THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE MINI-CORPS PROGRAM AS AN UNDERGRADUATE ON ALUMNI’S PROFESSIONAL CAREER

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DISSERTATION

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A Dissertation

by

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SPRING 2012
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I certify that this student has met the requirements for formatting contained in the university format manual, and that this dissertation is suitable for shelving in the library and credit is to be awarded for the dissertation.

__________________________, Director
Carlos Nevarez, Ph.D. Date
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the students of Dingle and Beamer Elementary Schools, and to my family. First, my students have inspired me to pursue this degree so that I can assist in preparing them to attend some of the finest universities in the country. My hope is that I may inspire them to achieve their dreams and live a prosperous and joyful life. Because I have high expectations of my students, I must set an example of achieving high standards for myself. Thank you to every student who I have had the honor to teach throughout my educational career. A primary reason for pursuing this degree was because I wanted to increase my knowledge base so that I could increase the aptitude of my students. Because of this, I kept returning to school for a total of 12 years. This is a testament that you can accomplish all of your dreams and goals when you set your mind to it.

Next, I would like to thank the members of my family who have instilled a sense of perseverance and a great work ethic in me for all of their support in achieving this feat: Agustin (Dad), Maria (Mom), Sandra (Sister), Judy (Sister), Gustavo (Brother), Manuel (Brother), Sophia (Niece), Isabella (Niece), Maribel (Niece), and Mateo (Godson/Nephew). To my nephew and nieces, I know that you too will grow up and accomplish all of your goals. Thank you for the sacrifices you all have made as I accomplished this. I am eternally grateful for all of your support.
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I wish to thank my family for all of their support. Now that I have completed this, I can make my family the primary focus again. You have always supported me and encouraged me to dream big. Thank you for all that you have taught me.

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I must also recognize the work of my research committee. I am very appreciative of my committee chair, Dr. Porfirio Loeza, for all of his hard work, patience, and meeting with me on a weekly basis to ensure that the study was completed. Thank you for making yourself available to me even on weekends and during your vacation. In assisting me with completing this dissertation, your exemplary leadership is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Dr. Ernesto Ruiz who guided me in developing the dissertation. The feedback you provided proved to be insurmountable in increasing the quality of this dissertation. Thank you to Dr. Reveles for serving as a committee member and also providing insights that strengthened this study. Finally, thank you to everyone at the Mini-Corps office in Sacramento, California for their commitment to this dissertation, and to the education of migrant students.
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Abstract

of

THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE MINI-CORPS PROGRAM AS AN UNDERGRADUATE ON ALUMNI’S PROFESSIONAL CAREER

by

Eduardo Gonzalez

Migrant students have a variety of obstacles such as poverty that may impede learning. Because of issues stemming from poverty, programs originated to assist families in need. One of those programs is the Mini-Corps Program that was established in the 1960s to support migrants in increasing achievement. Mini-Corps places college undergraduates who are from a migrant background with current K-12 migrants to assist in the educational process. An obstacle for migrants is that they typically relocate often as parents follow the crop patterns. This leads to students who lack continuity in their education. The constant relocation further compounds the difficulty of obtaining academic success in school. This study explores the Mini-Corps’ alumni as it focuses on the impact that participating in the program had on their ability to complete an undergraduate degree, complete a credentialing program, on obtaining employment, on professional development, and on establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. Through a mixed methods approach data was collected and analyzed in better understanding the impact of participating in Mini-Corps as an undergraduate. Surveys, interviews, and
participant observations all were utilized in collecting data and subsequently triangulated the data in search of common themes.
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- Measures Taken for Ethical Protection of Participants and Participant Rights
- Conclusion

## Role of Researcher

- Context Setting and Sample
- Instrumentation, Materials, Data Collection, and Analysis

