of stress for this participant was noted when he commented: "[it was] only last year, and we'd all been dealing with COVID-19, and I was switching careers, finishing my engineering job, starting pre-requisites courses for his new program, and also tutoring others." He could not manage all of the pieces and realized that he was doing too many things, so he cut back his original (and new) work to focus more on studying and, as a result, was doing much better.

Unlike the first two participants, this participant was actively engaged in multiple many-layered attending coping behaviors in the classroom. These have been described above and were notable in that he found the environment in the classroom to be mostly a positive challenge of engagement, for personal learning, and connected to his future. His attending strategies appeared to give him energy to stay positive and focused. He still had some avoiding behaviors, and, in some cases, these appeared to be mixed with notions of traditional westernized masculinity, such as not asking too many questions and not seeking help, but these were very limited in his descriptions.

Participant Three appeared consciously to navigate the complexities of avoidant and attending strategies. He appeared to perform the appropriate behaviors in classroom interaction, and those were very focused on his own efforts in schooling — not as an expectation about others, but about what he could do to shape his own learning environment. For this participant, there appeared almost no sense of the professor as a performer in the act of teaching.

Finally, the line of questioning concerning masculinity suggested interesting contrasts for this student. For this participant, his multiple and fluid concepts of masculinity appeared to aid him in navigating complex conversations about gender in the present time, much better than in his younger years. His masculinity in these moments appeared to wax and wane depending on the context and the receiver in his communicative dialogue. Like Participant Two, this participant expressed his masculinity in both typical and some atypical ways that apply to how he saw himself, how he defined gender roles in life, and how he stayed connected to his own personal and learning growth. For this participant, learning wasn't necessarily about being

masculine or feminine, it was about the individual ways that each of us learns and then applies

that learning to both school and work environments. These characteristics appear to be very

freeing in that, unlike other participants, he could interact in the classroom using a set of

strategies that allowed him to be successful and be a man, and he could do so using a very

limited westernized man's way.

Participant Four

Participant Four is a twenty-year-old male of Mexican background. Both of his parents

were immigrants who came to eastern Washington in the 1980s. At the time of the interview,

Participant Four had three siblings, and his extended family also lived in the same northwest

region of the US. His parents did not have advanced college degrees; his mother had two

cosmetology degrees (one from Mexico and one from the U.S.). His father had been a migrant

farm worker his entire adult life. His mother had the same original profession upon arrival in

the U.S., but after finishing her U.S.-based cosmetology degree, she went on to be a hair stylist,

eventually opening her own salon. His parents were still married and lived in the northwest

region of the U.S. within 300 miles of the participant. He and two his two siblings were all in

college. The participant indicated that he had an intention to leave his current location and

learn more, but he wasn't sure about college. However, he noted:

> And then after high school you can choose one of the valley colleges, or you can
> like obviously go to anywhere in Washington, but typically everyone who
> graduated from my high school, typically either goes to the agriculture
> community or works locally. And then for many, even after college, still go back
> to our culture and town.

He recounts his time in high school as doing ok, "but it was small and not very hard." In

high school he was focused on school, getting a good GPA, participating in some sports, hanging

out with friends, and but also knew that while other students thought about phones and technology, he was very interested in the back end of technology, everything that makes it all work. He was also very interested in computers and video games, but these interests were not supported by his parents or even by his guidance counselors. His self-reported high school GPA was 3.0. He first came to the region and went directly to the university, returned home after struggling, and then came to NW Community College and this region because, in his words, "…this was the tech hub, and I had an interest in that. In computer science and in the back end." His primary emphasis at this college was to take prerequisite courses with an intention to transfer back to the university or his engineering or CS degree.

In his words, "my father and my family, in general, are sort of well off now." Although this wasn't always the case. Not only had the family experienced a long struggle to make enough money to live, but Participant Four was also currently experiencing that same problem. His family and support structure included his mother and father, uncles, siblings, and some friends. He felt that he had support from his mother, but his strongest supporters were two uncles who both had undergraduate degrees. Participant Four was employed part-time. Like Participant Two and Three, as he reflected on his work and school balance, he noted that he often felt stressed about making enough money to ensure he could live and do more things instead of just focusing on work and school. For this participant, not only did he struggle with stress, anxiety, and, in his words, "…inappropriate substance abuse," one of his biggest stressors was making enough money to stay in the NW U.S. region. He had already had to relocate, back to eastern Washington, before after only six months away from his parents'

home. During this interview sequence, he commented on this set of intertwining struggles but emphasized that he was determined to stay in Seattle.

At the time of the interview, Participant Five's current GPA was self-reported as 2.8, and he had completed 65 of the potential 90 units intended for transfer. The student was recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW community college research office. Participants were offered a modest stipend, Participant Four accepted the stipend.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were often used predominantly unconsciously. He used a mix of attending and avoiding strategies in his courses. When discussing his general seating choice in the classroom, he recounted that in high school, seats were typically assigned, but in college he preferred to "quietly sit in the back," but then went on to say, "then sometimes I actually went to the front of the classroom, just to get better, to pay attention better, to the Professor." And he went on to note that this move to the front occurred in cases where he knew that he needed to "pay attention better, and that [action] kind of forced me to do that." As regarded behaviors like reading ahead or contacting the professor, Participant Four appeared to maintain a low activity level related to these typical attending behaviors. Although he commented about using them sometimes, he noted that he "doesn't review the syllabus much and waits for the professors' cues; [tends to] read only within the week or day of the course," and limits his question asking in class to "almost nothing." Another comment related to avoidant behaviors came about when he discussed interacting with professors. The tone of this response sounded a bit arrogant. Participant Four had described his professor as "a teacher

143

who was like a lawyer and worked at Amazon…and bragged about it." Participant Four then stated: "The professor would comment about how you needed this [skill] for a job, but then didn't comment about how the material was related to the job. [He] sort of talks down to you, or sort of makes the language a little bit difficult and uses lingo." In this case, Participant Four indicated that his reaction was to "completely shut down. What an awful class."

Interestingly, this participant's descriptions appeared to navigate from the avoidant (and, as he described, boring) experiences in a bit of a remembrance trance. After commenting about his apparent lack of attending behaviors, he then noted what it was like taking an asynchronous physics course online. He stated, "the professor might be a little slow," so he would speed up the video, find himself staring out the window, then try to refocus by "speeding up the video, googling some of the content, and be sort of on a scavenger hunt." As he conveyed this description, he looked at me, then looked away from the camera, then appeared to look even further away, and then looked back at the screen and to me. It was as though his actions in the interview were following the pattern of his course description: from loss of interest, to finding another interest, to realizing he needed to check-in again, and then refocusing on me.

Finally, in a particular passage commenting about a professor, Participant Four described using avoidant behavior when he might have to ask unclear questions. In thinking about complicated homework assignments or a general class conversation, he stated, "But I'll usually be kind of sheepish… would write an email like, 'Hey, is it okay to turn this homework in late?' Sort of like that."

As I inquired about his general question-asking behaviors in the classroom, Participant Four then appeared to gain a little more energy in the interview and commented about being engaged. For Participant Four this experience involved a particular topic of personal interest — finance and the stock market — and his awareness that, by sitting in the front row, he could "ask my question and be like… 'Well, what about the bull market?' or have a follow-up question." And although he was also more engaged in this response as well, the full passage included his using the phrase "sort of" five times in explaining how he interacted; thus, he appeared more interested and attending, but at the same time wasn't so sure about it. This participant also indicated that in cases where the professor was interesting or enjoyable "yes, then I will ask a bunch of questions during the class and then after class."

A theme that appeared to run through Participant Four's experience involved his sense of connecting with others when thinking about or discussing his work in courses. Reflected in this theme was the apparent importance of social connections. When questioned about any requirements related to group work, he noted that he often enjoyed and looked forward to it. He commented on two different course experiences that basically resulted in the same outcome — his personal excitement about group work, the lack of interaction among his peers, and then the rush to finish the assignment at the last moment. In both cases, he appeared to use attending strategies, such as frequent texting and the use of online chat (in Canvas), but received very little response from any of his group work peers. Participant commented in general about this inclination toward group work:

> I mean, I do like being in a group...I think that's what I really want. People I always end up with, though, don't really want to be in one. They just want to finish the work. I always look forward for a group assignment... I guess ...to make new friends and sort of see their perspective.

For Participant Four, descriptions about expectations of professors did not appear to emerge naturally. His perspectives about professors emerged through specific questions and, in most cases, the statements were either neutral or negative. Early in the interview, he commented about his high school experiences where he would sit only where he was assigned by the professor and the professor would, "quickly remind/scold us if we were in the wrong spot." As he later related much of what he expected from the professor, he would talk about the perfunctory nature of a course, describing how the professor would guide students through the syllabus, lecture, respond to our questions, and conduct testing. He commented that he often "[will] just wait to see what the professor tells me to do."

As he recounted his experiences in a variety of courses, he vacillated in his perspectives of the professor. In some cases, the professor or the course were described as boring, but in other cases the professor or the course was exciting or energizing. A closer review of the comments, however, revealed that the student was referring less about the subjects or topics and more about the presentation of the material. For this participant, the boring subjects had been physics, coding, and some math courses. In each of those cases, the professor was very flat, and the participant noted that, "it was hard to pay attention and stay motivated." And as already mentioned, this participant commented on disliking a professor who appeared to be a braggart and arrogant. Finally, this participant appeared to be concerned about interacting with professors who may not respond in a positive manner. Participant Four commented, "Usually, I try to avoid the professor because I'm scared of, I guess, having a bad answer."

146

At the opposite end for this participant were courses that he really enjoyed and for those, "yeah, if I really enjoyed the class, I would ask a lot of questions. And, I think, I would talk more with a [the] professor." This student commented more about expectations of needed interaction with professors related to his major of study (engineering). Even if these professors were sometimes boring, or sometimes strict about limited communication, he stated that, "[I] would go directly to their office, or their office hours." So, it appeared that even if the specific behavior of a professor was not reaffirming, he had an expectation that his major professors would be responsive if needed. Lastly, this participant appeared to have an expectation that a good professor would be one who would, "be direct in their responses and at the same time still helpful and engage as a person."

Finally, I would note that the COVID-19 pandemic may have added another nuance related to his participant's expectations of his professors. During this period, he appeared to have a heightened expectation to connect with them immediately and get assistance. In many cases, Participant Four noted a level of dissatisfaction with the availability of his professors, and in once case, commented on an almost complete absence of a professor. He stated, "I think sometimes I don't even know their faces. Where I don't even hear the voices, just sometimes for me it's just their name. But they are voiceless, absent, and there is no connection."

Participant Four conveyed, across several of his responses, a variety of traditional and non-traditional ideas about masculinity. Like Participant Three, this participant appeared to have some well-developed notions of masculinity and, to an extent, a fluidity about gender roles/identities that were not exhibited by many of the other participants. In response to the first question regarding the concept of masculinity and being a man appears to start first with typified westernized masculinity, "um, I guess being a hard worker. That's all I can think of...as being a hard worker." However, after this response, he immediately continued and made a statement about his sexuality and stated, "I don't know, I think it's mostly because of me... because I'm bisexual, I guess, and I sort of have a bad definition of masculinity." He appeared to view a contrast among his understanding of westernized masculinity, the concept of being a hard worker, and then his bisexuality; finally concluding that his definition is bad. This progression was interesting in that, although he was comfortable in disclosure of his sexual identity, he somehow believed his initial statement to be a bad definition.

When questioned further about the nature of masculine or feminine spaces, the participant responded with ideas of masculine spaces as, "auto shops, gyms, or even the orchards that they picked apples from." As he conveyed these ideas, he immediately questioned himself and then continued with, "but women are in gyms too. And I remember a lot of females working there [in the orchards], so that, that's kind of weird." Further he continued to recount his memory of learning about men's and women's roles or spaces. Participant Four stated:

> But yeah, usually a lot of the settings...traditionally... I guess, sort of a man's rule.
> I remember, particularly as a kid, it was always be [that] men... [were] in a higher

148

position. But then as I grew older, a lot I see a lot of females have that position also. So that also kind of, I guess erases that definition of masculine.

Later in the interview, Participant Four commented about how he learned both about expected gender roles and gender-based interests: "men aren't supposed to like the arts or creatives," but then went on to say, "but, you know, sort of, [men] not show their feelings. Sort of bottle that down, not express themselves. And I guess I really liked art because I can have that avenue to sort of enjoy being myself."

As the interview continued, I delved further into the question of masculinity in the context of the classroom. For this participant this line of questioning elicited continued — and even more nuanced — responses related to his notions of gender roles. When asked if there were typical things men do in the classroom, he responded, "I always be myself. I'm pretty fluid. I don't really present as macho." He went further when he reflected about typical masculine ways in the classroom in high school and stated, "really masculine is being very stupid, or just not caring at all." This participant appeared to have had a very early awareness that this type of behavior for him made feel odd or awkward or that he, "kind of resented that slacker attitude...being disrespectful in general toward teachers and professors." He then went on to comment about the ideas of a man as being competitive when thinking about the classroom after high school. In these situations, his characterizations turned more toward being prepared to respond appropriately or quickly and not get behind.

In these situations, it appeared that his notion of masculinity took on the overlay of westernized masculinity in that he "had to be sort of more competitive with people. But I'd always get a little bit worried about that, I guess, of being a man always trying to be competitive. Because I always hated that." In this way, this participant appeared to understand

that his ability to express expectations could perhaps be perceived on a more fluid scale of gender roles, yet other comments also reflected traditional notions of gender-based behaviors — which he seemingly felt bad or guilty about it.

When questioned about the nature of the classroom and whether it had a gendered orientation, he went on to describe his experiences in classroom settings with men and women. He did not necessarily comment about the classroom as a gendered space (although in a prior section he defined "masculine" as auto shop or a gym), but many of his expected classroom behaviors took on masculine or feminine characteristics. For him, being quiet, stoic, careful not to sound stupid, and being laid back were clearly masculine behaviors in the classroom. And although he was aware that he was different and often engaged in non-heteronormative behavior in the classroom, he appeared to continuously reflect on or check himself to behave appropriately.

Finally, when discussing preferences related to the gender of the professor, Participant Four varied in his responses, commenting that he "really enjoyed it more when it was a female professor," but then continued with, "in high school, there is [were] some teachers who were men that really enjoyed as well. Yet, for the most part, always females where I enjoyed the class more." While the gender of the professor did not appear to impact his own behavior or his performance in the course, he did note more enjoyment from the courses led by female professors.

BEING HISPANIC/MEXICAN

Multiple responses from Participant Four were related to being Hispanic. His response to a question about perceptions of being Hispanic elicited the following response, "I can

150

approach more people to communicate, because I know [that] basically this half of the world only speaks Spanish or English." Much like Participant Three, he was quick to comment on this topic when prompted. Also, like Participant Three, he spoke with a North American accent. So, although the question was specific about being Hispanic, much like other participants, he overlays being Hispanic with speaking Spanish. Although his ethnic background is Mexican, he minimized this quite a bit in talking about his past. He commented quite a bit about both immigrant parents having to work the orchards as this was the type of work "these people" could get. In another section, he commented about the benefit of "being able to pass as white." However, language acquisition and use dominated his responses related to his Hispanic background.

In a discussion of his early years, he commented about his parents' interactions with him and their use of language. In many cases with his parents, he would switch back and forth between English and Spanish — or speak predominately in Spanish with a little English — as he was trying to pay attention to what his father knew or was able to do. For example, he noted, "my mother learned how to speak English, but my father tried and, although he does know some basic... English — he might actually understand it better than you think — he pretends not to."

In subsequent sections, he spoke about his sense of self related to his ethnicity or nationality and stated, "I'm proud to be Latino," and commented about when it is appropriate that others know this. For him, being from central Washington comes with a layer of being careful or cautious as, "in some parts, from experience, I know people can be aggressive with you [when] talking in Spanish."

151

When asked about his future and what was in front of him, he again noted his pride and, in this instance, it was in "being Mexican." He went further to comment about how it might be important to break stereotypes and show others what he can do. For him, this was exemplified when he reflected on his chosen major field of study — engineering — and when it affected his education or work plans: "there are not really that many Mexicans in that field...and hopefully, I can be sort of the steppingstone." His responses through this section are filled with the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "Mexican." He did not define each or separate the terms. In one instance, for example, in his description of self, he started with term "Mexican," then in the same sentence he finished with a description of being "Latino."

In terms of the intersection of masculinity with his Hispanic background, Participant Four commented about what might be more typical in the United States compared with in Mexico. For him, when you mix the two, the definition became "more strict," and he goes on, "and in the U.S. even more in than here, it's about being independent. In Mexico, it's more like a collective." Lastly, as he thought about being Hispanic in the context of the classroom, he commented about who "shows up." For him, this is both about being Hispanic/Latino and about speaking Spanish. As he conveyed these thoughts, he was thoughtful to first describe, "well you know you can see African Americans or the Asians, but it's hard to see Hispanics." And then went on to comment about language use. For him this was the clear difference between college and back in high school. He stated:

> College felt a little bit weird I guess, because... in high school, they'll be like some people talking in Spanish. So, I kind of got in a little bit of culture shock when I heard people talking, you know, Japanese or Chinese. It's sort of strange, you know, to hear different languages other than Spanish or English. But yeah, for me it just kind of just kind of feel weird, a little bit strange that we're not hearing Spanish.

Lastly, Participant Four was careful to note that when it came to race or background, he sometimes told others that he does not know his background and would rather "just have them know me. But in some cases, they just want to know about Mexican culture."

Each participant was asked to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year." Participant Four commented in multiple ways. Overall stress for this student was a mix of many things. The interview question about setting up courses elicited a list of stressors related to the amount of work in each course, the costs, having time to do coursework and still work, making friends, and lack of motivation. Like some of the other participants, with Participant Four there was a sense that he did not feel like he fit in, nor could he find a peer to study with. For this participant, finding a person to connect with arose quite a bit in his interview. His early university/community college years were not like high school as he immediately had to begin difficult math coursework, stating "my high school experience might have been light — or they weren't hard on us — because I definitely did not feel ready once I started college."

Through the first part of the interview, a predominance of comments centered on his coursework, about being bored a lot, and predominately about not being able to share it with anyone. He stated:

> I think the reason why I kind of failed in Bothell was because there was no real motivation... I guess to continue pursuing my education. There's not really anyone to share that experience with. So, it's just been kind of me [and] who cares? Why should I be in class with other students if no one really cares. I appreciate my work [and]...it sounds a little bit selfish, I guess, but that's how it feels sometimes.

153

For him, stress was also about the coursework and the difficulty of the courses. He commented, for example, that when he first went to the university he was just inundated. At the time of this interview, he was taking classes at NW Community College, and he commented a bit more about the teaching environments, with COVID-19 and being online. He noted that the courses can be hard, but then he indicated that he was stressed and maybe the professors just aren't paying attention to him or the other students. This perspective is one that appeared to leave him slightly deflated, and he noted:

> I really kind of miss the in-person classes and because…if I have any questions, I could have raised my hand and then got answer right there. But now just feels a little bit…weird, because sometimes I email them, but then sometimes I'm like, need a specific question to be answered [and I end up having] to go to Google.

For him, stress was also about not being able to create connections in the classroom, have a peer or a person to study with, be able to ask immediate questions, and feel like he was part of something. This participant consistently commented on the challenge that each class presented, but unlike the other participants, his focus was much more heightened centered around missing the interactions with others.

Lastly, Participant Four was particularly stressed about the next steps in his education. He had taken some university courses, gone home, then came back to NW Community College. He knew that his eventual goals would take him back to the university and his degree choices, but when asked about this plan, he reflected on his family and the multiple things he was going to have to manage. He stated:

> I gotta be honest, everything is navigation with everything. For the most part it has just been sort of me doing everything because my parents really only know Spanish. And then they really haven't been to college. So, um, so basically, I just been kind of doing everything by myself, sort of researching everything else. And that sometimes can be tiring to do, because then I was the only one who made

154

the decision to go to Seattle, and I had to find apartments. And then I also had to apply for financial aid. And then also doing the research, the research on what kind of classes I need really for what to do. So, it's been kind of a little bit hectic, I guess.

Although he had the opportunity to experience multiple educational settings and was able to see that they are different, when considering his future option to transfer, the possibility appeared to elicit a high level of anxiety and stress and the feeling that he was doing this all alone. Like some of the participants, there also appeared to be a foundational boredom to the rote manner and typical pattern of a class. As he stated, "you review the syllabus, you do the reading, you take a test, and then repeat. It's kind of monotonous." When he discussed the courses and his every-day actions, his responses were fairly flat in affect, and he appeared calm. However, any questions about his future plans appeared to cause a spike in his stress levels, taking him away from everyday examples and making him appear to spiral or lack focus. Unlike all other participants, this participant demonstrated no eagerness to discover what might be in front of him in terms of his overall education.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of this participant's avoiding and attending coping strategies, expectations of professors, and his sense of enacted masculinity, descriptions of stress, and being Hispanic in the classroom. Much like some of the other participants, this participant did not necessarily use the term "stress." The highest level of stress for this participant was caused by boredom, as he noted multiple times throughout his interview: he did not want to be bored, he wanted interactivity in the classroom, and he disengaged when he did not have high engagement.

155

For Participant Four, there appeared to be active engagement and attending coping

behaviors when the topic was interesting, when he felt comfortable, and when he was

motivated. His active engagement in class was about making personal connections —

connections predominately with his peers. This was clear when he commented about the

minimal interaction in assigned group work, but also in general when he commented about

listening to lectures, getting bored, and just disengaging. He appeared to be aware of what

appropriate attending strategies were and how to use them, but his motivations were more

personal as they related to being engaged. He also appeared to have some substantial avoiding

behaviors. These appeared to be mixed with notions of traditional westernized masculinity —

being laid back, limited question asking — and these would wax and wane depending on the

specific classroom situation.