## Instrumentation, Materials, Data Collection, and Analysis

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

_I labored in the fields picking grapes one summer, and I always remember a boy named Pablo who worked diligently alongside his family. Pablo was about ten years old and he worked hard even though the temperature outside was well above one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Pablo picked grapes as fast as any adult in the fields and he was well respected by all. When I asked Pablo’s mother why he was not enrolled in school, his mother replied, “He doesn’t like school.” He would rather come and work, and help us here.”_ Inside, I felt furious because I had just graduated from college and was about to enter a teacher credentialing program. This enabled me to understand the importance of an education. In addition, I understood that Pablo’s mother was in the dark about the power of education to enhance Pablo’s quality of life. I tried to convince her to enroll Pablo in school, but regrettfully the family soon relocated to another field. _I always wondered about Pablo’s future, and if he had found a pathway out of the strenuous environment of fieldwork. I believed that if Pablo made it into a classroom, his odds of improving his quality of life would significantly increase. Pablo is one of many migrants who purchase fictitious documentation that indicates their age as 18, and provides their employers with paperwork stating their legal status to work in the United States. Typically, employers accept the fraudulent documents and children are permitted to work in the fields. Legislators have created laws to assist migrant families such as Pablo’s since the 1960s._

In the 1960s, laws began to surface aimed at increasing the educational achievement of migrants. A long-term effect of a surge in achievement may be an increase of the quality of life for many migrant students such as Pablo. Although it appears that legislation cannot prevent all injustices, it may assist in enhancing the quality of life for migrants. In 1960, few individuals realized the severity of working in the fields until a CBS documentary emerged and told the story of migrant life. After it aired on television, lawmakers understood the importance of enacting laws to assist this population.
The documentary, titled *Harvest of Shame* shed light into the lives of the migrant farm workers (Columbia Broadcasting System [CBS], 2010). Conditions for the migrants were deplorable and entire families worked long hours for minimal wages. The expenses of daycare were equivalent to a day’s wage earnings; therefore, children were left unattended to fend for themselves while the parents worked long hours. During the video, a CBS reporter asked a child why there was a hole in his bed, and the child replied that it was because the rats had bitten through the mattress. Another family interviewed in the documentary described how they camped out in a field and slept in their car. When asked about restroom facilities, they responded that sanitary facilities did not exist. Even though students had high aspirations to succeed, teachers articulated the harsh reality of the migrant lifestyle by stating that migrant students usually would not increase their quality of life through educational attainment while the cycle of poverty perpetuated itself within the family structure. Too many barriers to the educational advancement of migrant students impeded learning. Parents were repeatedly asked throughout the documentary if they ever thought they would have their own home or if they believed they would find other types of employment. All of the people stated that they saw no other source of income, and that they were hopeful to someday live in a home of their own. The future looked grim for numerous migrants and the government took action to curtail the conditions that migrant families experienced. The fact that it is on television makes it surreal, but never a reality, leading viewers to believe a life like this is unimaginable. Yet, some kids in school live through this every day.
Students whose families relocate from one town to the next in search of agricultural work are considered to be migrants and are most susceptible to dropping out of school. For this reason, the United States government has allocated monetary resources as an attempt to promote the educational achievement that may lead to an increased quality of life for migrant students. This study may reiterate the need to allocate resources to students who are disadvantaged because of the conditions that surrounds them both in their home and school environments.

Education is important for migrant students, as current trends indicate the negative implications of dropping out of high school. The life circumstances of a migrant child may increase the risk of dropping out due to interruptions in their education and other social and economic factors. As defined by the California Department of Education (2011), a family is considered migrant if they have relocated in search of work usually within the dairy, fishing, lumber, or agricultural industries (Operational Definitions). For instance, about one-third of high school freshmen in the United States will not graduate within the four-year time frame. In addition, about fifty percent of the Hispanics and African Americans enrolled in high schools will drop out before graduating. A correlation may exist between the lack of high school completion and less income earned. Moreover, individuals who do not graduate from high school experience higher rates of criminal activity (Bushway, Paternoster & Sweten, 2009). Figure 1 below demonstrates income earning potential as it is related to higher academic achievement.
An increase to the family’s income may enable a family to obtain basic necessities such as food, shelter, and health care; all are needed for survival. There may be a correlation between a family’s income and children’s performance in schools. A greater income may lead to a rise in achievement because a child’s family may afford nutritional foods, as well as a home where the child may have a quiet place to do homework. In other words, if a child increases his educational attainment, this may lead to more lifetime earnings. Through more education, the family unit may tend to increase their quality of life including better health care, less instances of government aid, and possibly even less crime. Some students, such as migrants, may arrive to school hungry or malnourished because of the low wage earnings provided by the family. Mini-Corps
provides support for educating students who may have a multitude of challenges in
demonstrating educational achievement.

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of Mini-Corps’ alumni
regarding the relationship between their participation in the program as undergraduates
and their professional career. Little research exists pertaining to the level of impact that
Mini-Corps has on alumni’s professional careers. Mini-Corps prepares undergraduates
for the challenges of working with a migrant population. Migrant students (K-12) are
from families who often relocate between schools as their families follow agricultural
crop patterns. When viewing the organizational chart of Mini-Corps, the Mini-Corps
Program obtains support from the Migrant Education Program (MEP). The MEP
oversees various programs designed to support the educational achievement of migrants.

The California Department of Education (2011) described Mini-Corps as one of
several statewide programs for migrant students. Those programs were created as a
means to assist at-risk youths in increasing their educational successes. Established in
1967, Mini-Corps provides tutoring support in assisting students to experience
achievement in education and develops future educators while supporting their
professional development. Tutors are full-time college students who seek a career in
teaching, and are often from a migrant family background themselves. Mini-Corps’
tutors work with migrant students during the school year and summer months in building
relationships among students, teachers, family members, and members of the community.
By being in proximity with migrant families, tutors may develop an understanding of
strategies that are needed in educating a diverse group of students. A secondary goal of
Mini-Corps is to develop a pool of potential bilingual and biliterate teachers who have the instructional knowledge and curricular base and skills to work effectively with migrant students.

Basurto, Lomeli, Padilla and Parks (2006) stated that Mini-Corps focuses on developing an ethnically diverse and culturally sensitive workforce through its work. In working with a wide-range group of students, it is important for teachers to also have knowledge of the intricacies associated with working with disadvantaged groups such as migrant students. Migrant students benefit from the support that the tutors provide by fostering a learning environment that is conducive to the migrant’s needs. For instance, a tutor may review key concepts presented by the cooperating teacher in a one-on-one setting. In the event that the migrant student did not understand the material, this form of intervention may enhance the comprehension of material. Furthermore, an important aspect of Mini-Corps is that it is present throughout 24 junior college and state universities in California, thus making it easily accessible to students. Because of the accessibility, K-12 migrant students may have an opportunity to work with college tutors and review the key concepts taught by the classroom teacher.

This type of structure may promote achievement as K-12 migrants benefit from the tutoring services provided. For instance, CitySpan Technologies (2011) highlighted the increase of achievement of migrant students. Beginning with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, the achievement gap experienced by many subgroups became visible. During the previous ten years (2001-2011), the achievement of migrant students in California as measured by state exams has risen. The configuration of Mini-
Corps may lend itself to increase the achievement of both college and K-12 migrant students. The system consists of undergraduates who are aspiring teachers, placed in a cohort model class. The tutors are then assigned one coordinator who oversees 20 to 25 participants and establishes a sense of support. Next, the participants are placed within schools that have migrant students and spend about 15 hours per week working in the classroom alongside the participating teacher while undergoing monthly workshops where the focus is on lesson design, literacy, language acquisition, English learner strategies, classroom management, cooperative learning, interdisciplinary instruction, critical thinking, teaching for intelligence, authentic assessment, professionalism, and instruction (Basurto et al., 2006). A focus on each of these key components provides the participants with a basis for teaching and allows for the exploration of key development skills that will help to educate migrant students.

Although Mini-Corps strives to augment the trajectory of migrants’ lives by focusing on education as a vehicle to increase their quality of life, the level of effectiveness has not been established due to limited research. From the data collected by CitySpan Technologies (2011), it appears that an increase in achievement in the areas of English language arts (ELA) and math is experienced by migrant students throughout California. Mini-Corps may have a profound impact on migrant students because of many components such as mentorship, and professional development that occur within Mini-Corps.