Participant Four did appear to both consciously and unconsciously navigate the

complexities of avoidant and attending behaviors. He appeared to perform the appropriate

behaviors in classroom interaction, especially in situations where he enjoyed the subject or

could interact with his peers. Much like Participant Three, Participant Four —although

influenced by his peers — did not appear to behave in reaction to the expectations of others.

Finally, the line of questioning concerning masculinity suggested interesting contrasts

for this student. This participant's multiple and fluid concepts of masculinity appeared to affect

his ability to navigate complex conversations about gender. During the interviews, his sense of

masculinity was expressed both in westernized notions of masculinity but also with examples of

gender fluidity. Unlike Participant Three, he appeared to feel completely free to convey this

fluidity, and he was aware about dominate or aggressive displays that he labeled as overtly

masculine and stated that he does not like them. For this participant, learning was not necessarily about being masculine or feminine, it was about individual motivations in each course, about appropriate interactions with peers, and about remaining engaged. Although his more developed sense of gender fluidity appeared to allow him to navigate away from locked or gender-proscribed behaviors, even his enactments of more appropriate attending behaviors were not necessarily leading him to greater success in his education. And, while seemingly positive in his responses during these passages, he appeared equally negative and frankly struggling as a student in other passages. He used a set of strategies that allowed him to be successful and be a non-normative man, but these were not prominent (or natural) for him.

Participant Five

Participant Five was a twenty-year-old male of Mexican background. Both of his parents were immigrants who came to the eastern U.S. in the 1980s and then to eastern Washington in the 2000s. He has five siblings, with half siblings from both parents as each has remarried. He commented extensively about his extended family that includes multiple aunts and uncles from both parents. He also commented extensively about his grandparents and an adopted grandparent who was Mormon (LDS). All of his immediate and extended family continue to live in the same eastern NW region of the U.S. His parents did not have advanced college degrees. His father had been a migrant farm worker his entire adult life but was also quite a political protestor, ending up in a detention center for some time during Participant Five's time in high school. Participant Five had several uncles who did go to college and talked about them through his narrative as people from whom he sought advice, especially around college choices and

courses. Finally, the participant had an extended network of friends — brothers to him — from his time in the military.

In his early years, his family lived in the eastern United States, and in his words, he grew up, "back east; yes, back east in Black America." He indicated that he enjoyed elementary and middle school and was very active socially as he liked to talk a lot. His family moved to eastern Washington as he entered high school, and he became, in his words, "a self-proclaimed social butterfly," continuing to spend a lot of time socializing. He realized that he wanted to go to college, and this became even more important after his freshman year of high school. He was not doing well in school at that time. He stated, "as a freshman, I knew my grades weren't the best, and I had an exceptionally low GPA." During this time, his high school introduced the idea of college and college visits. He went on a couple, mostly for social interactions, but remembered and liked the area where the University of Washington was located. Into his sophomore, junior, and senior year he became much more serious about high school, took multiple AP and IB courses. When he graduated from high school, his GPA was much higher, but he was not quite ready to go away to a university, so, instead went to a local community college and worked. When he was there, he could not quite see his path through college, and instead he chose a path into the U.S. Marines.

He commented about his parents' and grandparents' disappointment as he did not tell anyone that he had signed up for the military. He stated, "one day, I just did it. He signed me up, and I was on call for the right spot. Then I got this random call when it opened up, and then I just went." Participant Five commented quite extensively about his time in the military where he learned about obedience and discipline. It was a time to learn routines and for

accountability. It was also a time where he grew physically. He stated, "yeah, I was just about 5 foot 2 and 100 pounds in high school. As I was finishing in the military, and was the height I am now — 5 foot 9 and 200 pounds. So yeah, a big change." His deployment was during peace time, so none of his travels involved, in his words, "front line or fighting with the enemy." He traveled to Australia, Japan, Korea, and United Arab Emirates. As he was finishing his tour of duty, he realized he was done with military service. He knew he wanted to go back with his family but remembered his college dreams and thought about living in eastern Washington and instead made a choice to come to Seattle. As he pondered community college choices, he moved to a nearby smaller city with its own community college, but instead chose to come to NW Community College as it was closer to the larger city.

As he recounted his early college years at NW Community College, he noted that he "had to work very hard early on, and it was a little demoralizing as I placed into a low-level math class. But I stuck with it and moved through five math classes where I am now in calculus." As he reflected on his choice of major, he commented about two key uncles in his life, the careers, and degrees they had, and the advice they gave him. In one case, an uncle had a degree and worked in that field, for Participant Five this was "very smart." Whereas the other uncle has a degree in "forestry or horticulture. And then became an elementary school teacher and doesn't really know how his degree relates to his work." However, this participant relied heavily on both uncles for advice and eventually landed on a career and coursework in the sciences. Although he was also quite interested in construction and construction management, which is only a two-year degree, he still had an interest in obtaining his bachelor's degree.

At the time of the interview, Participant Five's current GPA was self-reported as 3.5, and he had completed 45 of the potential 90 units intended for transfer. The student was recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW community college research office. Participants were offered a modest stipend, Participant Five accepted the stipend.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were often used both unconsciously and unconsciously. And there were a mix of attending and avoiding strategies used in his courses. When discussing his general seating choice in the classroom, he commented, "I will sit in the front. This is different than back in the day [where] I would sit in the middle or wherever my friends were ...never in the front. But now I just, just kind of gut instinct, you know, I want to get to know the teacher." Additionally throughout the interview, Participant Five noted that he did a lot of studying, used notecards, tried to connect with all his professors, interacted well with his peers, and was persistent in his communication strategies. He commented about his study strategies that included reading ahead and skimming as needed. When tests were imminent, he did a couple of things in sequence. He noted, "it's study, study, study, study, study, study... I accelerate my notetaking... Dedicate some more time to just note cards and [use of] study guides."

In terms of his interactions with professors, Participant Five noted multiple examples in which he appeared to know when to lean in or find the professor to communicate with them. In an engineering course, the professor was somewhat absent, then the dean intervened, and they had a new instructor. Because of the change, Participant Five noted, "I was like, 'Can we

get a study guide and get more help?' And they gave to it us." In a Psychology course, he did

not do well on the first exam then switched gears and changed strategies. He notec, "I need to

tighten up the reins and [got] flashcards, pulled together all my lectures and the PowerPoints,

and then the next test was much better. I knew how to do this, but I had to kick myself into it."

In terms of behaviors like reading ahead or contacting the professor, Participant Five appeared

to know when and how to read. He commented consistently about skimming the syllabus, the

study guides, or texts, and noted that he "doesn't always do all the reading, but I do read the

right stuff." Lastly, depending on the subject, Participant Five appeared aware that there were

optional materials to support his learning and will often identify, "I look for certain subjects. So,

like for math, I'll watch other videos ...all good websites... try YouTube or Khan Academy and...

try to learn from other sources."

Participant Five's use of avoidant strategies appeared to be very conscious, and he then

had alternate strategies to turn himself around. Through his interview, he commented about

avoiding some of the reading, sometimes being a procrastinator, limiting his interactions, and

on occasion shutting down any student-to-student or professor-focused communication. In one

part of the interview he commented about reading, and stated, "And yeah, reading ahead, not

always me. I procrastinate a lot...and look for other ways to find the information. Especially in

math. I mean I like math, but I don't like reading about math." In cases where group work is

required, he noted that he "always tries, but group work often leads to greater

procrastination."

As I inquired regarding his general question-asking behaviors in the classroom, he noted

that in some cases he sits back and does not pay attention. He commented about one course

and noted, "I was just like cruising, sitting in the back, not listening, and then I did bad on a test again." Participant Five then remarked that this was rather odd for him as he was often quite engaged. And he then later remarked in several parts of the interview about how consistently he sat in front, asked many questions, and tried to get to know each professor. In one case he commented that, after a stressful period of not understanding the material, he "got to get to know my professor" and there was a feeling that "I actually have talked to this guy every day."

Much like Participant Four, a theme that appears to run through Participant Five's experience involves his sense of connecting with others, although for this participant it was not about a connecting for social reasons. For him, this was about connecting to stay involved and remain invigorated by the coursework. As this participant conveyed his experience of his courses and the classroom, he appeared to have a very clear idea about success for himself and how he could achieve it, "success is about the grades. And I know how to do that on my own. Sometimes things get in my way, I get in my way, but always know how to get back on track."

EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSORS

For Participant Five, descriptions about professor expectations were clearly stated in multiple sections of the interview. This participant's responses emerged related to questions about engagement in the course or how he interacted. As he recounted experiences in a variety of courses, he commented consistently about his perspective that the professor should not be boring or just recite the text but should be really engaged. In one section of the interview Participant Five commented that, "I like to hear a teacher that's like very passionate... then I know his teaching is probably going to be all that much better."

162

For this participant, some professors are great in that they provide study guides. Others are not so great when "they can't speak English well (I dropped that one)," or weren't available. In one course, Participant Five noted a boring lecture and zoom environment so he then sought out the professor to discuss certain issues. He commented:

> I did learn a little bit, and if I ever had any questions, I could go to her, and I can talk to her, and she would show me what I was doing wrong. And with great instructor, I think they take the time rather than just do stuff out of the book.

In multiple sections of the interview, Participant Five noted his inclination to sit in the front of the course, his comfort in asking questions, or even his ease with pursuing the professor by going to office hours. In one section of the interview, this behavior was commented on in relation to his expectations and he noted, "I feel like I don't have to talk to a professor every day but, okay, I do. I do want them to know who I am." In another section he commented that he was having trouble in a communication course and the professor was giving him very general feedback by telling him:

> "You're a good communicator, and you did great and all, but if I could give you a little feedback..." and then she went on to tell me how to improve. This threw me off as I didn't think really think I was doing that well, and I wished she just told me that. So, I went directly to her for more feedback. I got an A.

Lastly, much like Participant Four, this participant commented about his need for support in his engineering courses. For him, these were the most complicated or difficult courses he needed to take, and, in some cases, he wondered "and I am still not sure if this is my major." But he knew that if he needed extra assistance, then he could get it, so he persisted. About a particular engineering course he commented, "I knew that I just wasn't getting the information in the online format. Zoom was killing me. And I had to go to her... She did what I was hoping for, she made it more understandable." In this way, this participant demonstrated

163

that if the course got difficult, students could personally connect with the professor, and they would assist them.

Participant Five conveyed through several responses, a variety of traditional and non-traditional ideas about masculinity. Like most other participants, this participant appeared to have built up ideas about traditional masculinity, appeared to be aware when these might be more traditional, and continued to place himself in situations where he challenged these notions. The first question regarding the concept of masculinity elicited multiple responses from him. As he first began, he commented that being a man starts first with, "I feel like a lot of would come from like a military background. I feel like I grabbed a lot of the masculine side from the Marine Corps, and not from family in any way." He continued to further comment about getting in trouble and stated, "been a troublemaker in my high school career. Oh, not, not too bad." As he reflected on this further, he noted that this did change over time for him where originally it was quite a bit about being strong or being big. He even commented about his grandfather and stated, "he was up early in the morning and didn't come back till six in the afternoon. He was out in the sun all day. If you asked me to define 'masculine' 10 years ago, I would have told you, 'my grandpa.'"

He also conveyed his awareness that his ideas might need to soften or change. In the following passage, he transitioned from a strong description of his physical self to one where he noted what he might need to change and to think differently about. He noted that he

> ...felt I was the most masculine male in the classroom. I would say probably 200
> pounds going to class. I looked at other dudes or, you know, yeah that you
> tweak, or you know in my head... 'I'll beat that dude.' But I felt like Seattle was a

164

good place for me to come because they would kind of open the door to let out a little bit of the masculine maybe and break those habits that I did get from the military.

He then transitioned to explaining how things changed for him, noting multiple experiences that influenced this thinking. In the first instance, he commented about a time that he took a Gender & Women's studies course. In this course, he learned not only about gender differences, but also quite a bit about race and ethnicity. For him, this course appeared to be his first affirmation that his inclination to come to Seattle was the right one. He commented about what he learned and stated:

I knew... every person is their own. So, I definitely knew that I needed to tone it down on masculinity if I was in a classroom setting. I felt like I was [being] hostile, like 'Who's that dude?' But getting to know people and learning about others and their backgrounds... kind of tone it down a little bit.

In a second explanation related to his changed perspective on masculinity he commented about getting to know a person who went through a gender/sex transition. For Participant Five, his employment was also a large focus, and this new interaction occurred there. This interchange not only altered his perspective about constructing definitions of gender, but also the ideas that he had about people who might transition. He noted his feelings through the experience, "I want to be able to get to know other people. It feels good to be able to interact with everyone... I don't see why we should exclude anyone from that. It's a big shift [for me]."

As the interview continued, I delved further into the question of masculinity in the context of the classroom. For this participant, this line of questioning elicited continued perspectives that contrasted knowing that he had once been a strong, big man with knowing now that he wanted to stand up for others. In these transition conversations related to the

165

classroom, Participant Five appeared to reflect some limits in his description as he continued to discuss the new way to be a man in the classroom. For him it was not about a different way to interact or communicate, but it was about, "being courageous for all." He commented further when he contrasted men and women in the classroom. For several courses his descriptions appeared to demonstrate these limits when he commented about the gender studies course. He noted that the female professor "did lean a little bit too much toward the feminine." Whereas when describing a math course, he commented simply that his male instructor "leaned toward the masculine side." When I probed further to identify if there was more nuance to these responses, he simply repeated his previous statements.

When asked if there were typical things men do or that he personally does in the classroom, he had a variety of responses related to the location where he sat, who he interacted with, and his good relationship with others. However, in one case, his response again suggested the apparent transition he was making. He responded:

> I feel like some male students, I can relate to them. I can relate to you on that side and. And I could also relate to everyone else. And I kind of put myself in the middle, and I'm like, all right, I see how he's thinking, and I know how she's thinking.

In another section, the participant went on to note that in terms of communication and styles, men tend to be more direct and to ask questions, and he believes that he is an example of that. However, when asked about women's communication styles, he commented as well that they also tend to be highly communicative. He stated, "they talk a lot more... and ask the teacher questions. If it is a male instructor... carry out a little bit more conversation and sidetrack. The instructor... may let it play out." In this response, he appeared again to be somewhat limited in his definitions of typical male or female communication and behavior, and

in this case, somehow positing that women use their bodies, or maybe their wiles, to get something from the male instructor.

When questioned about the nature of the classroom and whether it had a gendered orientation, he described his experience in classroom settings with men and women. For him, men and women were equally communicative, but doing so in different ways and for different reasons. Finally, when discussing preferences related to the gender of the professor, Participant Five did not really indicate a preference in any of his responses. For him, it appeared that a gender was not tied to a discipline, he had male and female professors for math, gender studies, and communication courses.

BEING HISPANIC/MEXICAN

Multiple responses from Participant Five related to being Hispanic. His response to a question about perceptions of being Hispanic elicited the following response: "I am grateful that I learned it as a kid and caught on fairly well." Like several of the other participants, he spoke with a North American accent.

Although he had a background as Mexican, he minimized this quite a bit in talking about his past. He commented about his parents' limits as Mexican immigrants and being stuck working in low end fields of work. And he also commented quite a bit about his extended family that consisted of many, many aunts, uncles, and grandparents, all still living in eastern Washington — "stuck in that town."

He commented about his experiences in the classroom setting and being Mexican. For him, being on the west side of the NW U.S. mountains meant that he really felt like a minority. He stated, "I don't see many Mexicans in the classroom or out of it." However, he went on to

167

comment that he explicitly left Yakima as it was "very heavily populated Hispanic-Mexican community." As the conversation about his background continued to unfold, his responses about his minority status were further clarified, and he commented, "my father looks like he is Mexican... and people make all kinds of assumptions they shouldn't." Interestingly, this response was elicited when discussing the classroom and his interactions. As he continued, Participant Five noted that he had an interest in "taking a class with a Mexican professor." As he reviewed the list of names for his courses, if a Mexican name appeared he stated, "I would probably choose the Mexican one."

In terms of the intersection of the concept of masculinity with his background as Hispanic, Participant Five commented that this is not really something that he had thought about. For him, the idea was interesting to consider, and he could see that some men have a much more traditional idea of traditional masculinity. He commented, "if you asked all of my male relatives back in Yakima, it is about being strong, standing up for others, not showing a lot of emotion and, in many case,s quite a bit of bravado." If Participant Five is asked about his background, he wouldindicate pride in being Mexican, but mostly pride in being a person who was "learning to be open to a lot of new things."

THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

Each participant was asked to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year." Overall stress for this student was conveyed differently that most of the other participants. For Participant Five there was consistent focus and energy spent on interaction in the classroom, talking with others, and building his school-social network. The interview question about setting up and selecting his courses elicited stressors

168

related to the steps to identify each course related to the degree, about competition with others, and about building skills for his career. His first comments were about a typical classroom experience when he noted that his decision about where he sits in college was very different from in high school. He continued at some length about why he now sits in front:

> You know, I'm going to be... right in the front, that he will get to know me. I feel like having an interaction with... the instructor and him knowing your face. So, you know, I feel like it is a better connection, and I feel like I do better in class when I have that interaction.

Participant Five never had concerns about fitting in through high school and into college his overall experience was about positive social interaction and connecting to others. Through the first part of the interview, most of his comments were about his connections and friends. When it came to coursework, classes, and studying, Participant Five was focused knowing when to refocus on his studies when he was too social, and how to connect with each professor. He stated:

> When I think about school, I don't really get nervous or excited. I know that I need to work on it. For me, in many of my courses, I am sometimes a little too relaxed, and then I realize that I need to tighten up, to study more. When I put the attention back on my studies, I start to do better...unless there is a problem with the professor.

For this participant, stress was also about knowing that he needed to move away from interacting and socializing, and then place his attention on each course, or section of a course. Additionally, this participant commented quite a bit about working and gaining his military benefits. During one part of the interview, he commented about a time that things became too stressful. He stated,

> ...nights where I was up till like three in the morning. I'd get off work, and I [would] go straight to the computer, and I wouldn't go to bed till then. At that point I'd be able to drop it. I had to stop using my benefits, and I was like, well, I

can't, I can't do both full time and go to school. But I still progress in my education.

During this period, stress for him was about navigating the multiplicity of his commitments and ensuring that he followed through on them. However, Participant Five appeared to have a very quick response time to each stressful situation, knowing when to move or convert to attending strategies and get himself back on track for his education.

Lastly, mostly because of his time in the military and in reaction to highly engaged situations, Participant Five noted that he had some substance abuse issues and issues with anger management. In terms of his substance abuse, he commented that in the military he started to smoke [marijuana], and it helped a lot in high stress moments. He stated, "I do smoke marijuana, so it's like you get lazy smoking and then things don't get done. But …. I have reached a point where I'm like, I'm not smoking at all." In another section he commented about getting triggered by something that happened in class causing him to become angry. However, Participant Five noted that in some cases it is just about being mad at himself when he did not do well in a course. He stated:

> ... definitely [I get] very, very anxious, get really anxious, and I start [questioning] in my mind: "What did I do wrong?" Yeah, you know, inner thoughts. Okay. And that's my process of thinking. You know, I do get anxious, and I get mad at myself. And then I know that I just have to do better.

This participant appears to have very limited amounts of time for boredom, disgruntlement with his professors, or unease navigating the complexities of the classroom. Any questions about his future appeared to elicit excitement and limited stress reactions. This participant demonstrated an eagerness to discover what might be in front of him related to education and to life; he was quite open to his future.

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of this participant's avoiding and attending coping strategies, expectations of professors, his sense of enacted masculinity, descriptions of stress, and being Hispanic in the classroom. This participant did use the word "stress" and also used the word "anxiety." The highest level of stress for this participant was more muted than for some of the other participants. And for him, this was described in one situation where he was working too much, took too many courses, and was trying to get by on too little sleep. However, this comment only appeared once in the interview sequence and, in almost all other responses, Participant Five appeared to manage his stress level with a predominance of attending strategies, doing so with seeming amusement and positivity in his interactions.

Participant Five appeared to demonstrate continuous active engagement of positive attending coping behaviors. His engagement in class was not necessarily stated as actively pursuing or seeking personal connections, instead he simply appeared to gravitate toward this type of behavior. In each case where there could be a chance to retreat or a chance to use avoidance behaviors when coping, he did not do so. His responses reflected positivity in interacting with peers, with his professors, and when engaging and learning about the world. And conversely, he also appeared to have clear awareness of when he was avoiding situations both unconsciously and consciously. His unconscious behaviors appear to be managed well when he became aware that he was avoiding by using too much marijuana, when he was drinking too much caffeine when he was sleep deprived, or even when he was dealing with his own internal anger. In each case, he appeared to have responded in a timely manner to adjust

171

his behavior while in the midst of a particular college course; he continued to learn, and he continued to get good grades. Much like Participant Three, Participant Five, although influenced by his peers, did not react to the expectations of others. He appeared to be interacting and purposefully performing in his work, classes, and life in ways that appeared to be about being open to learning, about his sense of self as a masculine man, and about navigating in a complex world.

Finally, the line of questioning concerning masculinity suggested interesting contrasts for this student. For this participant, he appeared to have placed himself purposefully away from his family, in non-typical situations (for him), and was questioning his own sense of masculinity. His multiple and fluid concepts of masculinity appear to be assisting him in navigating complex conversations about gender. His sense of masculinity during the interviews was expressed in westernized notions of masculinity. However, although his language use and descriptions of terms like "masculine" or "masculine behavior" might appear somewhat limiting, his actions continued to place himself in challenging atypical, gendered situations, presenting an opportunity to develop a much greater ability to understand a non-westernized ideal of masculinity. He was aware of dominate or aggressive displays that he labeled as "overtly masculine" — and stated that he does not like them.

Much like some of the other participants, learning for Participant Five was not about being masculine or feminine, it was about the sense of moving him closer to his goal – a job or transferring, or maybe both. Unlike some of the other participants, he may not be described as having a more developed sense of gender fluidity. However, his actions, his continued positivity in interacting with others, and his independence in learning appeared to be assisting him in

172

navigating the complexity of working, going to school, and living in a new world. Participant

Five had consistent positive responses during almost all passages of the interviews. He

consistently used a set of strategies that appeared to be assisting him in moving toward success

in his education and in his personal interactions.

Participant Six

Participant Six was a twenty-six-year-old male of Mexican background. One parent was

U.S. born; the other parent was originally from Mexico. The parents divorced early in

Participant Six's life, and he also had two additional parents as stepparents. At the time of the

interview, his mother lived in Tijuana, Mexico. She worked in public health, a profession related

to her degree. His father lives in a town nearby to NW Community College and works as a civil

engineer. He has five siblings, three full- and two half-siblings. His half-siblings are still in their

teens and live close by with his father and stepmother. In his core family, he was a middle child

and both of his siblings had also gone to college. He and his extended family are predominantly

from the northwest region of Mexico, with some of them also currently living in southern

California. His father was an orphan and had no extended family. His parents both had college

degrees; his mother had a graduate degree.

He recounted his childhood where he and one sibling were born in the U.S., but the

other sibling was born in Mexico. For Participant Six, this gave him a sense, as he put it, "So, you

know, being of mixed culture is rather interesting, not just about the border, that's a whole

another issue. But growing up in the U.S. and Mexico at the same time." Participant Six was a

self-proclaimed artist using painting, mixed media, and other digital media. As he finished high

school, his passion for art guided him to work in the field, learning the craft, and he did not

have a formal interest in college. About five to six years after high school, and following conversations with his father, he was convinced that while he could continue his interest in art, he should attempt to get a degree. In 2019, Participant Six was convinced by his father and stepmother to move to Seattle and enroll in NW Community College. His father also provided the funding and a place to live as a part of the agreement. Although many students and parents struggle with the students' choice of a career as an artist or getting a degree in art, his parents were adamant that their interest was simply about ensuring that their son complete a bachelor's degree.

He finished high school in Tijuana, Mexico, and indicated that school was in some ways the same as in the U.S., and in other ways very different. His experiences in high school were mostly positive in that he did well, got along well with his teachers, and did not, in his words, "mess around at all." The biggest difference for him was described as an emphasis on "a lot of teamwork, a lot of group work." And in the U.S., he indicated that, up to this point, everything had been about the individual competition with others.

His self-reported high school GPA was 9.5 out of 10. For him, this was quite good, and he was considered in the top five in his class. In addition to finishing an associate's degree in Studio Arts, Participant Six would soon finish his second associate's degree in Film. The next step would then be to transfer to a bachelor's degree program. He indicated that this next step could take him anywhere in the U.S. or even Europe.

Participant Six indicated that his family was closely connected, but all very independent. His parents both had enough financial means to send him and all of his siblings to college. He indicated that he had faced consistent pressure to go to college. Participant Six stated, "She [my

mom] wanted me to get a degree, my dad wanted me to get a degree. I just kept saying 'well, if it's not something that I want to do...like art, then no.'"

He felt that his strongest supporters were his mother and father, but predominantly his father. And even though this participant indicated a tremendous amount of parental pressure to go to college, this participant also saw a move to the northwest U.S. as, in his words, "an opportunity, not just for college just like general growth or new experiences. That was [would be] amazing... I just said, 'Okay, I'm going to do it.'" Participant Six was not employed and indicated that he was focusing only on his education. Unlike other participants, he never commented about the stress of making enough money or the stress of work, but often ensured that he made enough money to do things instead of just work and school.

At the time of the interview Participant Five's current GPA was self-reported as 3.8, and he had completed 80 of the potential 90 units intended for transfer. The student was recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW community college research office. Participants were offered a modest stipend, Participant Six did not accept the stipend.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were predominantly used consciously. Although there was a mix of attending and avoiding strategies used in his courses, most of his focus was on attending, following through, and staying on top of his education. When commenting about the classroom set up, he remarked at length about the difference between his experience in Mexico versus in a U.S. classroom. For him, there was less emphasis on chairs in rows, and more a matter of groups of tables with chairs around. Participant Six spent quite a bit of time

explaining the differences between the U.S. and Mexican systems: different class set up, seating by alpha order using last name, seats in rows, no use of online technology systems, and an extremely strict adherence to following the communication rules of the professor.

Additionally, he commented about this ability to hide in the courses, where he could have his back against a wall with no one behind him, and even lean further back so that he was less noticeable. This sense of sitting/hiding in his classes was conveyed in the past tense. He noted that he now hides much less, but there were other contributing issues including being primarily remote for one and one-half years, his focus on art and art-based courses, and having less group work. Finally, this participant also noted two additional items that he believed contributed to, in his words, "made me more of an outcast." Participant Six indicated that he has Tourette's syndrome and is of another sexual orientation. Both issues contributed to his "focus[ing] more on school over...social life." All these contributions for Participant Six were connected to him in a way that made him self-describe as an outcast and made him ponder his original behavior as a person who hid in classrooms.

As regards behaviors like reading ahead or contacting the professor, Participant Six appeared to maintain a high activity level, consistently reading ahead, and contacting the professor frequently. For Participant Six, the behaviors were considered part of his normal behavior that allowed him to be successful and not focus on the "far in excess, social aspects of the classroom." Additionally, he noted that having spent the last six quarters in an almost completely online environment, he had spent a lot of time recently connecting to his professors. He stated, "messaging my instructors or discussion boards with my classmates. Yeah, I feel that that helped me build better relationships with my instructors."

176

As a part of his transition to a U.S.-based school system he commented quite a bit about things he just had to learn about like syllabi being provided online via Canvas, that the bookstore had books available prior to the term, and he could contact his professors prior to the quarter. For Participant Six, all these concerns were those that he immediately addressed and then did not repeat the behavior the next term. Participant Six appeared to have the requisite internal fortitude to use attending strategies and stay focused on his education.

As described by Participant Six, some of his best engagement with other students came through the discussion boards in his art courses. This participant had not been quite ready to discuss his artwork but eventually found this to be an activity from which he learned tremendously. And although he originally avoided this activity, he had now found this online format to be quite helpful, as he noted, "I really liked the discussion boards because the part that I wasn't aware ... is not only being the artist but being the art commentator...when we had to give feedback to our classmates."

When it came to the set of communication mediums available to students to use with both faculty and students, Participant Six appeared to have a robust set of tools that he used. As a part of the interview protocol, there are a variety of communication mediums discussed. This participant was unlike most other participants in that he uses all of them as needed and often. In his words, "I'll just use whatever I need... I'll use video calls and Zoom. I do enjoy texting; I think I'm good with emails. I also like phone calls." For Participant Six, the variety of communication mediums and the positive the set of attending behaviors suggest continued positive movement toward completion and transfer.

Although Participant Six commented quite a bit about avoidant behavior he has used in the past — hiding in class, not getting involved with other classmates, and limited interaction in his courses — he appeared to have learned how to change that behavior. He commented about his experience of learning to share in an English course, stating, "if I had something I felt was helpful, then I will share." For another course, he commented that, in the past, he used to get overwhelmed when there was a lot of reading ahead. However, he now knew that when he takes this kind of course he would have to use some new strategies. He commented:

> When one class feels like this is a lot of work, or it's heavy with readings or writing, I had to balance it out with the other classes I'm taking. And obviously, with my own personal artistic projects and my own personal life, it can be hard the first two weeks. But I feel like I can always find a comfortable place to take on a greater number of classes and not be too concerned.

For Participant Six, there appeared to be a very limited set of avoidant behaviors related to his education. And in most cases, his avoidant behaviors were somewhat selfishly connected to preservation of his time and used when activities took time away from his learning. In one case, Participant Six mentioned that in groupwork assignments, he was required to list or submit notes, and others must do the same. And given the asynchronous nature of the course, there was very little back and forth exchange, and many of the students waited until the last minute to submit, limiting the amount of time that the students had to interact. For Participant Six, this was best described by him in the following passage, "time is precious for me. So, I will consider how much time I spend on something where it doesn't seem helpful."

About another course, he commented that, "I've avoided communicating with instructors for things that I feel are not a big deal." He commented further about the need for individuals to follow up with each other, but again, most students waited until the last moment

and there was limited interaction between. Participant Six did not necessarily avoid the requirement to communicate daily, but he also did not necessarily follow through with each detailed part of the course assignment.

EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSORS

Participant Six identified several expectations related to professors' behavior. His perspectives about professors emerged through specific questions and, in most cases, the statements were primarily positive. In some cases, his expectations were about providing appropriate resources, in others it was about connecting and creating a relationship, and finally in a particular section he commented about integrity and honesty.

In several passages, Participant Six commented about his educational experiences in Mexico, and then coming to the U.S., and how those expectations had to be adjusted. One of his first comments was about how he was addressed and then later where he was asked to sit in a classroom. Early in his education, he was referred to by his last name, and there, students were required to sit in columns and rows related to the first letter of their last name.

In two different accounts, Participant Six gave feedback about good interactions with his professors. These good interactions provided both a sense of creating opportunities for conversation and engaging with the professor, and a sense of creating a relationship. In an English course, he described an interaction that extended beyond the realm of learning English, when he commented, "So besides like the whole work we were doing for English, we had a lot of good conversations about filmmaking... and he would share movies that I could watch or read about ...." In this way, not only was the work of learning English managed, he also was able to discuss one of his favorite subjects — filmmaking. In another example, he commented about

179

one professor who he got to know better after the course was completed: "And we've taken like the whole teacher/student relationship past the class because I've actually contacted her beyond class just for like our questions and things like that."

A contrasting experience was one where the participant noted a concern about the professor's dishonesty. In the assignment's requirements, the professor had listed the expected timelines, steps, and outcomes in the learning management system. This participant completed those expectations, but then received feedback that he did not follow directions. He went back to the original assignment description and struggled with what he found. He commented, "And I was worried, and I was like confused... And then I went back into the assignment, and she had edited the assignment. And why would she do this and say this to me? It was very disheartening."

MASCULINITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Participant Six conveyed, through several responses, a variety of traditional and non-traditional ideas about masculinity. Like Participant Three, this participant appeared to have some well-developed notions of masculinity, a fluidity to gender roles, and a comfortable sense of his gendered self that were not exhibited by other participants.

His response to the first question regarding the concept of masculinity and being a man starts first with typified westernized masculinity, "men who have a very aggressive traits where being a man is almost imposing," and then continues, "they're just lacking a bunch of other things, like they try to not be emotional they try not to be fragile or vulnerable." In this way, Participant Six expressed not only what some might describe as "masculine – aggressive," but the nuances of what he believes men should be able to do suggests his greater capacity for also

180

reflected a fluidity in gender expression. This was reinforced when he stated, "that translates into what being a man is: it's something that's not. It's this identity that is supposed to be strong or superior or, or better, but it's very restricted in what a man can do."

When asked about the participant's sense of self in the classroom and his own masculinity, he had an interesting response. His perspective reflected his awareness of a level of gender awareness, but it was traditional westernized masculinity. He stated:

> [...in] film classes where some male students will share any kind of experience. I can immediately see how they might not realize that what they're sharing is only true to them because they're strictly "heterosexual male white male." So, there's some entitlement to how valid their perspectives are. I don't think they hesitate, and... I don't think they have to feel vulnerable when they're sharing things.

In this way, Participant Six was considering what is or is not appropriate in the presentation of a gendered self, and what behaviors constitute disclosure or vulnerability. Another point related to this participant's views of male and female behavior in the classroom was illustrated when he commented about a standard westernized masculine response: "I would see that men, in some cases, usually...[offer] an opinion that's reaffirming of what we're seeing or some kind of story that confirms what it's being told. Women...would ask questions."

Later in the interview, Participant Six commented about how he learned about both expected gender roles and interests. He recounted a repeated experience with his mother who, although she knew that he is gay, continued to inquire about his relationships with women and how he interacted with them. Each time a woman appeared in his life as a friend, in his mother's eyes, this friend then becomes a girlfriend. In response, he had to continuously navigate and remind her that this was not the case. For his father, there was the continued expectation that Participant Six needed to provide for the family or for others as this was the

man's role. However, Participant Six noted that his father's expectations may have been less about a man's traditional role but possibly more based on his father's background as an orphan. His father's orphan status had seemingly provided very limited role models to guide him and limited him to these standard gendered ideals to transmit to his son.

BEING HISPANIC/MEXICAN

Multiple responses from Participant Six related to being Hispanic. His response to a question about perceptions of being Hispanic elicited the following response, "I can approach more people to communicate because I know that basically just this half of the world speaks only Spanish or English." Like Participant Three he did speak with a flat north American accent. And although the question was specific about being Hispanic, much like other participants, he overlays being Hispanic with speaking Spanish. His background was Mexican, but he minimized this quite a bit in talking about his past. He commented about his experience conveying his background. He stated, "if I say I'm Mexican, the assumption is 'oh, you're Mexican from the U.S.'— just because I don't have the strongest accent. It just opens up the conversation where it always becomes about why I'm here." For Participant Six, this perception of his heritage was very disheartening, and he felt very dismissed when this occurred.

In terms of language use, Participant Six commented about how useful it is to speak two languages. Again, similar to his being Hispanic, sometimes this aspect has plusses and minuses for him. In some cases, he has received positive accolades for his capacity to communicate broadly. In other cases, he had been questioned about his northern accent, and questioned about whether or not he was a U.S. citizen. Again, this line of inquiry to him often felt unproductive.

182

In terms of his being Hispanic and its relevance to the classroom, Participant Six commented about one specific aspect. For him, those around him appeared to have an expectation when they discovered that he was Hispanic (people noticed his last name). Then he would be expected to add to knowledge to courses or subject matter related to non-U.S. cultures or intercultural aspects. Similarly, there had also been an expectation that when issues emerged related to social equity or about privilege, he had often been asked to add to the classroom conversation. Lastly, when inquiring about whether being both Hispanic and a man impacted his interactions in the classroom, he stated that he did not believe there was an impact other than his perspectives on the limited westernized notions of masculinity — for himself and for others. Finally, terms of the intersection of his gender and ethnicity, Participant Six commented about what might be more typical in the United States versus in Mexico. For him, when you combine the two aspects, the definition becomes, "more strict," and "in the U.S. it's even more about being independent. In Mexico, it's more like a collective."

Lastly, Participant Six was careful to note that when it came to race or ethnicity, he sometimes tells others that he does not know his and would rather "just have them know me. In some cases, they just want to know about Mexican culture." For him this is, again, dismaying, as he would prefer to be known for more than his nationality or ethnicity.

THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

When asked to "explain your experience entering college and beginning your courses for the year," Participant Six commented in a variety of ways, but did not overtly comment about being stressed.

The interview question about setting up and choosing courses elicited very little in the way of stressors for Participant Six. After adjusting to the U.S. system and learning where to find information, he appears to prepare well; he reviews the syllabus, manages in-class interactions well, is effective in limiting avoidant behaviors with the professors, and in general appears to be a very prepared and capable student. However, much like some of the other participants, his comments reflected the definite perspective that he does not always fit in, as he said, "I have always felt different and set apart." This perspective was also reflected in his comments about how he used to hide in the classroom or look for a place to sit where he had his back to no one — apparently looking for safety. This strategy did not appear to be a concern at the same level for his college courses as in high school, although most of his college courses were now in art and film, and he stressed enjoying interactions in these courses.

In several different sections he commented on his "other" orientation, early in high school feeling different, then coming out to his parents, then feeling freer to express himself as "other" at NW Community College. And although he does overtly state that he is gay, it was veiled as "other" through most of the interview. This carefulness, combined with one other section about coming out, suggests that, although he is not concerned about being gay, he was still quite careful about disclosing this when he commented that this process of "coming out is just kind of hard. And you have to keep doing it. And I am kind of tired of doing it."

Although he had the opportunity to experience multiple educational settings and can see that they are different, when considering his future plans to transfer to a 4-year institution, this participant appeared eager to continue to study as long as it is paid for. However, he was still very keen on becoming an artist and wasn't quite sold on school, but his parents are.

184

Participant Six also appeared to experience enjoyment when he spoke of his courses and coursework. In two other cases, it appeared that he could become stressed when expected to do unfulfilling groupwork and when working with disingenuous professors. As he stated, "groupwork, I could take it or leave it. As long as we're moving together, ok. But, but...how should I say this. I'm not a very friendly person." In a different section, he commented about being prepared and following directions of the professor, but then being very disappointed when he discovered that the professor changed his mind on a course assignment and did not update the class. This caused Participant Six some anxiety, making him not want to speak with the professor.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of this participant's avoiding and attending coping strategies, his expectations of professors, his sense of enacted masculinity, his descriptions of stress, and his discussions about being Hispanic in the classroom. Much like some of the other participants, this participant did not necessarily use the term "stress." The highest level of stress for this participant was noted multiple times throughout his interview: he wanted interactivity in the classroom, and he disengaged when he did not have high engagement.

For Participant Six, there appeared to be active engagement and attending coping behaviors through most of his classroom and course activity. His active engagement was really about learning and becoming better. This was exemplified when he commented about his favorite subjects of art and film, but also in the instances where he commented about learning from his peers in group online discussions related to learning about art.

185

Participant Six had very clear ideas about masculinity, and these appeared to be very well developed. Moreover, for him this awareness appeared to be about his sense that gender is very fluid. He appeared to have a sense of his "otherness" very early in his life: his preferences for being quieter, listening, and sitting back. And although his high school years were not necessarily easy, he felt comfortable being who he was. For him this was about being less overtly westernized masculine — not standing out and not being overly aggressive. He was comfortable being who he was but did not want to discuss it extensively. He had made a comment about coming out and that he had to keep doing it. To him, this just appeared a waste of energy. What was also interesting is that for him it was needed or necessary because it was akin to telling people stories about one's sexuality in general, which shouldn't be needed. He commented, "That's exhausting to keep doing that. Yeah... I have not had the long struggle that a lot of people have. But...why should I have to prove anything to anyone? But obviously, I'm going to tell people."

Given this sense of a heightened gender fluidity, Participant Six appeared to navigate away from gender-proscribed behaviors, an approach that seemed to be assisting him appropriately and positively in his education. And this positivity in his management of self and his awareness of who he wants to be also seem to be helping him, as he did not appear to be struggling with his studies, his grades, or even the possibility of transferring.

He also dealt with is ethnicity much like his sexuality: if asked, he will tell people that he is Mexican and speaks Spanish fluently, but otherwise, he subsumes both aspects of himself. When commenting about his national identity he stated, "in Mexico, I did not need any of those labels or any of that...thinking about what it means for me to be Mexican or Hispanic or any

other word. It was never on my mind until I came here." This sense of subsuming is reified when he commented about not telling people he is Mexican because "I am tall, and mostly white, so I pass really well." Again, both aspects are interesting to consider related to this participant's capacity to navigate the classroom, and it appeared that there was a very limited impact of either of these aspects on his success.

Participant Seven

Participant Seven was a 25-year-old male of Guatemalan background. His father was U.S. born; his mother was originally from Guatemala. At the time of the interview, his parents were married and living in the NW region. Neither of his parents went to college. He has three siblings. All the children in his family went to college, and all are still currently in college. He is a middle child. His mother's extended family are predominantly from Guatemala, with some of them also currently living near his current family home.

He disclosed that he was raised Jewish, and even took his bar mitzvah, although his experience and involvement in the religious part of his life has waned into his adulthood. He also disclosed that he was diagnosed as a child with both ADHD and dyslexia and that both issues affected his experiences through his childhood and schooling. He did okay in school but was much better in sports. He was quite involved in many extra-curricular activities, sports, his church, and community service. He knew that he wanted to go to college but did not do well enough to go to a good college. He applied and was accepted into a liberal arts college in the NW and attended as a freshman. He commented that the experience was, "mostly not good, but I had some good classes."

Although he is Hispanic, he is also black. He commented, "…yes, I am kinda Black. And yes, Hispanic too, but I don't really look Hispanic." He commented about his background as a Hispanic, Black, Jewish young man with disabilities by saying, "I should have used all of this to get into a good college, but I did not." He never learned to speak Spanish well, as it was not emphasized at home, and his mother spoke very good English. After being unsuccessful at the university, he moved home and took a few years off school. In 2018, he enrolled at NW Community College with an intent to gain transfer credits through a path in engineering. This interest in engineering comes from his childhood and high school, where one of his favorite courses was Robotics. He admitted that he "always knew that I could build things."

Participant Seven indicated that his family was closely connected, and his parents have his Guatemalan grandmother stay with them regularly. He felt that his strongest academic supporters were his mother and father. He had a close circle of friends in high school and continued to maintain those connections into college. Although he indicated that he was close with the friend network, he described himself as "introverted because of my personality and disability." Participant Seven was employed part-time and indicated that he tried to maintain a limited work environment to focus on his education. Participant Seven never commented about money or the stress of work, his stressors were from other life circumstances.

His self-reported high school GPA was, in his words, "two something." In his current college work, he was doing okay, but not great. When I inquired about his current GPA he stated, "as things didn't go well this past quarter, I realized that if I tried to keep track of it [his GPA], I would get very down." At the time of the interview, he had completed 94 of the potential 100 units intended for transfer, as engineering requires more credits. The student was

recruited for this study through the outreach email/phone obtained through the NW

community college research office. Participants were offered a modest stipend. Participant

Seven accepted the stipend.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were often used both consciously and

unconsciously. Although there was a mix of attending and avoiding strategies used in his

courses, he vacillated with each depending on the difficulty of the course.

When commenting about the classroom set up, he focused on where he sat and being

comfortable, knowing what was expected by reviewing the materials and syllabus, and knowing

what the professor expected. As it affected his place in the classroom, he noted that he tended

to sit anywhere out of convenience, but "I prefer, usually, not to sit exactly in the front row." In

terms of his preparation for classes, he usually did a thorough review of the professor by

reviewing other student feedback through the website "ratemyprofessor.com."