While the California Mini-Corps has been in existence for more than 44 years, few research studies pertaining to the program’s alumni have been conducted. From
those that exist, one study conducted by Angel (2004) focused on the impact of early field experience on pre-service teachers. Thirty-eight teachers’ responses were analyzed regarding the impact that participation in Mini-Corps had while still in college. The study concluded that participation had a positive impact on the level of readiness for the challenges of the teaching profession, but it was limited in scope as it only focused on 38 teachers in the Monterey County area. This study however, will broaden the scope and focus on all of California’s participants. Alumni perceptions regarding the impact that the program itself had on their careers will be synthesized and added to the existing body of research.

Statement of the Problem

This study will address four main problems. First, a lack of research pertaining to Mini-Corps exists. Therefore, this study will add to the existing body of literature. Next teachers may not be adequately prepared to effectively teach students who have diverse needs. Moreover, because part of the study’s focus of completion of graduating from college, the achievement gap is an area of major concern. Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group; therefore, educators must identify programs and strategies that assist in promoting graduation rates. Finally, the implications on society of dropping out of high school are immense.

Because few research studies exist, data pertaining to these aspects are critical for policymakers and educators who create policies and educators who work with students, especially educators in Mini-Corps. The Mini-Corps has been in existence for more than
40 years, yet research and information regarding the relationship of the program and its impact on alumni’s professional careers is minimal. This study focuses on the perceptions of Mini-Corps’ alumni with regard to the relationship between their participation in the program and current employment.

Prior to the mid-1990s, teachers in California were not required to obtain the cross-cultural language and academic development (CLAD) or the bilingual cross-cultural language and academic development (BCLAD) certification. This certification was essential as many teachers were not equipped with strategies that promote the achievement of second language learners. Many teachers were teaching diverse populations without a set of strategies that could assist them in the educational process. Currently, there may be a lack of teachers who are equipped with the skills to work with students from at-risk populations.

In addition, a major problem for educators is the achievement gap that is present across United States’ schools. First, migrants lag significantly behind in achievement when compared to their White counterparts because migrant students may experience more obstacles that may impede the progression of learning. Ninety-eight percent of migrant students are from the Hispanic subgroup (California Department of Education, 2007). This is important because 52% of California’s student population is from the Hispanic subgroup. Because Hispanic students drop out of school at greater rates than other groups, this may have profound implications on society. Implications such as more delinquent behavior, more students seeking government assistance, and a lesser earning
potential could all be associated with dropping out of school (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2005).

An area of major concern is a student who becomes disengaged from the learning process at an early age. Oftentimes, students are levels behind when compared to their current grade level, and cannot accrue enough credits to graduate within four years of high school. The ramifications of students who do not graduate from high school may become an enormous burden on society. If current trends persist across the nation, about 33% of freshman will not graduate in four years, and for Hispanics and African Americans, it increases to nearly half of the students. Some educators have stated that when students drop out of high school they tend to earn less income, and place themselves at greater risk for delinquent behaviors and unlawful acts (Bushway et al., 2009).

Students who drop out of high school have a profound impact on society as well as their lifetime earning potential. Marzano et al. (2005) stated that across the nation, the median income level of a student who graduates from high school is $19,900 compared to $11,864 for a student who drops out of high school. A student who completes college has a median income level of $37,203. If the same student continues his or her educational pathway and obtains a master’s degree, his or her median wage earnings increase to $49,324. A doctoral degree increases the income to $63,952. As Marzano et al. (2005) clearly demonstrated with the data presented above, a correlation between average yearly income and higher educational attainment is evident. On average, students who achieve further education are more likely to possess a higher earning
potential. In addition, dropping out of high school may have negative implications on society.

Bushway et al. (2009) commented on the burden of high school drop-outs on the population. Students who drop out of high school may become a burden on society. High School dropouts are also a drain on the nation’s economy. High school graduates are healthier than dropouts; it has been estimated that if the approximately 1.2 million youths who are likely to dropout school this year complete their high school degrees instead, they could save states more than $17 billion over the course of their lives. (Muennig, 2005)

Hankivsky (2008) believed that his thorough review of the literature indicated that students who drop out of high school have decreased lifetime earnings, poorer health care, increased instances of joblessness, delinquency, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, early pregnancy, economic dependency, reduced quality of life, and “an increased incidence of marital instability” (p. 10).

Due to the aforementioned societal implications of dropping out of school, it is important that teachers are adequately prepared to assist in increasing achievement of diverse groups. Credentialing programs may not be sufficiently preparing teachers to work with at-risk populations. Teacher preparation programs may not offer a wide range of courses that are designed to effectively teach English Learners and migrant students. Some programs that exist may offer strategies that may be incorporated in working with second language learners but may lack substantially in terms of promoting achievement. The structure of Mini-Corps may provide tutors with insights into the challenges that
migrant students are confronted with by directly placing them in the migrant students’ home environment. By having knowledge of the migrants’ lifestyle a tutor may gain direct knowledge when educating the student.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of participation in Mini-Corps on alumni’s professional career. First, the research was conducted using a mixed methods approach and the data collection process is divided into two phases. Creswell (2009) affirms that a mixed methods approach provides a more in-depth analysis of the data. In phase one, a quantitative approach consisting of an online survey was administered to 105 alumni. In addition, the quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient statistical analysis was used in determining the correlations of the variables. The Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient illustrates the level of impact between the variables of the study.

In phase two of the study, a qualitative approach to collecting data was used as five alumni were interviewed using purposeful criterion sampling methods (Creswell, 2009). Open-ended questions were asked that obtained insight into the Mini-Corps experience. Data generated from phase one and phase two were juxtaposed and synthesized to evaluate the common themes that emerge. In addition to the online survey and the interviews, the participant observations of the Mini-Corps tutors receiving
instruction were conducted. The observations enabled the researcher to view part of the daily operations of the Mini-Corps tutors.

Research Questions

The research question is designed to gain insights into the level of impact that participation in Mini-Corps has on alumni’s professional career. This study will contribute to the existing literature by illuminating the level of impact that Mini-Corps has on completing an undergraduate degree, the impact of completing a credentialing program, the impact of obtaining employment, the impact of professional development, and the impact of establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. Participation in Mini-Corps exposes tutors to the intricacies associated in working with migrants. In addition, the research question probes into the relationship between participation in Mini-Corps and the educational outcomes and professional development within Mini-Corps.

Hypothesis

One hypothesis is that Mini-Corps has a positive impact in developing a workforce that understands the academic needs of migrant students. The researcher hypothesizes that Mini-Corps has a strong impact on completion of an undergraduate degree, completion of a credentialing program, impact on employment, professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. In addition, a secondary hypothesis includes that as a result of participating in Mini-Corps, alumni develop empathy for working with at-risk youth. Based on the experiences of working in the
students’ homes or work environments, Mini-Corps alumni may develop a passion for working with at-risk youth and may seek to be employed with these populations.

Purpose of the Study

Mini-Corps serves as a program that provides direct instructional services to migrant students with a secondary goal of developing a pool of potential, bicultural and biliterate teachers. This study explores the impact of participation as a tutor in Mini-Corps and alumni’s professional employment. The research-based study contributes to the existing body of literature and allows for educators to juxtapose this program with other programs when decisions that affect migrant students need to be made.

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses upon two theoretical frameworks: the social learning theory and the situated learning theory. First, the social learning theory hones in on building positive relationships. Mini-Corps strives to build mentor/mentee relationships between the participant and the students. The college coordinator is responsible for training, guiding, and mentoring the tutors that he or she works with, thus there definitely is a conscientious effort to establish a mentor/mentee relationship. Afterwards, tutors also serve as role models for migrant students. Also, a mentor/mentee relationship may be established between the tutor and other staff members. Mini-Corps participants serve as positive role models in a society that may not provide role models who have experienced academic success.
Additionally, the theory states that knowledge is created through reinforcement of various behaviors. For example, a child who is praised by his or her parents for good behavior may have a sibling who changes his or her behavior to meet the expectations of the parents upon witnessing their praise. The importance of the social learning theory relies on acquiring new skills or information and changing behaviors simply through watching the behaviors of others (Ormrod, 1999).