Participant Seven spent quite of bit of time explaining the struggles of his coursework,

how each course's grading system was set up, and his success. His most important review was

for the grading system in each course: in his words, that system, "can make or break you." In

the case of a current engineering course, the final exam was 60% of the grade, and for him this

was "really not great because it doesn't leave much space to fail." In these instances, he also

remarked that this system and the resulting pressure "kind of affected my, my overall health."

In other courses, he commented that where there is variability in the assignments, he does

much better and is able to positively stay focused on the course. In the case of a linear algebra

course, he noted two things that made this a better course for him; one, the variety of graded

189

assignments including online discussion and homework; and two, the ability to engage with others in discussion. In the one course, he noted, "I didn't do great on some of the more test-based things, but I also don't feel like it's a death sentence on any one part. If my if my written is good, then it still evens out at the end."

In terms of interacting in class and asking questions, for this participant it all depended on the course and the professor. For him, if was he was feeling good about the course and his performance, then he was more inclined to participate. And for him, participation appeared in the form of more in-class discussion (especially in group work) and in question-asking. In his words, "If I'm more comfortable in the class and have a better understanding, I have a tendency to try and ask questions. Just so other people don't have to ask those questions." Conversely, his behavior changed when he was "not that comfortable. I kind of hold back a little bit. Usually writing stuff down...or trying to understand things so I'm just trying to keep up."

In terms of behaviors such as reading ahead or contacting the professor, Participant Seven did not consistently cite either of these as normal activities. Part of the interview sequence included a series of prompts that were about preparedness or coping strategies. When asked this set of questions, Participant Seven stated vaguely, "Most of the time I just try and do practice problems or look at some of my notes and stuff beforehand." And at this point in the interview, the participant made several comments about his Individual Education Program (IEP) and how his learning struggles sometimes got in the way.

As described by Participant Seven, some of his best engagement in his classes was with other students in groupwork. However, in his words, "groupwork is interesting. Sometimes it is good, sometimes it is bad. But you really only remember the bad ones." For him, groupwork

190

was an area that he could get excited about and stayed focused on. Even if things were going well in a course, then he would focus on the group, spend time on discussion boards, and assist others — often becoming the student who helped others navigate. Conversely for him, if the group ended up being full of other students who did not follow through, then it wasn't a good experience. Interestingly, one of the positive coping strategies he noted included a full review of the syllabus to scan for the type of work and approach required. Participant Seven did this in some cases to learn about the grading system but also in others to identify required group work. In his words, "You kind of have to plan for possibly having a group work assignment [come] out of nowhere."

Lastly, a consistent pattern of attending behaviors for Participant Seven included the ability to speak his mind, especially when something was not going well in a class. He remarked extensively about successful and unsuccessful courses and in doing so made a particular comment when reflecting on a professor. He stated:

> When I find them kind of BS'ing us, [for example], I had a problem last quarter, where a professor kind of messed up and didn't give us the right information about turning in an assignment. So, we [had] the wrong information… we would have come to the wrong conclusions. [And I told him] If you hadn't messed up in the first place…. And he didn't like that.

When I inquired about how he felt about this exchange and whether he was concerned that it might impact his performance, his relationship to his professor, or even his grade, he stated, "…don't care. I needed to speak up."

When it came to the set of communication approaches available to students to use with both faculty and students, Participant Seven appeared to have a robust set of tools that he used. During the interview, a variety of communication mediums were discussed. His only

reticence was in using the phone, and he had a concern that people should not have his phone number. However, for this participant, he regularly connected with his professor using whatever means were available but noted that he frequently takes advantage of office hours. And, when in-person contact was an option, he commented that, "I go regularly because I know that I need help in my classes for help on homework or understand certain things...with my IEP, I need to make sure that they know me." In interactions with his peers, he was usually the student who would establish initial contact, mostly for groupwork. And for this groupwork purpose he predominantly used texting or Canvas (the LMS) tools.

Although Participant Seven did not necessarily comment about the avoidant behaviors he has used in the past, he used some when navigating his current classroom experiences. He was aware of avoidant behaviors such as not regularly attending class, not taking notes, sitting in the back, and focusing on non-coursework in class, but he didn't specifically state that he had any of these behaviors. And in most cases, his avoidant behaviors were somewhat selfishly connected to ensuring that his professors knew of his special needs to avoid having his time wasted. I inquired about his ability to manage each course if something became difficult, such as doing poorly on a test or feeling like he did not understand the material. In these cases, he did not specifically comment about any particular behavior, but instead commented about what he felt. For example, he stated, "if, say, you start to spiral, it doesn't matter if you have more time, because you're just going to spiral for a longer period of time."

In one case, Participant Seven mentioned that groupwork assignments can get quite complicated. He did not state, however, that he avoids groupwork because it has become part of almost every course. For him, the larger concern was when the groupwork became difficult.

He noted one specific example "when others just stop performing. And I will help prep their work, but then just stop talking to them as it appears to be wasteful."

In another section, Participant Seven commented about becoming overwhelmed in classes where the material is complicated and the professor is moving too fast, or where the instructor was "extremely boring." In these cases, he noted that he sometimes checks out and, "wasn't really able to pay attention that much. So, I ended up listening to music…just like writing down everything that he was writing down. I was keeping awake at that point." In other courses where things didn't go well or were confusing, he would "kind of avoid it. Then just try and go to office hours to get help." He explained why he behaved this way saying, "I have a weird amount of pride in certain degrees, but I also kind of don't want to like look stupid at times."

Two last comments are relevant related to Participant Seven's coping strategies. First, when I inquired about whether his behavior of not wanting to look stupid by asking questions in class was related to anything, like maybe his sense of self, he indicated that it was not a factor. However, he then ended this section by explaining that this behavior was solely about "his disability."

EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSORS

This participant's perspectives about professors emerged through descriptions about some other issue, such as his background, his success in his courses, communication, or his general experience. For him, one of the greatest determinants for him to be successful was a professor. For Participant Seven, having a good professor "could make or break the class."

When recounting his early/first experiences in college, Participant Seven commented extensively about the transition from high school to the university, his failing and then re-enrolling at NW Community College. In the beginning of the interview sequence, he had commented about what he learned so far and he stated, "I kind of learned a lot of things through my schooling, like the fact that professors aren't teachers, and I have to define them differently." This comment appeared without prompting, as we were discussing his background in school, yet it was significant in that he wanted to make sure that I knew this.

As noted in a previous section, Participant Seven had very high expectations about the general performance of his professors, noting that they could essentially make the class either work well or not, for the student. In a particular section of the interview related to preparing for courses, Participant Seven offered an extensive amount of feedback related to what he personally expected. For him, professors can be tough or strict, but also could be understanding and clear with information about course expectations. His primary concern was to get a professor who is not strict, but inconsistent. For him, these experiences allowed him to express his feelings and how he had been impacted. For example, he stated, "my physics class sucks this quarter. I'm not going to lie. He [the professor] just kind of sucks, too." He continued to explain: "I'll ask him a question, and he will be annoyed that I asked him a basic question. And that feels really bad. It makes you not want to talk to him." In another section of the interview, he commented about a difficult experience with a professor and noted, "I had a class with one of the least favorite teachers I've ever had. I don't know why, but she hated me. She was a good professor; she was good at her job. She was a terrible human being."

Further in the interview I inquired about the courses in which he felt he had been successful. Many of the participants in this research study responded by making comments about subjects and the specific courses. Participant Seven immediately connected this question to a professor. His comment concerned the process of getting into a "closed class" that was one of his successes; he stated, "my professor is really helpful. Yeah, he's just an overall good guy." And upon reflecting about one of his top three courses — pre-calculus — he again commented about the professor and stated, "that was probably one of the ones that…demonstrates how a good teacher … makes such a big difference."

In two different accounts, Participant Seven gave feedback about bad interactions with his professors. For this participant, there clearly was a connection in the responses about unsuccessful interactions and how these appeared to be causing him an increasing amount of stress. In one case he offered a very important perspective about how he felt stating, "college has really only kind of broken me down more, instead of built me up." In a second response, Participant Seven commented about his general perspective about his success. He stated:

> And especially with exams, I have lost a lot of confidence in my ability to actually take an exam [and] do well in them. So, I told him this. He told me that he's not changing his grading system. And it kind of felt like: "Oh, this is a waste of time." And I'm [thinking] "oh, I hate you."

Two final comments were offered when asked about his expectations from professors because of this participant's need for assistance with college-approved accommodations for his learning disability. As stated earlier, Participant Seven had self-declared significant learning assistance needs. Many of his responses in the interview ultimately had a connection to his learning needs. In another instance, he commented about these needs in relation to a particular professor when he had made a request of the professor: "I want to talk to you […] I

195

regularly use office hours because I know that I need help in classes." He added, "with my IEP, I need to make sure that they know me." In a different course, Participant Seven commented that he — and the whole class — were experiencing some difficulties with the professor's emphasis on the grade of one exam. As a group, the students had commented about this to the professor prior to the exam. They all took the exam and did not do well, and, thus, it appeared that the overall grades for the course would be low. Participant Seven took it upon himself to speak to the professor, and the conversation did not go well. He commented about this experience: "I feel like it's important to have different structures for different classes, and … a professor to kind of admit that the structure that they might have initially gone with isn't necessarily the greatest way to do it."

MASCULINITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Participant Seven conveyed through several responses a variety of traditional and non-traditional ideas about masculinity. This participant appeared to have some well developed notions of masculinity and a comfortable sense of his gendered self.

His response to the first question regarding the concept of masculinity and being a man started first with a quandary. He posited places and activities that people might inhabit that are more masculine such as wrestling, then contrasted that example with a question that, "someone who is feminine can't like those things as well?" He then continued with expressing ideas regarding people moving across a continuum— appearing male but with feminine characteristics, or the reverse. A final comment he made referred to the how people experience this fluid movement and stated, "There is so much to it ... that it feels it borders on how we also individually consider our...masculinity. And it can be very confusing." In this way

196

he reflected some internal contradictions that he was still working on. Most importantly, even given that there may be more comfort with this kind of gender fluidity in our current time in the general U.S. population, for him this sometimes feels like "we've boxed ourselves in."

While the above statements suggested a progressive internal struggle that challenges the status quo about what is or is not masculine, he then followed with a very traditional idea about masculinity that had to do with an individual's physical strength or physical presence. He commented, "I feel like I'm naturally stronger than some people... of a lot of my normal friend group. I think I'm probably one of the stronger people."

When inquiring related to the participant's sense of self and masculinity in the classroom, this participant expressed a definition that differed from any provided by the other participants in this study. He commented:

> I feel like for my educational side...being a man basically means nothing to me because I feel like the disability has been more of a driving force than my actual sex or gender…. Yeah...you kind of view yourself at the bottom of everyone, then you kinda don't feel like it matters.

This passage provided insightful into Participant Seven's experience in the classroom and in his education. Although in previous responses he indicated that his disability had impacted him and that he needed professors to understand his specific needs, this passage expressed how his learning challenges have impacted him broadly in his education. And, although he acknowledged that traditional masculine behaviors may not be helpful in order to navigate successfully in college, the implications of gender were swept aside when considering his greater deficit — his learning disabilities.

When prodded further about his perspective regarding masculine or feminine spaces or even those spaces within college courses, he stated that he did not feel that there was much of

197

a difference. In fact, this participant's perspective was one that, in educational settings there was a kind of evening out or levelling of the playing field. For him, subjects or spaces did not carry any gender emphasis. And in his comments, he then shifted the conversation back from a discussion of gender to expectations for his professors. He stated, "you can have a girl good at math, and a guy good at math. It doesn't really matter because...the professor [must] make sure that...things aren't ending up out of balance."

Lastly, I inquired about his perspective related to his behavior and expectations about gender when observing others. He noted that when it comes to interaction in the classroom and discussion, he had seen many experiences where women were "[more] confident in their ability to stand out." When asked if this confidence was connected to specific classes, he noted that he did not have any particular course in mind. However, in other portions of the conversation, he noted that it was more often the case that women and men were equal in their interactions and capability, and "it doesn't feel like anyone usually stands our unless they're actually a good student." For Participant Seven, this experience was most apparent in math and science courses.

BEING HISPANIC/GUATEMALAN

Participant Seven made very few comments related to his Hispanic heritage and identity. His response to a question about perceptions of being Hispanic elicited the following response, "I'm sort of in sort of not. I mean, I probably would say I'm Latino. Like, as in from a country?" Like several of the other participants, he spoke with a typical North American accent. Participant Seven did not link being Hispanic with speaking Spanish. However, when I inquired about his national status and which terms he used to describe his background, he indicated that

he preferred to be referred to as Guatemalan; however, even this was a qualified response as he had stated that his status as either a black man or a man with disabilities were both stronger influences on him.

In terms of language use, Participant Seven commented about how useful it could be to speak two languages. He reflected that he knows some Spanish and understands the language better than he speaks it. It was not common in his household to speak Spanish regularly. However, during his early years and into his teens, his Guatemalan grandmother would live with his family for up to 6 months. Unfortunately, his grandmother did not speak any English, and because of his limited abilities, he had spent a limited amount of time interacting with her. He commented about the cultural aspects of his Hispanic background, especially food and celebrations, noting that they had an important, but limited, degree of influence on him. Lastly, he commented about other's interactions with him which, because he appears to be black, often become stilted or confused when he mentions that his national identity is Guatemalan.

In terms of being Hispanic and its relevance to the classroom, Participant Seven commented about a specific aspect. As he reflected on the concept of masculinity and connected it with his Hispanic background, the term "machismo" emerged. For him, this term almost takes on a quality of being a joke, is not taken seriously, and even has a negative connotation. In his words, "it's not used in a way that it's supposed to — to actually [express how to] be a man or anything like that. It's almost like it's closer to being a joke than like actual seriousness."

Lastly, while he made limited connections between his status as Hispanic and his classroom interactions or behavior, Participant Seven did indicate two issues that were

dominant in his classroom interactions. The first, more significant aspect, was that it is visibly apparent that he is black. For him, his appearance had impacted him in ways that reflected his access to the Hispanic community. Participant Seven commented, "Well, it's more like... being in the black community, all you need to do is be black, as opposed to being in the Hispanic community. It feels like there are more barriers to entry." The second personal aspect were his experiences as a student with disabilities, clearly the strongest influence on him and on his classroom performance.

THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

Each participant was asked to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year." Participant Seven offered several reflections, but there were no overt comments about being stressed.

The interview question about setting up courses elicited multiple stressors for Participant Seven. For this participant, the stressors included navigating failure, identifying, and navigating the classroom with disabilities, concerns over having to repeat courses and stay on track, and knowing that he could find professors to engage with him who were fair. In some cases, students find that navigating the student pathway can be quite complicated and a variety of factors influence their success. There were multiple instances where Participant Seven commented about failing school, not doing well in school, and having to start again. These experiences appeared to be causing him some level of stress to the point that his mood and tone of voice changed when describing his experiences. This theme reappeared whenever he commented about his current grades, his GPA, or the potential to transfer to the university.

Some of his first comments were about getting ready to finish at NW Community College and about transferring and he stated, "I think at the current moment, I only have three more. Like, if everything goes right this quarter. I think I only have three classes left. And, yeah, yeah...if everything goes right." His tone during this response was low, and it sounded as if he was not sure. Because this was at the beginning of the interview, I did not seek clarity about why he had answered that way, but he seemed unsure. In another instance during the interview, Participant Seven commented about a time when his studies were not going well and that he was concerned about his GPA, stating, "at one point I had all of my classes scheduled out and had everything ... under control. And as things didn't go as well, I realized that if I tried to keep track of it. I would get very down." This statement was similar to his comment about his first experience at a university right after high school and essentially failed out. In both descriptions of these experiences, this participant's tone lowered, and he appeared more diminished in his responses, with an almost defeated appearance.

In multiple sections of his interview, Participant Seven commented about his expectations for his courses and how these expectations made him feel. For the most part, these were expectations about professors and his predominant need for a professor who was fair and balanced and would take feedback. In one section he described this expectation this way, "In some ways, I feel that when a teacher gives you the ability to fail, like fail in homework and fail on your test, then you actually can feel comfortable succeeding in a class." During this section of the interview, he commented about the good and bad things a physics professor had done; this vacillation appeared to cause him stress as his mood and tone seemed low.

In another section of his interview, he commented about learning about the system of higher education. Each college or university might have different rules for grade options or repeating courses. The issue of repeating a course appeared several times in different parts of the interview. In one section he commented at length, stating:

> At least at this college, you can take a class three times before you can have it taken off your record. If I had known that, I wouldn't have taken one or two classes… just waited for a better professor to take them. I definitely, definitely screwed up in that way.

During this portion of the interview, he was not necessarily up or down in mood or tone, but he was expressive in such a way that it appeared that this learning had caused some impact on him. More importantly, learning how not to fail might be seen at the low end of the spectrum in terms of how one views success in college. For this participant, this awareness demonstrated his knowledge of how to manage courses and appeared to cause him stress in that he did not know that he could exert some control by picking different professors. However, he seemed to be aware that even this issue was not necessarily in his control.

A final area of stress for this student concerned his statement about his ADHD and severe dyslexia. This issue reappeared for this participant in multiple sections, and it appeared as though he had been carrying this issue with him since his childhood. This burden of having a disability is not easy on anyone, but for this participant it was the cause of significant stress. One specific passage highlights this overall experience:

> I feel like for my educational side... I feel like the disability has been more of a driving force than my actual sex or gender, or whatever. I don't know, it's one of those things where it's like, if you view yourself at the bottom of everyone, then you don't feel like it matters.

Participant Seven's stress was mitigated, or he appeared less stressed, when discussing his family, his friends, work, and courses where he got to use his applied skills. He was looking forward to the university transfer experience and being able to complete his undergraduate degree. There was a sense that, upon transferring, things might be easier as he would be closer to his goal or to the finish. He appeared to convey a sense of relief when he commented about this.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings that can be taken from the aggregate of this participant's avoiding and attending coping strategies, expectations of professors, his sense of enacted masculinity, descriptions of stress, and being Hispanic in the classroom. Much like some of the other participants, this participant did not specifically use the term "stress." The highest level of stress for this participant was noted multiple times throughout his interview: he wanted fairness in his courses from professors who worked with him on his grades, and he wanted understanding concerning his learning disabilities.

For Participant Seven, there appeared to be a variety of conscious and unconscious coping strategies used when he was in the classroom. He could be highly engaged when it was needed, and in some cases, this engagement came when he was defending others regarding fairness. But his active engagements were seemingly never about learning and becoming better; instead, these engagements appeared to be prompted more as part of the process of navigating through each course to completion.

Participant Seven had developing ideas about masculinity. Similar to some of the other participants, it appeared that he has awareness of the need to accept all people, no matter

their orientation. He never demonstrated any skittishness regarding others performing in a non-normative gender manner. When describing masculinity, however, he was constrained by westernized notions: the size of a person, tone of voice, and physical strength. However, he was also grappling with nuances that men are still men even if they have feminine characteristics.

Although his high school years were not necessarily easy educationally, he had fun and did well in non-academic aspects. And as he ventured to the university after high school, his awareness that he was at the bottom even colored his entry into a regional liberal arts college, as evident from this statement: "I think you could fail high school and [still] get into this regional liberal arts college."

His perspective on his ethnicity or national identity are unique in this study in that he used the label Hispanic when he described himself demographically, but then was very clear in saying that he is a black man and explaining that others did not know that he is Hispanic. In one instance, he commented about how being Hispanic was like a party trick because by appearance he looks black, then he tells others he is Hispanic, and then they ask him to prove it. Proving it to others meant he then had to speak a little bit of Spanish. His reflection of these experiences (and it sounded as though this had happened multiple times) was not a positive one.

Lastly, Participant Seven appeared to be on the cusp of transferring to the university. He knew how many courses he had left, when he wanted to start, and which school he wanted to transfer to. However, his high levels of stress regarding his repeated failures in courses and his learning disabilities suggest that transfer may not be immediately in his immediate future.

Additionally, his statements about not really wanting to know his GPA appear to be a suggestion of hiding or avoiding. Because current academic status is one of the most critical components of readiness to transfer, his lack of awareness indicates that he may not be as close to readiness as he indicated.

Participant Eight

Participant Eight was a 19-year-old male of Chilean background. His father was U.S. born; his mother was originally from Chile. At the time of the interview, his parents were married and living in the NW region. His father went to college and had an advanced degree; his mother had no college background. He has three siblings; he is a middle child. All the children in his family went to college, and all are currently in college. His mother's extended family moved to the U.S. when his mother was a teenager. His extended family of grandparents, aunts, and uncles all lived in this NW region of the country.

He did well in high school and excelled in sports. He knew that he wanted to go to college but also wanted to work and was not sure about going on to a university. He applied and chose to come to NW Community College. He did not state a preference for any subject, nor made any statement about excelling in one subject area over another.

Although he is Hispanic, his ethnicity was not a predominant aspect in his life. Early in his life he was encouraged to learn and speak Spanish. However, this interest became less a part of his life in middle and high school. To focus on this again, his parents supported a semester in Ecuador so he could immerse himself in the language again.

He had a circle of friends in high school and continues to maintain those connections into college. Additionally, this same friend network also includes the parents of his friends who

have all kept close connections to each other. This friendship group is one that he had

participated with for school, for sports, and especially for social events. Participant Eight was

employed with two different jobs and regularly working up to 50 hours a week. During the

interview, Participant Eight never commented about money or the stress of work; his stressors

were from other life circumstances.

His self-reported high school GPA was 2.6. In his current college work, he was doing

well. In his words his current GPA was in the "3.1 or 3.2 range." At the time of the interview, he

had completed 45 of the potential 90 units intended for transfer in business. The student was

recruited for this study through the outreach contact information obtained through the NW

community college research office. Participants were offered a modest stipend; Participant

Eight accepted the stipend.

COPING – ATTENDING AND AVOIDING

For this participant, coping strategies were often used both consciously and

unconsciously. Although his responses also revealed a mix of attending and avoiding strategies

used in his courses, Participant Eight continued to maintain a consistent positive focus on

completing his transfer requirements.

When commenting about the classroom set up, he focused on where he sat and being

prepared, knowing what was expected by reviewing the course materials and syllabus, and

knowing what the professor expected. In terms of his place in the classroom, he tended to just

sit somewhere in the middle, but "not too close or too far back. If I am too far back, I won't

learn anything."

Participant Eight's work schedule was something that impacted the number of courses he took and how he managed his study time. In his first year of schooling, he commented that he worked only one job. At the time of the interview, he was getting ready for his second year of college, and he also wanted to help out with his father's business, so he added a second job. Given this extra work, Participant Eight commented about the time he sets aside for his homework, "late into the night, or early in the morning," and was diligent about getting his work done.

Part of the interview sequence involved a set of questions about student success and the perspective of each participant. Participant Eight commented in two important ways. One, his first response was simply, "I don't feel successful in school." Two, he commented about a longstanding concern related to his education — test anxiety. Additionally, he explained that his anxiety is typically around rote memory and multiple choice. For essay tests, this participant did not indicate any anxiousness, concern, or lack of preparedness. Conversely, when I asked about if he had areas or spaces that he felt successful, he commented about his inclination toward applied learning and applied skills. And some of his best skills include providing support for others related to things like QuickBooks, SPSS, and using online analysis tools.

In terms of interacting in class and asking questions, for this participant it all depended on the necessity to do so. One of his first comments related to his in-class interaction and question asking was "oh, that's not for me. I rarely raise my hand. But I'm a good listener." In terms of groupwork and other group activities, Participant Eight had no major concerns and commented that "he likes working with others, but this has only come up once in the year that I have been here, and it was with a friend." However, more broadly Participant Eight commented

about his preferences and stated that he does prefer groupwork overall because "It's less stressful being able to ask your group." Finally, in terms of attending behaviors of attending classes regularly, he commented, "I go everyday," and about notetaking, he explained, "not so much, that is not really my thing." In terms of behaviors including reading ahead, Participant Eight did not consistently cite using this strategy and would often read or skim the test just prior to his courses.

When it came to the set of communication strategies available to students to use with both faculty and students, Participant Eight commented that he uses them all and does not have a concern that any specific one is or is not appropriate. He commented that he definitely prefers in-person courses and is looking forward to that opportunity soon. His primary focus for in-person classes is the live connection to the professor and the other students and that it just "makes for a better course."

Although Participant Eight did not specifically comment about avoidant behaviors he had used in the past, he used some when navigating his classroom experience. He was aware of avoidant behaviors such as not regularly attending class, not taking notes, sitting in the back, and focusing on non-coursework in class. Of the list of avoidant behaviors, the most obvious ones for this participant were those that involved avoiding test-taking preparation strategies to learn the material. These included reviewing notes, creating notecards, or studying with others. For the most part, it appeared that this participant has a heightened sense of potential test failure that it limits him from seeing these as avoiding behaviors. More importantly, this avoidance appeared to be unconscious in that he wasn't aware he wasn't doing the right thing; it was more a matter of shutting down in the face of one of his highest moments of anxiety.

Finally, Participant Eight appeared to avoid the professor on some occasions when he needed clarification and instead utilized fellow students. He commented, "So I really liked group work because it helps me understand more [and] makes me more comfortable asking questions. And you kind of work through it together."

This participant's perspectives about professors and his expectations were very limited. Overall, he felt that his professors should be available to respond perfunctory requests, to clarify concerns, and not to overwhelm the students with unattainable homework assignments. When asked about making perfunctory requests, Participant Eight provided a recent example: "but in college so far, it's only just been like, 'hey, this link isn't working. Could you tell me a possibility about how I could fix it?'" In a second area of the interview that discussed expectations of the professor, such as requests for clarification about homework, assignments, or tests, or topics that Participant Eight sought out the professor to engage in a discussion on a topic covered in class, Participant Eight commented:

> We had homework that was not really doable. We had probably too much and too little time. And I knew I wasn't the only one in the class [having difficulty] because I had kids in my class emailing me and emailing the groups, asking if the homework was too much, and if it was impossible to finish in time. I contacted the professor. Someone had to.

Further in the interview, I inquired about which courses he felt he had been successful and unsuccessful in completing. When asked this question, many of the participants had made comments about specific professors. For this participant, his most difficult subject and the classes in which he had not been successful included both first- and second-year English. He

209

compared how he had experienced English in high school with English in college and commented:

> I thought that I'd already learned English in high school and that was hard enough. Then I get to college, and it feels like I have to learn it all over again — almost like I'd never learned it in the first place. And it was complicated, and the professor, this professor, was not helpful. His explanations made things worse. I need them [the professors] to provide simple enough explanations that I can complete this work. Boy, that was a bad class.

MASCULINITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Participant Eight conveyed a variety of traditional and non-traditional ideas about masculinity through several responses. This participant appeared to have some cursory notions of masculinity but also a comfortable sense of his gendered self.

His response to the first question regarding the concept of masculinity and being a man was very simple: "I don't know, being a man... You gotta figure it out yourself. You don't really have anyone. It's just youm and you gotta go do it." This statement is interesting in that it does not necessarily fit with some of this participant's other responses about not speaking up much in class or about his preference for group work — and in both cases these appear to avoid insistent or persistent questioning. However, when asked about how he had developed his perspective about being a man, he commented this way: "I feel like women are asked a lot more if they need help, or they're doing okay. And I feel like that happens less for a man." This response is also interesting in that it appeared that he had some expectation that everyone should be asked, but because one is a man, it would be less likely to occur. And, to some extent, this response is consistent with some research that indicates that while men would like help, they often don't know how to ask for it. When I inquired further if there was some direct connection between needing to ask a question and the fact that men don't ask as many

210

questions, he responded that there wasn't a connection for him. For this participant, it was much more about "[not] wanting to like take time out. And instead needing to completely go over this again rather than like asking the guy next to me." For Participant Eight, it wasn't about any sense of embarrassment, but it was about wasting time.

Interestingly these statements led to another set of statements related to not being embarrassed and his friend group. To a question about masculinity he responded, "It's really hard to embarrass myself. I don't know … I just, I pretty much, I'll walk outside with a pink tutu. I've always been pretty confident myself, and I've never been really embarrassed." This statement appeared to emerge without much thought or effort, and it illustrated the extent of his comfort level.

From an elementary school age, Participant Eight has kept the same small circle of eight, nine, or ten guys who have built a close network for friendship, sports, and religious. This network also included each of the young men's parents. For Participant Eight, this tight network enabled him — and challenged him — to stand out, be comfortable, and act with a certain level of confidence.

As he posited places and activities that people might inhabit that are more masculine, this participant indicated that he did not think these exist and could not identify examples of such places.

While the above statements suggest a slight progressive shifting of typical gender standards for Participant Eight, they don't appear to be very strongly held to challenge the status quo about what is or is not masculine. Instead, this participant appeared to have a

211

perspective of knowing that he should challenge stereotypes — walk around in a pink tutu —

yet for him, this behavior would most likely only be done if within his friend group.

When inquiring about the participant's sense of self in the classroom and his

masculinity, he was very matter-of-fact, stating, "I don't think gender really matters in the

classroom. I don't think it has anything to do with the classroom." The brevity of the comment

did not provide enough information for a clear interpretation or analysis; however, one could

posit that he is comfortable and more fluid with gender roles and expectations. However, it

may be just as likely that he's either never thought about the classroom in this manner and

does not have the words to express himself or did not understand what was asked.

Lastly, I inquired about his perspectives related to his masculine behavior and

expectations of others. He noted that when it comes to interactions and discussions in the

classroom, he had seen many experiences where the men exhibited more assertive interactions

by asking questions and in working with peers. For him, these assertive interactions did not

necessarily give him cause to struggle or worry as he was "used to seeing some of this amongst

my male friends while growing up and playing sports."

BEING HISPANIC/CHILEAN

There were a very limited number responses from Participant Eight related to his being

Hispanic. His response to a question about his perceptions of being Hispanic elicited the

following response: "the main thing is about where they're from. So, the difference between

Mexico and how they're like Latino and Hispanic; it's not a huge difference." Further inquiry

related to his status as Hispanic/Chilean and his use of the Spanish language also elicited very

limited responses; he explained, "It's not a huge thing, and sometimes it comes in handy. On

212

my gap semester... for two months. I picked up a lot. However, it isn't as relevant if I tried to use it here."

Lastly, and similar to comments from two of the other participants, this participant commented about how others respond when they found out he is Hispanic. This participant self-disclosed that, "no one ever knows, and I am very much white." He then continued with, "but then they ask me if I can speak Spanish, to which they are further amused." However, he noted differential treatment of his cousins who do not pass and who have a more Hispanic, less Caucasian appearance. He stated, "a couple times where my cousins told me stories that maybe people ask a little too many uncomfortable questions. And these cousins don't look like me." This participant felt lucky that he didn't have this experience, yet disappointed that his family could be treated in this manner.

In terms of being Hispanic and its relevance to the classroom, Participant Eight commented that this was a "non-issue." He stated, "I really can't think of how it might impact me or others."

THE EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

When asked to "explain your experience entering the college and beginning your courses for the year," Participant Eight commented in a variety of ways but made no overt comments about being stressed.

The interview question about setting up courses also elicited very limited statements about stress. For this participant, stressors included test anxiety, lack of non-successful courses or subjects that were difficult, and ways of avoiding confronting the professor. For many students, test anxiety is a major stressor. This topic appears to be ubiquitous across all subjects

or manner of instruction. It was noteworthy that this participant noted that he had been dealing with the issue since childhood. However, the concept of using coping strategies to alleviate stress didn't seem to be a part of this participant's approach. This participant was aware of the problem but did not appear to know how to use attending strategies to resolve or improve each situation. More importantly, the topic of text anxiety was discussed with enough vehemence that this participant appears to get stuck in situations where it might occur regularly. However, his GPA of 3.1/3.2 also suggests that it may not be as severe as he believes it to be.

His second area of stress included courses that may provide a historical difficulty for him. For this participant, those included courses in English, literature, or those with extensive writing. He noted these specific courses because they often include essay-based tests. These same courses, he later noted, are the same that might provide easier testing outcomes. This inconsistency highlights a potential contradiction in that he did not appear to see how the course topic and difficulty appeared to cause him quite a bit of stress, but at the same time these courses use a testing method that he prefers.

His final area of stress included situations where he would prefer to inquire and seek advice from fellow students, rather than from the professor. Again, much like the second area of stress, this area also revealed some contradictions. In earlier interview passages, this participant indicated both a level of comfort in seeking out the professor or asking questions and an indication that he didn't get embarrassed in doing so. Yet at this point in the interview, he stressed that he preferred asking his peers for clarification, stating that he was more comfortable in that setting.

In comparing this participant's discussion about areas of stress with the other participants' responses, Participant Eight's responses clearly did not take on the same level of intensity as the others' responses. This participant's responses were very light-hearted and were typically combined with his perceived sense of overall success. This student came to NW Community College directly from high school, had consistently taken 12 to 15 credits per quarter, had a current GPA of 3.1/3.2, and had appropriate short-term goals that appear to define him as having the ability to learn successfully, enter the workplace efficiently, and obtain a satisfying job. During the interview, Participant Eight's stress level never appeared to be high, nor apparently high enough to cause him to struggle in or fail a course.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS

Multiple meanings can be taken from the aggregate of this participant's avoiding and attending coping strategies, expectations of professors, his sense of enacted masculinity, descriptions of stress, and being Hispanic in the classroom. Much like some of the other participants, this participant did not specifically use the term "stress."

For Participant Eight, there appeared to be a variety of conscious and unconscious coping strategies he used when in the classroom. He was a positive, interactive student in class settings, and he (mostly) solved any issue that he was struggling with. His comments, while in some cases contradictory, never appeared severe enough to mitigate his success.

Participant Eight appeared to have slowly developing ideas about masculinity. Like some other participants, it appeared that he had awareness of the need to accept all gendered expressions. At no time did he demonstrate any concern with his own sense of masculinity in or out of the classroom or his responses about others. This absence suggested a comfort with

215

accepting all persons across the gender continuum. Although some of his statements may have appeared as early or emerging perspectives about traditional and non-traditional gender roles, he also appeared to be ready to discover and embrace all persons regardless of their gendered expressions. And, most importantly, even if he had limits to his awareness or understanding, these limits did not appear to limit his classroom success.

Lastly, his perspective on his ethnicity or national identity are not unique in this study as several participants who do not specifically acknowledge or use their racial, ethnic, or national identity background. However, each individual makes choices — and reveals personal preferences — when making claims or statements about personal background or demographics.

Participant Eight could have chosen not to declare this status, and based on his interview comments, he also does not appear to be using his status to his advantage in any way. However, in another apparent contradiction, he defines himself according to his ethnicity on his college application materials (the means for being identified for this study population).

Much like several other participants, this participant appeared to be on track to transfer to the university. He knew how many courses he had left to complete, knew that he wanted to take a gap year, and knew when he planned to re-start his university education. His apparent low level of stress also suggested that he was managing the overall academic experience well. In general, this participant appeared to be positively navigating the complexity of school, the steps needed to transfer, and his day-to-day interactions with others in school.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter contained the findings of this study, presented emergent themes as derived from open and axial coding, and offered general interpretations for each participant. Eight participants were interviewed for this interpretive exploratory qualitative study. Interview questions were developed into a semi-structured interview guide to identify potential success in the classroom for male Hispanic students at a community college intending to transfer. All participants were men ages 19 –26, identifying as Hispanic, and with a declared intent to transfer to a university. Emergent categories for the participants included attending and avoiding coping strategies, expectations of professors, masculinity, and masculinity in the classroom, being Hispanic, and the experience of stress.

Chapter Five includes an analysis of the key themes from the interviews, relates these to the extent literature, and offers a secondary analysis that provides recommendations for practical application of these results.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATION, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to increase our understanding of the coping

behaviors exhibited by Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students intending to transfer to a

senior college (university). This chapter includes a discussion of major findings related to the

literature on the lack of male persistence and retention in higher education, the concept of

masculinity, coping behavior and stress in the academic environment, and lastly Hispanic/Latino

student participation in higher education.

Further, the intention of this chapter is to also review the prior descriptive passages

from Chapter Four, reincorporate them into emergent categories and secondary themes, and

provide a limited analysis. Additionally, the interpretive lens will be used and incorporated at

the level of the individual and from the perspective of the researcher. Finally, although this

chapter attempts to provide preliminary and secondary themes and categories, the sample size,

and manner of participant recruitment limit this body of research within the exploratory realm

of the researcher. The themes emerging might be better framed as further questions to be

asked, suggested for practical application, or options for further study. The chapter concludes

with a discussion of the limitations of the study, areas for future research, and a conclusion.

ASSUMPTIONS, DELIMITATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Delimitations for this study included the following: the sampling frame to include participants identifying as male, Hispanic, with 50% of the planned degree complete and intending to transfer, and from a community college; the use of a loose interview guide derived from one central research question; and the use of an interpretive paradigmatic lens within an exploratory framework that allows for the predominance of long narrative passages from the participants.

Limitations affecting this study included the impact of COVID-19 on the research site selection and the ability to recruit participants. The original study was intended to include interviews with students who had already transferred, thus looking backward at their reflection of a successful transfer to the university. After multiple unsuccessful attempts to connect to neighboring or regional universities to access their students and/or site, I made the decision to switch to a local community college where I had access to the sampling population.

Secondarily there were multiple complications with recruitment in that most instances of sampling can achieved through multiple electronic means (as already described). Yet sampling also includes the opportunities for in-person connections to professors, student groups, and specialized programs. After confirming the switch from the university to the community college as the major site, I then encountered multiple instances of non-response from units that had moved to fully remote operations during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The recruitment process to obtain participants was much more laborious and those participating could be the result of students more inclined to partake of financial incentives (although several declined the incentive).

OVERVIEW TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

Research Questions

The intent of the study and outcomes were centered on and supported the following

primary research question with three sub-questions:

How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students (intending to transfer) experience stress and manage (cope with) the academic environment?

- How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate (intending to transfer) students experience stress?

- How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate (intending to transfer) students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)?

- How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate (intending to transfer) student experience?

In the prior chapter, each participant's story emerged along the categories presented

within each interview. The prior chapter included the following categories: (1) attending and

avoiding coping strategies, (2) expectations of professors, (3) masculinity and masculinity in the

classroom, (4) being Hispanic, and (5) their experiences with stress. Additionally, each

participant section included abbreviated general interpretations and analysis by the researcher.

For this chapter, theories related to how Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students

— those intending to transfer — experience and manage the academic environment are multi-

dimensional and varied. Some factors that contributed to participant academic success relate

primarily to the individual, some to the context, and some are related to familial and societal

influence (Warin & Dempster, 2007). All these factors help contribute to an environment where

Hispanic men intending to transfer to the university experienced some challenges.

Data Analysis Process

The data and analysis were derived from the body of qualitative analysis that emerged differentiating content analysis from thematic analysis (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003). Thematic analysis may also be described as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis is typically achieved and is appropriate when employing a low level of interpretation. This is best seen when utilizing an approach that extends beyond phenomena or case study, and therefore typically includes more than one or two participants. Additionally, themes were also supported with substantial cited/quoted text from the participants. This study follows these parameters in the use of heavy participant text (voice), but also with a sample size of eight.

However, other components of the analysis contributed to the content analysis — and one in which higher-order interpretations may also be made. From the initial coding of each interview, a second interview was conducted with follow-up or clarifying questions. After several interviews were conducted, themes were developed and then tested against new interview data from new participants. After all interviews were completed, a secondary level of analysis was done using a word cruncher feature of a qualitative analysis software program. This produced data to allow for comparisons against the original categories and data sets. This level of detail and comparison allowed for the research to move toward content analysis as a descriptive approach in both coding of the data and its interpretation of quantitative counts of the codes (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Morgan, 1993). Also, this next level involved the review of texts or expressions that can be read and interpreted within the context of meaning construction as abstractions (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

The presentation of the data for Chapter Five includes the analysis of the each of the themes appearing in Chapter Four including (1) avoiding and coping strategies, (2) interpretations about masculinity and the classroom, (3) interpretations about being Hispanic, (4) expectations of professors and relationship building, and (5) the experience of stress. Following the above sections will be a secondary section conveying higher-order interpretations including resilience, mattering, and building confidence; navigating liminality; and emergent personas. The final section includes implications for theory and research, anomalous findings, implications for practice, and limitations of the research.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY RESULTS BY THEME

Attending and Avoiding Coping Strategies

Depending on the situation, the types of stressors, the previous learning patterns — and frankly a host of other factors — all people tend to experience stress and use a variety of coping strategies to manage the stress. It is generally assumed that the active (attending) strategies are often used by persons with high goal orientations, previous experience in a similar setting, and/or previous experience with similar stressors. For this study some attending strategies included asking questions for clarification, calling or emailing the professors to clarify issues/questions, setting group meetings, sitting closer to the professor and staying after class to visit with the professor, studying and reading ahead, reviewing the syllabus thoroughly, engaging with other students in group work, and notetaking, whereas people with limited goal intention, lack of focus, and limited experience in a similar setting tend to use avoidant or passive strategies (Pierceall & Keim, 2007). Specific avoiding strategies included avoiding eye contact with the professor, falling asleep in class, sitting in the back of the class, beginning

other disruptive or overall assertive conversations in class, making no attempt to engage in classroom activity, missing tests and assignments, not reading the materials provided for the course, not taking notes, and not reviewing the syllabus (Black & Bimper, 2017; Broughman et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2009).

As conveyed in Chapter Four, each participant's use of avoiding and/or attending coping strategies was presented and additionally, how conscious each participant was of those behaviors. The data as presented in Chapter Four are summarized in the following table as a referent for each participant related to their coping strategies.

Table 1: Overview of Participant Coping

PARTICIPANT	AVOIDING STRATEGIES	ATTENDING STRATEGIES
One	Occasional non-studying, work prominence	Frequent interaction in class, communicates with others, frequent studying, and notetaking, shifting quickly to attend when doing something wrong, connected to peers, strong connection to the professor
Two	Placing work above school, infrequent professor contact, stays quiet in class, falls asleep, no notetaking	Taking notes, asking questions, but only if he knew the answer
Three	Skimming chapters right before class, occasionally checking out, boredom with bad lectures	Reads ahead, reviews syllabus, prep for exams with food and clothing, listening for content, good notetaking, competing with the professor
Four	Quiet and sits in back, doesn't review syllabus, does not read ahead, checks out with bold instructors, not interacting directly with professors, needing other/peer support	Attending only when interested, some studying behaviors
Five	Some procrastination	Sits in front and proactive, use of notecards, studies a lot, highly communicative, very friendly with all persons, seeks professor input

PARTICIPANT	AVOIDING STRATEGIES	ATTENDING STRATEGIES
Six	Prior quite a bit of avoiding with sitting in back, hiding, sitting in rows	Reads ahead, contacts professors, sits in front, focused on school and learning, preps a lot, reviewing Canvas regularly, and use of discussion boards, open to all communication
Seven	Knowing his grades, does not always review syllabus or read ahead, professor should provide	Does practice problems, reviews notes ahead, groupwork is good
Eight	Works a lot, does not read ahead, does not raise hand, skims only before classes, test anxiety phobia	Sits more forward, sets time to study, focuses on group interaction and use of applied skills, open to using all communication mediums everyday attendance

USE AND AWARENESS OF COPING STRATEGIES

The following section summarizes each participant's coping strategies, the level of awareness of those strategies, and the potential orientation toward success.

Participant One had a balanced orientation demonstrating avoiding and attending strategies equally, depending on the situation. His attending behaviors in his courses focused on knowing how much to study and invest in each course, identifying opportunities to be involved in heightened interaction in the classroom and with the professor, consistently doing his homework, paying attention in class, and staying engaged and connected to his peers in the classroom. He appeared consciously aware of strategies that could have been categorized as avoiding and knew when to turn them off to start paying attention.

Participant Two had an orientation toward avoiding strategies, with some instances of attending strategies. His avoiding behaviors in his courses focused on placing work above school, having infrequent contact with professors, staying quiet in class, falling asleep in class,

and limited notetaking. And while he indicated some knowledge of attending strategies, these were very limited. He did not appear to have much conscious awareness of the strategies used in his courses.

Participant Three had an orientation toward attending strategies, with very limited instances of avoiding strategies. His attending behaviors in his courses focused on reading ahead, reviewing the syllabus, preparing well for exams, quirky preparation before exams with his food and clothing, listening for content, good notetaking, and a strategy that he called competing/racing with the professor. He did appear to have a heightened awareness of the strategies used in his courses.

Participant Four had an orientation toward avoiding strategies, with some instances of attending strategies. His avoiding behaviors in his courses focused on remaining quiet and sitting in the back of the class, not reviewing the syllabus, not reading ahead, checking out with bold instructors, not interacting directly with professors, and an emphasis on needing other/peer support to function. And while he indicated some knowledge of attending strategies, these were somewhat limited. He appeared to have some conscious awareness of the strategies used in his courses, but only in some, not at all.

Participant Five had an orientation toward attending strategies, with some limited instances of avoiding strategies. His attending behaviors in his courses focused on sitting in the front row and using proactive interaction in classes, using notecards to study, studying consistently, being highly communicative using any medium possible, being very friendly and engaged with all persons, and continuously seeking professor input. And while he indicated

some knowledge of attending strategies, these were very limited. He appeared to have very conscious awareness of the strategies used in his courses.

Participant Six had an orientation toward attending strategies, with some instances of avoiding strategies. His attending behaviors in his courses focused on reading ahead, regularly contacting professors, consistently sitting in or near the front, being focused on school and learning, preparing a lot, reviewing Canvas (course LMS) regularly, consistently using online discussion boards, and being open to all communication. And while he indicated some avoiding strategies, these were very limited. He appeared to have very conscious awareness of the strategies used in his courses.

Participant Seven had an orientation with an almost equal representation of avoiding and attending strategies. His avoiding behaviors in his courses focused on not knowing his grades, not reviewing the syllabus or consistently reading ahead, and having an expectation that professors should provide the motivation for his success and learning. His attending strategies in his courses focused on regularly doing practice problems, reviewing notes ahead of each class and exam, and preferring group work. Depending on the situation, he appeared to have a mixed orientation to his unconscious or conscious use of either type of strategy used in his courses.

Participant Eight had an orientation toward attending strategies, with some instances of avoiding strategies. His avoiding behaviors in his courses focused on an emphasis on work over school, not reading ahead, not being interactive in his courses, and suffering from severe test anxiety/phobia. Depending on the situation, he appeared to have a mixed orientation to his unconscious or conscious use of either type of strategy used in his courses. He expressed

limited hesitation in school and appeared to be moving toward success in completing his degree.

Overall, a variety of strategies were used by each of the eight participants that could either be categorized as avoiding or attending. Additionally, in Chapter Four, I assessed the participants' potential awareness of when they use each, or in other words, the conscious or unconscious sense of the behavior. Four of the participants had a prevalence for attending behaviors and had an awareness of how and when each used either these (or any avoiding behaviors). Two of the participants had a prevalence for attending strategies and had a mixed awareness of their use; in some cases, they were aware of the use, and in other cases they appeared unaware. Finally, two of the participants had a prevalence for avoiding strategies and each appeared unaware of how and when avoiding or attending behaviors were being used.

A variety of noteworthy comments connect the outcomes for these participants to the extant literature. For Participants Two and Four, there was quite a bit of commentary related to their coursework and its difficulty, and to struggles with interpersonal connections (Pizzolato, 2004). For Participant Two, the consistent theme throughout the interview was the struggle to pass College Algebra, and indeed the interview was punctuated with commented, "I don't know what I will do, I don't know," when thinking about his efforts to pass the course. For Participant Four, there was a strong theme of being lonely and trying to find connections to others throughout his interviews.

A strong theme in many of the interviews — regardless of the propensity for one type of coping — focused on these men taking things head-on, solving problems directly, not using

emotion in coping, and not using any social support systems (Tamres et al., 2002). Participants

One, Two, Three, Five, and Eight all commented as relevant to this research:

> **Participant One**, when asked a question about being overwhelmed, responded: "…overwhelmed? No. Challenged? Yes. Because I manage challenge, but I never feel overwhelmed."
>
> **Participant Two**, when asked to define masculinity, responded: "…taking charge of something." And "I stand for whatever I believe in. I don't put my head down for nothin'."
>
> **Participant Three,** when asked about his interactions and asking questions in class, responded: "And you don't want to be embarrassed so you're not going to do it."
>
> **Participant Five,** when asked about his view of masculinity in the classroom, commented: "…felt I was the most masculine male in the classroom. I would say probably 200 pounds going to class. I looked at other dudes or you know, yeah, that you tweak, or you know in my head... I'll beat that dude."
>
> **Participant Eight,** when asked about his view of masculinity in the classroom, responded: "…You gotta figure it out yourself… you don't really have anyone. It's just you, and you gotta go do it."

For many of the participants, the ability to navigate success in the classroom appears to

be related to many factors, including attunement to subject and major, the prevalence of

attending strategies, the ability to seek assistance or be disclosive (Dergla & Chaklin, 1976;

Solberg & Villareal, 1997). As indicated above, the majority of participants had a proclivity for

attending strategies, with one exception. Most of the participants struggled with self-disclosure

and help-seeking. In some cases, the issue was about embarrassment as Participant Eight

emphasized that he'd rather "do group work and ask the group." Participant Six's perspective

was interesting in that he'd had more time in school and knew how to ask for help, but he still

was hesitant, indicating that disclosing would be "looking like you don't know, and you don't

want them to know you don't know." For Participant Two, although he was comfortable asking

questions, he would ask only if he already knew the answer because, otherwise, he "would look stupid in front of others."

ATTENDING BEHAVIORS AND CONNECTIONS TO THE FEMININE

Although not typically found in higher education before the mid-twentieth century, it appears that behaviors associated with schooling are those that may have the appearance of being more feminine or within the context of a heavily influenced feminine environment (Broughman et al., 2009; Leathwood & Read, 2009). Current movements in education — and in community college classrooms — call for more interactive and discursive classroom environments, an environment seen as reflecting feminine behaviors. For some students, they see the relationship and subsequent movement to attending behaviors as challenges to their gendered selves or sexual orientation.

For men in this study to be masculine was to limit active/attending behaviors as they might appear to be too feminine (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). In general, these behaviors in the classroom amount to what might be referred to as "studying." For some, studying was something you didn't do or at least didn't have others know that you did. And in some cases, there was almost an expectation that a good class was one where a student didn't need to study and could instead rely on performative interaction in the classroom. Participant Two conveyed some sense of this when he commented on his female professor saying, "she actually had my attention the whole time, and I actually learned a lot in that class. And I actually got good grades without even having to study."

As one considers the array of both conscious and conscious coping strategies used by these participants, I also considered the other factors that might overlay their experience in the

229

classroom. And as posited in this study, the overlaying influences for the participants included an orientation as male and being Hispanic.

Masculinity and Moving Away from the Gendered Roles

Although this study identified hegemonic masculinity as the strongest overlay to how men may view themselves and their interactions, as one considers the ability of these eight men to navigate socially constructed ideas of westernized masculinity within the context of the classroom, each presented a continuum of responses that suggests an evolving perspective on how men navigate masculinity. For many of the participants, this evolution involved the awareness and acceptance of gender fluidity (Elliot, 2020). Additionally, there is an overlay of how some Hispanic cultures typify this highly masculine gendered expression. The data as presented in Chapter Four are summarized in the following table as a referent for each participant related to their definitions and expressions of masculinity.

Table 2: Overview of Participant's Definitions of Masculinity or Male

PARTICIPANT	MASCULINITY
One	Men as providers, power, acquire things, jock, aggressive, control, territory, fighting, challenge; edge of other and can be "nerdy"; masculine-high
Two	Men as taking charge, "I stand up," persistence in face of adversity, louder, always speaks up
Three	Men as mixed in their orientations, learned from father, emotionless, competition, aware that aggressive is not "great"; however, not always fitting in, aware of limiting stereotypes, disclosure as gender fluid
Four	Men as mixed in their orientations, being a hard worker, self-declared as bisexual, typified notions of westernized masculinity, doesn't present as macho, aware that too competitive is bad
Five	Men with typical notions of westernized masculine, strong and large, military, learned from grandpa, hard worker; however, aware of too strong masculine, open to learning new, courageous for others

PARTICIPANT	MASCULINITY
Six	Men as mixed in their orientations, but artist before all else, gender fluid, gay, westernized masculine is not good, parents have high expectations for traditional gender marriage
Seven	Men as mixed in their orientations and aware of typified masculinity, comments about strength; however, moves with gender fluidity, strong questioning of what the middle looks like, balance between men and women, he is at the bottom with IEP, machismo as joke
Eight	Men as mostly typified notions of westernized masculinity, strong sense of self, sense of bravado, limits to understanding gender in the classroom

In summary, Participants Three, Four, and Six indicated an "other" sexual orientation as gay, bisexual, or queer, but even these participants conveyed typified westernized masculinity when describing what it means to be a man. During the interviews, without provocation, their definitions included terms such as "strong," "large," "competitive," and "aggressive," and included concepts such as limited self-disclosure; a strong sense of self; being courageous, hardworking, and emotionless; taking charge; being a provider; acquiring things; being controlling; and fighting. In expressing themselves with these terms and concepts, each conveyed a semblance of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculine ideology often connotes the following: men as strong and not "sissy," men striving for achievement and success, men showing no weakness, and men as thrill-seeking and being somewhat violent (Connell, 1995).

PERCEPTIONS OF MASCULINITY

Participants One, Two, and Eight had the strongest perspectives related to traditional westernized masculinity. Additionally, for each, there was a sense that this was learned behavior — from parents, family, or peers (Jandt & Hundley, 2007). For Participant One, this

was conveyed and related to his background as a Columbian man. For him, his narrative is full

of expressions like "aggressive," "competition," "fight," "stand out," and "challenge." In a

beginning passage while describing himself he stated:

> Well, like due to the fact that, you know, women have been able to actually
> break the glass ceiling that society placed over them for many years, I've seen
> like some women actually become actually aggressive, and try… tend to have
> little masculine characteristics. You know, like for some of the aggressive things,
> and the way they conduct discussions or like ambition, or anything, some
> attributes. But I don't see it as — I actually see it pretty good. You know, I
> actually consider [to be] it nice and everything, and I admire that. You know, I
> admire when people are like strive for success, and they actually want to do
> good and achieve. I admire that, and I don't care if you're… I don't care if you're
> like your gender, your sexual inclination, or whatever. You know, you're actually
> achieving, and for high results, do it.

This passage is interesting in that he conveys his sense of the masculine environment

and describes behaviors as being "aggressive." He then continues by describing women as

potentially aggressive in discussion or ambition, but then evaluates it as "nice" (Archer et al.,

2001). As indicated in the first part of this section, this statement is akin to a 21st-century

students' awareness that strong declarations of masculinity should be questioned and

balanced. However, although this participant conveyed no other similar passages in his

interview, he also had the strongest ideal related to traditional masculinity. He apparently had a

strong cultural and familial background teaching him what it is to be masculine; this was briefly

interlaced with a more common 21st century understanding of gender as fluid but in a very

limited way (Fagot & Leinback, 1987; Levy et al., 1995).

Participant Two's strong statements of masculinity were conveyed and related to his

perspectives about getting through college in that he was never going to "put his head down."

And further, in the apparent face of repeated failure in College Algebra, he stated, "I've taken

this class enough times that maybe someone else [might] just be like, 'forget school!' I'm going to continue because that's the major I'm going for, and I'm going to do it." While this continued persistence in the potential face of repeated failure is admirable, it came with seemingly no strategy about how he would do it. He was alone in his venture to succeed, and he didn't seem capable of finding help.

Finally, Participant Eight made a reference to being masculine that had the appearance of gender fluidity. Interestingly, Participant Eight conveyed a statement related to his sense of masculinity that seemingly might be considered somewhat fluid, but I conjecture this was offered reflecting the current context of gender fluidity. Participant Eight stated, "It's really hard to embarrass myself. I pretty much… I'll walk outside with a pink tutu. I've always been pretty confident in myself, and I've never been really embarrassed." This participant appeared to have a lot of confidence in himself, and this confidence was most evident when discussing his life-long friendships including his friends' parents in this group as well. For this participant, the statement about wearing a tutu might be a matter of the performance of masculine as non-masculine within the context of a close network (Dempster, 2009), and it might be seen less as a sign of gender fluidity and more as a matter of a challenge to gender norms within a highly masculinized environment.

CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS AS MASCULINE OR FEMININE

One of the hypotheses of the study was that the participants might experience interaction in the classroom differently from women, and this was borne out. In many of the participants' responses, each time they made statements about classroom interaction, they also expressed serious questions or statements about their behavior.

233

Participant Three described himself as gender fluid, but then in a passage regarding how men and women communicate in the classroom, he stated, "question asking, you're not going to do that... If it's something that's like not relevant... it's embarrassment. I think that, at the very least me, but also many men, might be prevented from speaking up…. I do hear a lot more females [asking] questions."

Participant Four commented about his early understanding of men versus women and stated, "I remember, particularly as a kid... it will always be like a man... in a higher position. But then as I grew older, I see a lot of females have that position also."

Participant Five commented that, although it appeared that men and women use communication similarly, "men, in some cases, usually...[offer] an opinion…reaffirming of what we're seeing. Women...they would ask questions."

These participant comments appear to indicate a movement and awareness from many of them about using attending coping strategies when interacting in the classroom. However, the above statements also suggest an ingrained sense that men act and behave in a particular manner in the classroom. For many men, there is still a perspective that one can be direct in communication, but that communication may not necessarily be one that uses emotion and hints at over disclosure (Derlga & Chakin, 1976; Tamres, Janicki, & Helgeson, 2002).

GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND INTERACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

Heteronormative structures of gender often purport that young males perform behaviors as exemplified in family environments, school settings, and in the media (Berila, 2011). Some of the associated behaviors that fit within the domain of attending coping strategies have been called out as within the domain of the feminine (Caldera, Huston, & O'Brien, 1989). In general, these behaviors in the classroom include help-seeking, asking questions, an emphasis on listening, emailing, and/or requesting to see the professor.

During the interviews, Participants Three, Four, and Six indicated that they were gay, bisexual, or queer. Additionally, three different participants also commented about their understanding that, although they may have described masculine as being strong, standing out, being competitive, or being aggressive, they did so apologetically. For Participant Seven, when commenting about masculinity or a Hispanic form of masculinity — machismo, his response was "this is almost a joke. Why would someone act that way?" This comment is consistent with research that identified that, over time, the discourse about masculinity continues to shift within the person; in time, the dominant masculine themes do change for individuals (Archer et al., 2001; Dempster, 2009).

Most of the participants also demonstrated a tendency to express some gender fluidity. Although each participant appeared to be developing along a continuum/path towards greater awareness of the limits of traditional definitions, each was clearly at their own point on that continuum (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). For many of these participants, this movement is seen even in the body of research that has identified the outcomes of learning about hegemonic masculinity that becomes tempered over time (Dempster, 2009).

Gender fluidity can be described as, "a person who floats between the masculine and feminine ends of the continuum, either slowly over time, or at any given point, depending on individual, social, and/or cultural differences" (Lundquist-Arora, 2020, p. 8). In this study, multiple expressions from seven of the eight participants suggest a greater sense of how the gendered world is changing. Participant Two, however, did not convey this sense of gender fluidity in any of his interview responses. This sense of changing environment whereby there is greater awareness of the construction of gender and identifying and teaching about gender

identity frameworks could provide such an opportunity for students and professors together (Younger & Warrington, 2007).

For all of the participants, there was an open awareness of the limits of traditional masculinity and connection to navigating the classroom (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). These statements suggested categories of behavior for men and women that are non-exclusive and seem to question men's behavior that emerges from biological notions of typified mammalian response to domination (Wood & Eagly, 2015; Woodhill & Samuels, 2004).

One of the most interesting responses about masculinity came from Participant Seven. He listened to my question asking "what does it mean to be a man" and then responded with, "it's almost closer to a joke than like actual seriousness. And it's like being called a Chad" [slang for a disparaging term for an alpha male]. Participant Six's perspectives about masculinity also reflected a belief of gender fluidity when he stated: "that translates into what being a man is — it's something that's not. It's this identity that is supposed to be strong or superior or, or better, but it's very restricted in what a man can do." Finally, Participant Three stated, "I try my hardest not be aggressive. I have seen very aggressive male students that are way over the line, and it never made sense to me."

The use of terms that suggest intersex or fluidity of gender, awareness of inappropriate masculinized behaviors in the classroom, and awareness that biology is not destiny in interaction or communication are interesting outcomes for this group of participants (Younger & Warrington, 2007). A goal of this study was to identify how these eight men define and express themselves within the context of a gendered classroom. These eight men all expressed some traditional ideals related to westernized masculinity, but they also expressed ideals that

represent a continuum of gendered ways that men and women may interact in the classroom. Overall, the experiences of heavy masculine influence as somewhat limiting to men was best expressed by Participant One — who appears to be doing well in school —through his strong use of language; by Participant Two — who is not doing well in school — and apparently lacks help-seeking attributes within a masculinized self; by Participant Seven — who seemingly is unsure of his success level in school — and has contrasting definitions of masculinity; and finally by Participant Eight — who appears to be doing well in school — and demonstrates a carefully constructed sense of masculinity couched in demonstrations of gender fluidity.

Being Hispanic

A final criterion for inclusion in this study included a Hispanic background. This criterion was included as it had been hypothesized that having a Hispanic heritage could potentially limit each of the participant's success as many traditional Hispanic cultures have a strong westernized ideal of masculinity.

The Hispanic characteristic for inclusion in this study was identified from a self-reported ethnicity measure that each student used when applying to this NW community college (the college does not, however, collect data on national identity or sub-populations of race or ethnicity). A goal for this study is to understand the experiences of students who self-identified as male, Hispanic, and being enrolled at a community college; a grouping that placed these participants in one of the largest underperforming groups of students in the U.S.

Male students in the U.S. are not performing as well as women in most undergraduate colleges and this disparity is particularly pronounced among Hispanic/Latino men, who have lower rates of attending and completing college than their female Hispanic/Latino

counterparts. In addition, it has been noted that the most particularly difficult juncture for any

student is engagement in the academic setting (Astin, 1997; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 1998).

However, attendance and persistence in the academic environment are often difficult for

Hispanic/Latino male students as they are also a group with one of the lowest recorded rates of

higher education participation and success (Lundquist 2020; NCES, 2019; Schneider, Martinez,

& Ownes, 2006; U.S. Census, 2015; Vincent-Lancrin, 2009).

The data as presented in Chapter Four are summarized in the following table as a

referent for each participant related to their definitions of being Hispanic.

Table 3: Overview of Participant Definitions of Hispanic

PARTICIPANT	BACKGROUND
One	Columbian, social life as cultural, Columbian tied to masculine, Spanish language is important
Two	Mexican/Cuban, Spanish language is important, collective struggle as Cuban
Three	Mexican/Columbian, white-passing, Spanish-speaking as important, awareness of being treated differently
Four	Mexican, Spanish-speaking important, pass as white, proud Latino or Mexican, but doesn't always declare
Five	Mexican, Spanish-speaking important, proud Mexican, but doesn't always declare, tied to family that were migrant
Six	Mexican, Spanish-speaking important, white-passing, proud Mexican, but doesn't always declare, Hispanic means he speaks for others equity
Seven	Guatemalan, Jewish, emphasis that he is black, not Spanish speaking, disability is stronger
Eight	Chilean, but not strongly Hispanic, limited Spanish speaking, I am white.

HISPANIC AS HIGHLY MASCULINE

Hispanic cultures have been identified as highly masculinized. Studies both support this

belief and discount it, calling it a myth (Casas, Wagenheim, Banchero, & Mendoza-Romero,

1994). However, the research on Hispanic males includes persons from the Iberian Peninsula, from the U.S., as well as from Central and South America. And of course, Hispanic persons are in other regions of the world as well. Given the breadth and variety of Hispanic backgrounds, there appears to be greater variability in the concept of masculinity within Hispanic cultures than originally thought. This is best observed when considering the conflicts that Mexican culture may be seen as highly masculine, yet by others as matriarchal (Benavides, 1992); machismo is on the decline (Gonzalez, 1982), but may also still be very relevant (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Saenz et al., 2013, 2015); and that differentiated concepts of masculinity are found within all cultures (Gilmore, 1990; Hofstede, 2011).

NATIONAL IDENTITY

Consistent with this research, the combined set of responses for this study's participants related to their race, ethnicity, or nationality were very mixed. In general, the following define the major categories of their responses: strong ties to national identity, white-passing, Spanish speaking, and lack of connection to the definition of Hispanic. While there is a paucity of research related to any of these categories, the most prevalent is research examining the concept of white passing and the effects of Spanish-speaking ability. Participant responses for this study are similar to studies including Piper's (1996) research into greater Black student comfort in class when appearing white and Renteria's (2016) research involving greater comfort for white-passing Latinos/as and the limited use of one's Spanish speaking ability. To some extent, the participants conveying that they are white-passing and hide their ability to speak Spanish may also be working on saving face or hiding their diversity (Nelson et al., 2021).

Participants One, Two, Three, Five, and Six all identify strongly with their national

identity as, respectively, Columbian, Cuban, Mexican, Mexican, and Mexican. A variety of

passages conveyed their perspectives that matched the research and are included as follows:

Participant One demonstrated strong ties to being Columbian which was also highly westernized masculine. However, these did not appear to present limits to his interactions or potential success.

Participant Two demonstrated strong ties to being Cuban, recognized that Cubans are both strongly masculine, but also spoke in the collective. His combination of being Cuban with concepts of masculinity may be limiting his help-seeking.

Participant Three demonstrated ties to his original Mexican background, extensive extended migrant family. However, his perspectives did not suggest strong overlays to masculinity.

Participant Five demonstrated strong ties to being Mexican and being proud of his militant migrant father. However, this national identity did not overlay his perspectives on masculinity.

Participant Six communicated weak ties to being Mexican. He was the only participant raised in Mexico. Being Hispanic, Mexican, and/or Latino appeared to have no relevance for him in terms of his masculinity.

Participants Three, Four, and Six indicated that being Hispanic is a non-issue as they defined themselves as "white passing." As Participant Eight explained: "it is like a party trick: 'You are Hispanic?' Yes. 'Then speak some Spanish.'" Participant Six commented about his complexion, his tall stature, and his cousins who are darker and indicated, "It really does not matter."

Participants Three and Four also both commented about originally being able to speak Spanish, but then contrasted that statement with "but I am white-passing." Both of these participants' experiences may mirror research findings indicating that marginalized populations, specifically Latinos, have mixed feelings of masculinity, have felt misled, and when tied to their background, feel disenfranchised enough to remove themselves from notice (Abalos, 2002).

The topic of language use and being a Spanish speaker were originally not a part of the

interview questions, but later emerged in several of the participants' comments. From then on,

the interviews addressed this question. This topic appears to have a direct relationship to the

240

confidence each participant demonstrated and their pride in being able to speak more than one language. This was pronounced in Participants One, Two, Five, and Six. Participants Three and Four also are quite competent in Spanish, but for them, language use did not appear to be a prominent issue. Interestingly, in the research, this issue can be significant in the K-12 setting and even college settings when the individual does not know English. However, there is a paucity of research about the effects of being a dual language user and its importance in being successful in academia, although one study looked at this issue related to students who were going to study abroad (Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018). Secondarily, there is emerging research related to later-in-life acquisition or enhancement of Spanish for Latinos in the U.S., focusing on Spanish heritage language education (Osorio, 2010; Thompson & Brown, 2019).

Several of this study's participants appeared to lack a connection to their Hispanic identity; for example, Participants Three and Four discounted this along with their language skills. Additionally, Participant Six was mostly concerned that he simply be treated as "a person," and not defined by any specific category. The last two participants each held a different perspective: Participant Seven declared as Guatemalan but also as Black. And when commenting about his background, the most pronounced definition of self for Participant Seven is his "learning disabled" status. He felt that this feature meant that he was always at the bottom of every list, each class, and in life in general. Finally, Participant Eight strongly identified with being white and North American. His mother's family came to the U.S. from Chile, and he has a Spanish-only-speaking grandmother, but to him, he is, "an American [North]."

One of the hypotheses of this study, based on the literature, was that the combination of a Hispanic background and a strongly masculine sense of self may potentially limit the success of these participants. The interviews with these participants do not suggest that this combination strongly influences their ability to navigate the classroom and achieve success. Only one participant who was struggling in college had a strong national connection to being Cuban and reflected more highly western masculine perceptions.

Expectations of Professors

Additionally, many of the components of a good class and a student behaving in a good manner suggest that the development of a relationship between the student and the professor may be one of the most ideal aspects of a good class, leading to greater student success. In some of the earliest research investigating the retention of students, results have indicated strong ties between student success and the connections with faculty (Astin, 1985; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 1991, 1998; Tinto, 1975, 1993). However, and as stated in the literature review, most of these studies sampled traditional college-age, Caucasian men. In some cases, more recent research has sought to identify the myriad of roles that a faculty member plays at each college and when interacting with students (Fugate & Amey, 2000). However, this research was also from the perspective of the institution or person in the role. In some cases, more recent research has identified that setting high expectations had strong contributions to student learning for Latina/o students (Lundberg et al., 2018). In a comparative study, students' perspectives were studied related to developing competence; developing an awareness that they can handle challenging work, avoid poor choices, and avoid avoidant behaviors, and

exhibiting a positive self-concept as learners (Mesa, 2012). While Mesa's study had some relevance for this study, it was limited to one discipline — Math — and involved a comparison between student and professor expectations.

One of the strongest pieces of research that may have relevance to this study was a body of work completed by Clark (2012) that explored student understanding of the faculty experience in terms of "how belonging and encouraging relationships mattered, how they built confidence, and how they achieved their goals" (p. 512). Thus, the body of research that has the most relevance to this emergent category is related to the work of belongingness, mattering, and in some cases marginalization in higher education (Braxton, 2000; Kim, Sax, Lee, & Hagedorn, 2010; Rendon, 1994; Schlossberg, 1989).

The participants in this study made multiple comments and statements about successful course experiences being those where they could connect with the professor to discuss personal issues and feel at ease in interacting with the professor. For example, Participant Two noted that in a successful course one of the important aspects was the relationship to the professor and he stated:

> But on top of that, whatever I didn't understand, I guess since me and her had like a good relationship, and I understood what she was saying, then I just through, and if I had any trouble, I could just—I felt free to go to her office 'cause she was easy to talk to.

Interestingly, in a study from Wood and Turner (2010) identifying African-American student perspectives on their academic success, the faculty student interaction was highlighted as extremely important and it was noted that "The intricacies of personal attention [from the professor] provide concrete examples of how positive social relationships between faculty (institutional agents) and students serve to enhance student academic success" (p. 146). The

243

participants in this study also do not differentiate between male and female instructors when

identifying positive interactions toward success. Although not fully explored here, there

appears to be a slight preference for men to have a more open and communicative stance if the

professor is female. However, this did not emerge as a major theme. This could be the focus of

future research as well.

As each participant navigated the complexity of their courses the issue of manner of

communication also emerged in a way that appears to be both about gendered norms, but also

generational. The data as presented from Chapter Four are summarized in the following table

as a referent for each participant related to their expectations of their professors.

Table 4: Overview of Participant Expectations of Professors

PARTICIPANT	EXPECTATIONS
One	A performance, high interaction, respect toward professor, support for student-to-student interaction, student follows directions of professor
Two	Lecture, but be open to inquiry, a performance, listen and appreciate student needs, building a relationship, keep your attention
Three	Human and understanding, know your students, being available when they struggle, respect to the teacher, clear guides to remembering information
Four	Be energizing, not arrogant, be responsive to student inquiry, create a connection
Five	Not be boring, engaging in class, providing good study materials or advice, knowing your students, career, or academic advice
Six	Provide resources, create a relationship, be honesty and have integrity
Seven	Good ones make or break the class, strict is ok, but be consistent, understanding of student struggles, open to change
Eight	Respond to requests, clarify concerns, not overwhelm with extensive assignments

Overall feedback from the participants is extremely important to this study as it appears

to have some of the highest levels of resonance for each student regarding their success.

Participants Four and Six appear to be making the most positive progress toward their goals and are seemingly doing so while being the most independent (not needing a lot of support). But both Participants Four and Six have expectations about their professors that have to do with respect for the professor role of providing information and respecting them in that role — and at the same time they want someone engaging and who connects with their students. In the case of Participant Six, the biggest issue was that the professor needs to demonstrate honor and integrity — as Participant Six found that one of his professors had lied.

For the other participants, two areas are most relevant related to what they might need: (1) there is an almost 100% agreement that the professor be engaging and somehow create a relationship with each student (Laker, 2008), and (2) a subset of that relationship should be to know how to help a student that is struggling and may not know how to ask for help (Levy et al., 1995).

> **Participant Two** had a highly masculine approach to courses that does not appear and was struggling tremendously and does not know what to do.
>
> **Participant Three** had disclosed, frankly, that he was lonely and wants a connection. And he has failed out of school once before.
>
> **Participant Four** was successfully navigating his second degree but would still like to learn and not be bored.
>
> **Participant Six** was successfully navigating toward his transfer college but one of the greatest benefits that he had gained in school was that learning from a community of artists had connected him in ways that he never imagined possible.
>
> **Participant Seven** felt as if he was at the bottom of each situation where his disability had made him feel unsuccessful. He stated that he was on track to transfer but does not know what his grades are or the companion requirements to get into the university.

Participant Eight appeared to be successfully navigating toward his associate degree and has a substantive social support system but stated that he felt unsuccessful in college.

There are two additional comments related to the results from this category: (1) students, in particular male students, display help-seeking behaviors and do not know how to use attending strategies successfully to gain that help, (2) students want agency in determining outcomes related to their education. As regards students needing help the body of research strongly suggests that whether it is their masculine upbringing, the professor's orientation, or the nature of the course — men need help in these environments, and it is one of the highest needs they have, and is often unmet (Kimmel, 2007).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

In the final section of this chapter, related to implications for practice, I make recommendations concerning counseling, orientation, first-year experience, and affinity group support as potential solutions. Another recommendation could include more time spent in faculty professional development to support the creation of belongingness and relationships with students. Finally, the issue of agency is very important to students. While some could argue that certain students place the onus on others rather than themselves (especially when they are not doing well), all participants in this study wanted to have faculty members who understood them, and, in many cases, would give them a voice in creating the class environment. The issue of agency has been researched in multiple studies with a particular focus for most. Researchers found positive outcomes for a student's role in exploring diverse outcomes in learning assessment (Adie et al., 2018) and found that the expansion of the student role in determining the structure of physical classroom played a role in positive

246

outcomes (higher GPA and overall pass rates) for students (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2017). In many ways, the participants in this study appear to be navigating how power plays a role in their learning environment and want to play a role in constructing that environment.

Power and Influence

This theme emerged — and has a strong relationship to typical notions of westernized masculinity — but is covered separately here to emphasize that some students see how power can be yielded. In particular, there is research that identified the outcomes related to domination and power across and within the male domain (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). This research is relevant as one considers the responses from some of the participants that include the categories "Hispanic," "national identities," and differentiating "male and feminine typed responses" in the classroom (Archer et al., 2001). These factors appeared to impact their perceived sense of self and, thus, their ability to successfully navigate the classroom. A clear early example emerged from Participant One when he conveyed what it was like for men versus women in the classroom. Participant One stated:

> …like for many years, I've seen some women actually become actually aggressive, and try… tend to have a little masculine characteristic, you know, like for some of the aggressive things, and the way they conduct discussions or like ambition, or anything, some attributes. You know, I actually consider it nice and everything, and I admire that. I admire that, and I don't care if you're — I don't care if you're like — of like your gender, your sexual inclination, or whatever.

This statement is particularly interesting in that he appears to be conveying women within the context of ways that men behave and then defines it as "nice." This response sounds similar to the image of competition in the classroom as feats of strength (Harris & Struve, 2009), or even the emergence of the masculine in times of stress (Warin & Dempster, 2007).

In a response related to his background as Columbian, Participant One also calls out the

levels or hierarchy related to those under the auspice of the category of Hispanic. He related a

story about what typical Columbians, or Cubans, or Mexicans would do, but this story was

mainly about who was dominant in the discourse, and for him, it was Columbians (Thompson &

Pleck, 1995)

Interestingl,y some of the research about men in higher education calls out the capacity

to design environments where students can co-author (Pizzolato, 2004). In this way, students

may then have some agency regarding how they navigate the classroom, attend and cope, and

"be a man." And as one considers that multiplicity of context, what is most predominant is how

all those factors contribute to an overall level or feeling of stress. An overview and discussion

related to stress is covered in the next section.

The Experience of Stress

A primary research question for this study focused on the following question: How do

Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate students (intending to transfer) experience stress and

manage (cope with) the academic environment?

An interesting body of research identified that there is great fluidity to young men when

learning about being flexible and identifying other ways to be masculine (Allen, 2005; Haywood

& Mac an Ghaill, 2012). However, some of this same research identified that men would resort

to early learning about the dominant, hegemonic, form of masculinity in times of stress (Warin

& Dempster, 2007). The issue of stress was considered as a topic within the context of

academic coping and the use of attending and avoiding behaviors/strategies, as it relates to

these participants' sense of masculinity, and as it relates to these participants' identification as

Hispanic. The intent of this study, in fact, was to understand and explore the stress that may cause a person to exceed the resources available to them and thus have them feel somewhat endangered (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The participants in this study conveyed various reactions to the term "stress" and their responses reflected their perspectives of their abilities to deal with various kinds and levels of stress.

> **Participant One's** overall interactions in the class take on the combination of highly masculine traits in performance, dominance, and emphasis that the professor also performs, and ensuring goal setting is maintained.

> For Participant One, all the above brought about diminished levels of stress, greater excitement in the telling of the story, and in general, enjoyment in his classes. He appeared to be making positive and proactive progress toward completing his associate degree and readying for transfer to the university.

> **Participant Two's** overall interactions in his classes took on a combination of high masculine traits but within the context of wanting a professor who would engage with the students and one who was open and encouraged students to ask for help. The highest levels of stress for Participant Two were in considering the amount and difficulty of his courses and the homework. Conversely, when engaged in conversations with peers, his mood, tone, and stress levels lifted.

> Participant Two appears to be struggling in avoidant and reactive ways, he appeared unsure of his readiness to transfer. Although hopeful and seemingly positive, both he (and I) were unsure whether he would successfully transfer to the university.

> **Participant Three's** overall interactions in the class were done using fluid gender traits, heightened awareness and use of attending strategies and use of his connections and learning about what it meant to use his Spanish speaking skills. And for him, these factors all provided positive engagement and enjoyment in the classroom. The one area that this participant commented on that suggested high stress concerned avoiding boring or rote instructors.

> For him, having a weak instructor wasn't the kind of stress that would cause him to fail or flee, but it would cause him to use avoidant strategies like not paying attention in class. He appeared to be making positive and proactive progress toward completing his needed credits and readying for transfer to his next educational opportunity.

Participant Four's overall interactions in the class were done using fluid gender traits, but still his comments reflected an awareness of the strong masculine context of most settings. When he could engage with peers in coursework or had a highly interactive professor, his stress levels diminished, and he enjoyed his courses. For him, his greatest sense of stress was engagement with other students. It may have been that the last 18-month's educational context was mostly fully online and removed from others, but this disconnect took on the tenor of deep loneliness and that he was doing all of this alone.

For him, this level of stress combined with his previous experience of failing out of college may cause him to back out or fail in the current context.

Participant Five's overall interactions in his classes took on a combination of masculine traits but with conscious awareness of other gendered expressions. This participant was highly engaged with professors and students alike and found ways to make that happen almost as a matter of his general orientation in life.

The highest levels of stress for Participant Five were in trying to work to support himself with school, reverting to inappropriate use of substances to numb him, and maintaining engagement in the face of boring lectures. His stories, told over time, suggest that these stressors were low, and he very clearly knew how to manage them. He appeared to be making positive and proactive progress toward completing his associate degree and readying for transfer to the university.

Participant Six's overall interactions in the class were done using fluid gender traits, heightened awareness and use of attending strategies, and using his connections, and learning how to interact with others related to his favorite topic in life — art. And for him, these factors all provided mostly positive engagement and enjoyment in the classroom. The one area that this participant commented on that suggested high stress concerned his propensity to remove himself and retreat when he did not feel comfortable.

Interestingly, this participant described himself in the past, and now, six years later, he appeared much more comfortable with himself. He appeared very confident that, even in the face of negative stressors, he would be successful in school and his art career.

Participant Seven's overall interactions in the class took on a combination of masculine traits, but with conscious awareness of other gendered expressions. This participant was engaged with professors, but he commented extensively about needing to have understanding professors, positive and interactive coursework and peers, positive not failing results, and the potential to transfer. These issues caused him the highest levels of stress.

Additionally, this participant commented extensively about his need for support with his learning disabilities. The number of times — and the manner — that he recounted his experiences suggested a resigned sense of almost failure. His inability to attend to his current grades and to his potential transfer requirements appeared to be a sign that he may not successfully finish and transfer. He is, however, within three courses of finishing and he (and I) were hopeful.

Participant Eight's overall interactions in the class took on a combination of masculine traits, but with limited conscious awareness of other gendered expressions.

This participant was engaged with professors, but preferred group work and the company of other students. The highest levels of stress for Participant Eight were in trying to work to support himself with school and staying on top of his anxiety over test-taking. However, these stressors did not appear to be overwhelming, and he appeared to be on his way to successfully finishing his associate degree and transferring to the university.

DISCUSSION, EMERGENT THEMES, AND PERSONAS

Resilience, Mattering, and Building Confidence

Most of the participants discuss the issue of successfully navigating classroom interaction including where they sit, how groups are organized, seeking assistance, and in many cases, speaking up in class. However, two of the most predominant outcomes from these eight participants include their perspectives about creating connections or relationships with the professors and having support available and knowing how to obtain support, especially when they were struggling.

There is a substantial body of research regarding mattering, validation in higher education and, specifically, in a community college. This work first appeared and was derived from Tinto's integration model. That research found a strong relationship between mattering and the persistence of non-traditional, community college students, and specifically, between

251

the professor validating the existence of the students in their courses and in the college in general (Hillyard, 1996).

In response to this research, Tovar et al. (2009) developed a college mattering inventory to diverse urban community college students, and Wood and Harris (2013) developed and issued the community college Survey of Men (CCSM) that contains several scales to measure a student sense of belonging and connections to a college. The utilization of the tool provided positive outcomes and suggested broad use across community colleges. Tovar (2015) later explored how institutional agents positively impacted Latina/o students' success that utilized concepts of mattering and validation.

Interestingly, one of the more pieces of research involved a case study that explored ways that two-year predominantly white colleges could provide validation and mattering for students of color (Turner & Zepeda, 2021). This study found that it wasn't so much about an invitation to welcome, but more a matter of a combination of factors that demonstrate diversity, equity, and inclusionary (DEI) practices. Although diversity training and education have part of college and corporate life more substantively since the 1990s, only more recently has this type of work become more broad-based attending to the climate of a college, including annual surveys; public displays of demographics of students and employees; heightened recruitment for diversity; affinity group development for employees and students; and training in multi-culturalism, unconscious and conscious bias, and power and privilege by predominant white cultures. For the students in the Turner and Zepeda study, this included creating a welcome, but also extended to creating affinity or learning communities, to providing opportunities for diverse celebrations of difference, and offering well-developed DEI training

across all facets of a college. The Turner and Zepeda research has some of the best resonance to the results of this study. Again, the participants in this study were looking for ways to connect — and matter — to the professor and were desiring to feel that they were being engaged and welcomed based on their identity.

Navigating Liminality

The concept of liminality was first introduced by van Gennep (1960) in anthropological studies that were specifically looking at rituals and rites of passage. Essentially, there were three components or phases of a rite a passage including separation, margin (or limen/liminality), and re-aggregation. The most complicated phase is the middle or liminal state, and it also has an in-between moment. A prolonged period in this state leaves a person too long in limbo and, for some, does not allow for re-incorporation into the new status (van Gennep, 1960). As a body of work, this research was also derived and related to Spady's (1971) research regarding how people navigate the decision to commit suicide including whether they do not or could not, when they find themselves in a new and unfamiliar space, and as they find a way to reincorporate back into the new or old schema. Finally, this original body of work regarding liminality and departure was then utilized in developing many of Vincent Tinto's (1975, 1993) retention theories and body of work related to a student's decision to depart from college.

For this study and the participants, there is high resonance with this concept of liminality, the navigation into a new space. For participants in this study, there was a decision to enter the community college as a Hispanic student. While not all Hispanic students are seen as at-risk, Hispanic male undergraduates in a community college are one of the groups with the

lowest consistent attendance and completion rates of racial/ethnic groups of students in higher education (Goldin et al., 2006; Laker, 2008; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009, 2011; U.S. Census, 2015; Vincent-Lancrin, 2009).

Additionally, combined with the concept of masculinity, these participants' general reticence for help-seeking as they enter and navigate this space suggests that, as a rite of passage, male Hispanic community college students intending to transfer have great difficulty with the process of entering and completing their associate degree and/or achieving transfer. As conveyed by the research (Derlga & Chakin, 1976; Hacker, 1981; Tamres et al., 2002) and by many of these participants, movements into uncomfortable spaces may happen, and most of them still avoid seeking help. Or, more importantly, as they expressed their need to build connections with their professors, to build relationships, and to really matter, they don't feel comfortable taking the risk to ask for help — because men don't ask for help.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Although there are many ways to view the data as expressed by each participant, Chapter Four presented the words of participants, and, while there were some attempts at interpretation, this section will provide a more in-depth interpretation and discussion and will suggest a set of typified personas that may be useful for classroom design, retention support, and/or other programming intended to support for students in a community college.

It is also suggested that colleges wishing to help these students, and others like them, consider developing men's centers (Cook, 2005; Dixon, 2010; Osborne, 2010; Saenz & Bukoski, 2010), applying the high-level personal outcomes in their new student orientation programs

(Rodriguez & Kerrigan, 2019; Turns & Borgford-Parnell, 2011), and providing assistance to help

men understand and practice telling the truth (Berkowitz, 2011).

Emerging Personas

Persona development is a useful tool to aid in programming, assignment of treatments,

and marketing in many different types of systems (Chang et al., 2008; Pruitt & Grudin, 2003).

Although typically developed utilizing much larger data sets, initial outcomes from the eight

participants can be used as loose guides to support students with similar characteristics.

Although participants may fit into one or more categories, and/or may fit one or more

personas, for the purposes of this application in practice I have placed each participant into a

persona based on the type and amount of assistance each might need.

Persona development may be guided by multiple inputs and, ideally, should contain the

following (White & Devitt, 2021): a fictionalized name; a short biography or summary of the

persona; demographic information; a summary of goals, motivations, and challenges; what

sources influence and inform them; and any relevant quotes from the interview. For this study

and the development of personas the following categories were used: a general label

connected to the student orientation, general characteristics, outcomes derived from the

interviews, and the type of assistance each may need. The category of characteristics was

derived as statements of behaviors related to each participant's responses. The category of

outcomes was derived from the section of general interpretations of each participant found in

chapter four. The category of assistance was derived from the application of student

development theory and student affairs practitioner perspectives.

The general use of persona development as construction around a useful to set of characteristics and assistance needed to then apply practical tools for each student (Chang et al., 2008; Pruitt & Grudin, 2003). Participants placed in the **Social Guy** persona appear to navigate success quite well except for two issues: (1) a predominance of traditional western thoughts and ideas about masculinity, (2) an inability to ask for help especially around academic issues or tutoring. The Social Guy persona could best benefit from learning about how to tell the truth, owning it, and adjusting their behaviors.

Participants placed in the **Success as a Loner** persona appear to be navigating independently very well; they do many things by themselves and often limit their social interaction with others, both in and out of class. They would most likely need assistance with identifying ways to connect with other men to create a sense of community and for support in their predominant ideas about non-normative gender expression. Men's Centers and telling the truth practice would assist them.

Participants in the **Lost Boys** persona appear to be the least successful in navigating the classroom and college environment. They would most likely need assistance with three areas: (1) appearing either to lack comfort with non-normative gender or express traditional masculinity to point of not knowing how to ask for help, (2) appearing to be alone in their interactions, often not knowing where to turn for help, and (3) appearing to lack internal motivation or know how to build their confidence to do so. Counseling supports, confidence building, mentoring relationships, and practice telling the truth would assist them. For this study and as a potential application in practice, the following participants are proposed to fit into each persona:

- **Persona One – Social Guy**: Participant One and Five

- **Persona Two – Success as a Loner**: Participant Four, Six, and Eight

- **Persona Three – Lost Boys:** Participant Two, Three, and Seven

Table 5: Social Guy Persona

PERSONA ONE: SOCIAL GUY
Characteristics
- Interested in being in the front row   - Talks to others, interacts in class   - Seeks conversation as action   - Confident and uses traditional masculine interactive behaviors   - Navigates coursework with predominately attending behaviors   - Hispanic/Latino and proud
Outcomes
- Most likely making positive progress   - May need assistance in complex situations, navigating courses
Assistance
- Men's center for new norms of behavior   - Career and transfer advice to center goals   - Support for when dominant, typical western masculine behavior emerges   - Support for learning when complicated subject matter arises

Table 6: Success as a Loner Persona

PERSONA TWO: SUCCESS AS A LONER
Characteristics
- Sits back and listens   - Good at attending behaviors of read ahead, pays attention, assignments on time   - Seeks independent time to study, to learn   - Uses a blend of non-typical masculine or other gender norms in interaction   - Navigates coursework with predominately attending behaviors   - Hispanic connected, but may be seen as a limiter in success
Outcomes
- Most likely making positive progress   - May need assistance in group interactions or areas requiring heightened social interaction
Assistance
- Men's center for new norms of behavior   - Confidence building in social interaction   - Comfort with non-normative gender expression   - Support to engage when avoiding behavior is dominant

Table 7: Lost Boys Persona

PERSONA THREE: LOST BOYS
Characteristics
- May sit anywhere, but typically in back   - Seeks interaction as confirmation of self   - Unsure of self in interaction and may struggle with goal orientation   - Lacks confidence in self and uses vacillates in masculine and feminine interactive behaviors   - Navigates coursework with predominately avoiding behaviors   - Hispanic background may dominate thinking about expectation
Outcomes
- Most likely not making positive progress   - Needs a lot of assistance in complex situations, navigating courses
Assistance
- Men's center for new norms of behavior   - Career and transfer advice to center goals   - Assistance navigating avoidance behavior   - May need counseling support for goal, self-integration

Men Need to Tell the Truth

Although, because of the exploratory nature of this study, there are limits to extending the results broadly, the results of this study do offer suggestions for supporting men in the college environment, in particular, participant responses related to men telling the truth. Some research related to traditional heteronormative masculinity indicates that in the performance of being a man, men would be better off just telling the truth (Berkowitz, 2011). This body of research indicates that if men — in general — were able to hear from each other about their real lived experiences, then they would have a much greater opportunity to apply that understanding to their own experience, seek help if needed, or just understand that they are not alone. Specifically, Berkowitz (2011) commented, "Men's role conflict, passivity in the face

of other men's problematic behavior, and reticence to express a social conscience might all be reduced if men knew how other men really feel" (p. 165).

For participants in this study, two passages are most relevant to this topic. Participant Seven noted, in thinking about masculine behavior in the classroom, or even thinking about the use of the word "machismo," that these terms are "just kind of ridiculous and limiting. Yes, [I] know that men behave this way, but [I] would consider this kind of a joke if men acted in this manner." Participant Three's comments, expressed when discussing heteronormative masculine behavior, were similar to Participant Seven's when he commented that traditional masculine behavior is "simply off-putting and not helpful in interactions in the classroom."

The implications for practice suggest that a cohort model and, specifically affinity group development, would provide support for these men so that would feel connected to other men. Additionally, the progressive support needed also might include counseling and intervention development that can appropriately engage men in developing the capacity to provide feedback to one another, to listen actively and appropriately, and to ensure that men can release any preconceived notions related to masculine behavior in and out of the classroom.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations

Limitations in research are related to those outside of the researcher's control. For this study, its limitations present threats to trustworthiness and credibility. There were multiple limitations, including the presence of researcher bias in the interaction with each participant, including age, demographic background, and power differential; the limits of self-reporting

through interview prompts (limitations in participants' ability/willingness to share or describe their experiences); and non-generalizability of the study.

While I expected that my presence in the process and my role as the researcher could limit the participants' interaction and capacity for self-disclosure, as the researcher, I was considered the research instrument intended to understand what was occurring in the setting. As stated by McCracken (1988), "the investigator's experience is merely a bundle of possibilities, pointers, and suggestions that can be used to plumb the remarks of the respondent" (p. 19). My identity as researcher could have limited the amount and type of responses and the subsequent analysis of the data. These interactions, although followed by an in-depth review of the data and re-introduction and clarification of the data through a second interview with each participant, may also have affected my interpretation of the participants' comments. My background as a Caucasian-appearing, middle-aged male in a position of power, may have also played a role in that potential bias. This background could have been both the lens in which I viewed the data, but also one in which the participants may have limited their responses to me.

The ability of the participants to provide a free flow of information may have been limited because of my presence and their ability to provide openly true accounts of experience. A body of research related to men and specifically men in higher education includes the limits that men may experience conveying personal information. Although much was done in the setup of each interview to make the participants comfortable, the very nature of the topic like the "construction of masculinity" may have limited their responses as they may not have been ready for in-depth disclosure (Derlga & Chakin, 1976; Hacker, 1981; Tamres et al., 2002).

260

My role as a male in a position of power at the college may also have influenced the participants' responses such that they limited their responses to another man. However, in two studies researching the impact of the assumed gender of the interviewer and the responses from participants, both presented mixed results related to the male gender and limitations about the quality of the responses from male interview subjects. In one study researching the impact of gender and influence upon participants Kane and Macaulay (1993) found that men tend to more direct and authentic in their response when being interviewed by other men. Interestingly this was posited to be related to an assumption that men hold more power and could control outcomes. In another study by Matteson and Lincoln (2009), the more interesting outcome was the use of an "ethic of care" in conversation and interaction during interviews instead of a gender influence. Although the researchers posited that gender played a role, the data did not provide enough evidence to make that conclusion. Matteson and Lincoln's exploration was also applied to young students in an elementary school setting.

Finally, my role in a position of authority at the college could be seen as a layer of influence in the interview process. Only one participant, however, knew who I was in terms of my formal work role. To all other participants, I simply introduced myself as a person who was an administrator at the college and conducting a research study. None of the participants asked questions about my identify after the introductions, and each interview proceeded quickly to the questions.

Lastly, as a qualitative, exploratory study with a small sample, it was never the intention to generalize the research to a broader population. The series of steps taken to review the data including a constant comparative method, use of qualitative analysis software for word

frequency and coding analysis, and use of research-based persona development provide some

usefulness in thinking about future research and in practical application. However, with the

limited sample size of eight participants, great care must be taken when making any

comparisons. While there are many possible research and applied possibilities, the main goal of

this study was to provide initial insights into the cross-section of being male, the social

construction of masculinity, and being Hispanic impacted these participants' ability to

successfully manage the academic environment in readiness to transfer to a senior institution.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study, being of an exploratory and interpretive nature, raises several opportunities

for future research. More research would be necessary to refine and further elaborate any of

the secondary themes, anomalies, or assess practical applications.

- A future study could be expanded in search of statistical outcomes using survey and scale instruments.

- Given the size and non-homogenous nature of the sample, a future study could look at a set of participants who strongly identify as masculine, use a coping inventory to assess the strength of westernized masculinity, and then interview a subset of those surveyed.

- Given the size and non-homogenous nature of the sample, a future study could look at a set of participants who are within the traditional college-age range of 18-22, then use the methods and research provided in this study to interview this population. The assumption is that the participants in this study who had a larger gap between high school and college appeared to be more successful.

- Given the size and non-homogenous nature of the sample, a future study could look at a set of participants who strongly identify as masculine, but then also include low SES and low GPA as characteristics; then use the methods and research provided in this study to interview this population. The assumption is that the participants in this study had a variety of SES and GPAs. Both are indicators of success and the type of support needed.

- Develop a research methodology that might include observations of the students in the classroom and/or in the online Canvas shell. From those observations, select a subset that has more homogenous strong western masculinized characteristics. Then use the methods and research provided in this study to interview this population.

- Develop a research method that involves the interview protocol and methods used in this study and add a component of self-authorship for each student (Barber, King, & Baxter-Magolda, 2013; Pizzolato, 2004; Torres & Hernandez, 2007). Then utilize a method to compare and contrast the two sources and combine them into a unique shared narrative of male Hispanic community college student success.

This study could also be extended in longitudinal and comparative ways. For example, there were limited statements made about the expected success of each student. Follow each participant in multiple year segments to identify their success in finishing and perspectives regarding how their perspectives on masculinity or status as Hispanic contributed to any change over time.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The intent of this study was to understand, through exploratory means, the lived experiences of male Hispanic community college students with an intention to transfer. A review of the research included male difficulty in higher education, the construction of masculinity, academic coping, general and specific retention theories, and Hispanic students in higher education.

The 1950s and 1960s may have been the last significant decade where men were entering and succeeding in higher education at rates much higher than women (Applerouth, 2017; Goldin et al., 2006; Kim & Rury, 2007) and in an era where typified masculine behaviors were responded to positively, and in some cases, men were okay "to act like men." The classroom and higher education environments today provide different opportunities, and those

opportunities may limit men who come from traditional patriarchal families with westernized notions of masculinity and communication modes that are overt, direct, and sometimes aggressive.

From the study results, there was some conjecture made about implications for practice that were derived from the perspectives of marginality and mattering, and from studies of liminality and the rites of passage. The ability for each of these students to navigate the liminal (unknown and in-between mental) state, to find connection and reconnection to each other and their goals, and to become something different allows each to demonstrate positive or forward movement toward their educational goals. In some cases, all the participants were demonstrating success, and in other instances, several of the participants may not be doing so. The implications for practice included the development and use of personas as the foundation for programming for students, the recommendation to develop tools and resources for men in orientation and counseling supports, and the development of men's centers as substantive supports for men to seek support and engage in learning about appropriate men's ways of interacting and studying at a community college.

As I consider the five participants who appear to be making positive progress toward success and transfer, and the three participants who are making questionable progress, the question becomes: What is the right combination of both internal and external (psychological and sociological) aspects of these environments that may assist the student in making positive progress? Many of these students have experienced a form of gendered upbringing that is traditional — formed or informed by familial and typified Hegemonic westernized notions of masculinity, and each is also living in an era in transition, moving from traditional definitions of

264

being a westernized man to a more gender-fluid world. Both of these features may provide some discomfort to them. Through that discomfort, through the passage to becoming a successful student, though, they may be making positive progress and relief to be someone new and maybe someone different. This substantial someone new is being experienced by their learning to be a good student and interact in positive non-hegemonic masculine ways in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Intersection with Research Questions

	How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent-to-transfer students experience and manage the academic environment	a. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent to transfer students experience stress	b. How do Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent-to-transfer students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)	c. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent to transfer student experience
General Introduction Questions				
1. How do you get through your courses? Describe how you set up the term? What do you think or feel about the upcoming term, the actual work, tests, interactions, and	X	X		
2. Tell me about some experiences or examples of classes where you have been successful.	X	X		
Interactions with Classroom and Professors				
3. What are some examples of interactions in/out of the classroom? Probes: • Read the text • Read additional material • Study with others • Research online • Email classmates • Phone classmates • Contact the instructor • Contact others that can add to your knowledge	X	X	X	
4. How do you communicate w/your professor? Probes: • If you regularly	X	X	X	X

	How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent-to-transfer students experience and manage the academic environment	a. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent to transfer students experience stress	b. How do Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent-to-transfer students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)	c. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent to transfer student experience
communicate with your professor, how do you do so? • With other students? And or others regarding your course, homework, questions, etc. • Tell me about some examples?				
5. What do you think of this communication? Probes: • It helps me, should be done, shouldn't be done. • How do you feel about the communication? o Good, Bad, Indifferent	X	X	X	X
6. If you are doing well in class do you actively participate? Probes: • Describe doing well. • What is active participation? • What is passive? • Who else contributes to this sense of doing well? • Does this also involve the professors? • Or others?	X	X	X	X
Coping and Stress in the Academic Environment				
7. What strategies do you use to stay focused on the course?	X	X	X	X

	How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent-to-transfer students experience and manage the academic environment	a. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent to transfer students experience stress	b. How do Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent-to-transfer students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)	c. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent to transfer student experience
•Ask questions •Generalized interaction •Homework •Notes •Attendance •Emails or calling •Help from peers •Heightened interaction with the professors			X	
8. How would you define success in the classroom? Probes: • Grades • Positive interaction • Learning through the course • Readiness for the next course • Ability to remember and use information	X	X	X	X
9. Do you have any examples of difficult classes?	X	X	X	
• What made these difficult?		X	X	
• Did you ever feel overwhelmed in a class? How does this sense of overwhelmingness show up/come out? • Don't go to class			X	

	How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent-to-transfer students experience and manage the academic environment	a. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent to transfer students experience stress	b. How do Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent-to-transfer students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)	c. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent to transfer student experience
• Don't read ahead • Fall asleep				
10. Do you have some specific examples of classes where you have been successful?	X	X		
11. As it regards general overall potential success are there other considerations that I may not have mentioned?	X			
•Other ways to be active?		X	X	X
•Non-active?		X	X	X
Masculinity				
12. How do you define being a man? And/or what is the term masculine mean? Probes: • Describe a masculine place or setting? • Where did you learn this? • Has this definition changed over time?				X
13. Given the above example how would you define yourself in the classroom? Probes: • Active • Non-active		X		X

	How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent-to-transfer students experience and manage the academic environment	a. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent to transfer students experience stress	b. How do Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent-to-transfer students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)	c. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent to transfer student experience
• Does your definition or sense of self affect your style in the classroom? • Do you know what learning styles are and what yours is?				
14. What are some examples of how "being a man" appears/comes up in the classroom? Probes: • Conversation or in class discussion • Use or by email, texting, tweeting, etc. • by phone • Tone and intonation • Attendance • Active participation • Non-active participation			X	X
15. As you think about your class experience, how do you think this your activity level or hindered your academic experience? Probes: • Would you use gendered terms (masculine/feminine) to describe the experience? • Does this experience change for you depending on the: o Type of class? o Who is teaching the class? o The other student			X	X

	How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent-to-transfer students experience and manage the academic environment	a. How do Hispanic/Latino male undergraduate intent to transfer students experience stress	b. How do Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent-to-transfer students use both avoidant and attending coping strategies when in the academic environment (classroom)	c. How does the concept of masculinity affect Hispanic/Latino male under-graduate intent to transfer student experience
participants? o The type of coursework?				
16. What are some other considerations about your classroom behavior? Probes: • How do girls/women interact in the classroom? • Masculine does/does not fit into the classroom? • Does being a man make the classroom experience different? • Parental expectations? • Peer expectations?		X	X	X
17. If you could redesign the classroom that was attuned to a man's ways – how would you do this? Probes: • Remind of previous answers.		X	X	X

APPENDIX B: EXTENDED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Guide

Participant Name:
Date:
Background
- Tell me a little about yourself?
  - Your background.
    - Family, siblings, work, education
    - Other ways you describe yourself.
  - Your experience in school.
    - K-12
    - Other higher education
- Goals for your
  - education or life?
- What are your goals when your transfer and what have your experiences been?
  - Goal setting
  - Assistance
  - Picking a school
  - Moving away
  - Family
- Anything else that you would like to comment on?

General Introduction Questions
1. Describe a typical classroom experience.
Probes:
- Where do you sit?
- Do you read ahead?
- When do you review the syllabus?
- Do you have typical patterns of behavior before, during, and upon finals?
  - or tests, projects, etc.
- Do you often engage in the classroom? If so, how?
  - examples?
- Do you see yourself as successful in classroom interactions?
  - In assignments or other ways to measure success?
  - If you see yourself as non-successful in what ways?
- Do you regularly work with others to complete course tasks?
  - If so, is this by choice?

2. Tell me about some experiences or examples of classes where you have been successful. Why do you think this happened?

3. Tell me about some experiences or examples of classes where you have been unsuccessful. Why do you think this happened?

Interactions in the Classroom and with Professors

4. What are some examples of interactions in/out of the classroom?
Probes:
- Read the text
- Read additional material
- Study with others
- Research online
- Email & Text & Zoom classmates
- Phone classmates
- Contact the instructor
- Contact others that can add to your knowledge

5. How do you communicate w/your professor?
Probes:
- If you regularly communicate with your professor, how do you do so?
- With other students? And or others regarding your course, homework, questions, etc.
- Tell me about some examples?

6. What do you think about the types of communication used?
   Probes:
- It helps me, should be done, shouldn't be done.
- How do you feel about the communication?
   - Good, Bad, Indifferent

7. If you are doing well in class, do you actively participate?
Probes:
- Describe doing well.
- What is active participation?
- What is non-active participation?
- Who else contributes to this sense of doing well?
- Does this also involve the professors?
- Or others?

Coping and Stress in the Academic Environment

8. What strategies do you use to stay focused on the course?
Probes:
- Ask questions
- Generalized interaction
- Homework
- Notes
- Attendance
- Emails or calling
- Help from peers
- Heightened interaction with the professors

9. How would you define success in the classroom?
Probes:
- • Grades
- • Positive interaction
- • Learning through the course
- • Readiness for the next course
- • Ability to remember and use information

10. Do you have any examples of difficult classes?
Probes:
- • What made these difficult/Why was the class difficult?
- • Did you ever feel overwhelmed in a class? How did this manifest or come up?
  - o Don't go to class
  - o Don't read
  - o Fall asleep

11. Do you have some specific examples of classes where you have been successful?

12. As it regards general overall potential success are there other considerations that I may not have mentioned about causes?
Probes:
- • Other ways to be active?
- • Non-active?

Masculinity
13. How do you define being a man? And/or what is the term masculine mean?
Probes:
- • Describe a masculine place or setting?
- • Where did you learn this?
- • Has this definition changed over time?

14. Given the above example how would you define yourself in the classroom?
Probes:
- • Active
- • Non-active
- • Does your definition or sense of self affect your style in the classroom?
- • How do you like to learn?

15. What are some examples of how "being a man" appears/comes up in the classroom?
Probes:
- • Conversation or in class discussion
- • Use or by email, texting, tweeting, etc.

- by phone
- Tone and intonation
- Attitude
- Attendance
- Active participation
- Non-active participation
- Assertive communication

16. As you think about your class experience, how do you think this your activity level or hindered your academic experience?
Probes:
- Would you use gendered terms (masculine/feminine) to describe the experience?
- Does this experience change for you depending on the:
  - Type of class?
  - Gender of person teaching the class?
  - The other student participants?
  - The type of coursework?

17. What are some other considerations about your classroom behavior?
Sub-Questions:

- How do girls/women interact in the classroom?
- Masculine does/does not fit into the classroom?
- Do you feel listened to more often when you have a male instructor or female instructor?
- Does being a man make the classroom experience different?
- Do you withhold your opinion because it might offend female students?
- Parental expectations?
- Peer expectations?

18. If you could redesign the classroom that was attuned to a man's ways – how would you do this?
Probes:
- Remind of previous answers.
- Classroom exercises
- Homework
- General activities,
- General focus
- Particular topics, etc.

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL

Date: May 3, 2021

To: Susan DeCamillis, EdD, Phillip King

From: Gregory Wellman, R. Ph, Ph. D, IRB Chair

Re: IRB Application *IRB-FY20-21-140 A Qualitative Study of U.S. Hispanic/Latino Male Students Intending to Transfer and Their Academic Coping Strategies*

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, *A Qualitative Study of U.S. Hispanic/Latino Male Students Intending to Transfer and Their Academic Coping Strategies (IRB-FY20-21-140)* and approved this project under Federal Regulations Expedited Review Approved 6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes. 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your protocol has been assigned project number IRB-FY20-21-140. Approval mandates that you follow all University policy and procedures, in addition to applicable governmental regulations. Approval applies only to the activities described in the protocol submission; should revisions need to be made, all materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. In addition, the IRB must be made aware of any serious and unexpected and/or unanticipated adverse events as well as complaints and non-compliance issues.

This project has been granted a waiver of consent documentation; signatures of participants need not be collected. Although not documented, informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and participant rights, with the assurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must be provided, even when documentation is waived, and continue throughout the study.

As mandated by Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46) the IRB requires submission of annual status reports during the life of the research project and a Final Report Form upon study completion. Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor.

Regards,

Gregory Wellman, R. Ph, Ph. D, IRB Chair
Ferris State University Institutional Review Board