Mini-Corps’ participants typically are former migrant students themselves who have gained successful admittance into the higher educational system. They serve as role models for younger students and model behaviors that reinforce learning, study habits, and life skills. The social learning theory states that students will want to emulate these behaviors. As tutors interact with Mini-Corps coordinators or other staff members, they may also want to copy behaviors of academic success and great study habits.

Second, the situated learning theory focuses on the applicability of real life situations. This theory believes that learning is created through actions, and it is by doing so that an individual truly learns. Because Mini-Corps is designed in an apprenticeship environment, undergraduates learn teaching by working in the field long before they obtain permanent employment teachers. Furthermore, Brown Collins, and Duguid (1989) stated that, “Cognitive apprenticeship supports learning in a domain by enabling students to acquire, develop, and use cognitive tools in authentic domain activity. Learning both outside and inside school advances through collaborative social interaction and social construction of knowledge” (p. 1).
In addition, Lave and Wenger (1991) believed that learning must place an emphasis on the entire person and not simply on the knowledge gained of the person. The authors argue that learning is a process of participating in communities and actually spending time in the setting that is being studied. Individuals learn best when they are placed in an apprenticeship type of environment. “The historical significance of apprenticeship as a form for producing knowledgeably skilled persons has been overlooked, we believe, for it does not conform to either functionalist or Marxist views of educational progress” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 62). Furthermore, it was suggested that various occupations employ an apprenticeship environment for prospective teacher candidates. Some of these occupations require participants to know vast amounts of knowledge such as doctors, lawyers, and professional athletes. “If learning is about increased access to performance, then the way to maximize learning is to perform. Not to talk about it” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 22).

Mini-Corps is designed to assist migrant students in increasing their achievement in a K-12 setting. In doing so, tutors from the college system are placed in situations that enable them to understand the challenges with which migrants are confronted. The situated learning theory states that humans learn by studying in a classroom, and learning can be enhanced by placing the individual in real scenarios. This is exactly what Mini-Corps is designed to do as it places prospective teachers directly in a school environment.
Operational Definitions

**Cohort Model:** An instructional model for education in which a group of students moves through all of the classes and phases of the program together.

**Migrant Student:** A child is considered migrant if the parent or guardian is a migratory worker in the agricultural, dairy, lumber, or fishing industries and whose family has moved during the past three years.

A qualifying move can range from moving across school district boundaries or from one state to another for the purpose of finding temporary or seasonal employment. A young adult may also qualify if he or she has moved on his own for the same reasons. The eligibility period is three years from the date of the last move. Eligibility is established through an interview conducted by a migrant education recruiter who visits both home and employment locations where migrant workers are employed. The law states that migrant education services are a priority for these students whose education has been interrupted during the current school year and who are failing or most at-risk of failing to meet state content and performance standards. (California Department of Education [CDE], 2011b, p. 1)

**Mini-Corps Program:** A program that provides tutoring services to migratory students to give them the academic and social support they need to succeed in their course work and stay in school.

The tutors come from a migrant family background and are full-time college students who are pursuing a career in the realm of education. Mini-Corps tutors
work with migratory students during the school year and summer school as role models to strengthen the relationships among students, teachers, family members, and members of the community. (CDE, 2011c, p. 1)

**Mobility**: Referring to the change in school institutions.

**Program Improvement (PI)**: Referring to a school that does not meet the necessary goals for each of its subgroups. Five stages of PI status exist and each stage has consequences.

**Social Learning Theory**: A theory stating that humans acquire certain behaviors by watching other people’s behaviors (Ormrod, 1999).

**Western Stream**: A pathway that migrant workers take as they follow the crops through the states of California, Oregon, and Washington.

**Limitations, Scope, and Delimitation**

The study focuses on alumni who have participated in Mini-Corps throughout the state of California. It should be noted that some participants of Mini-Corps began while in their freshman year; others began toward the end of their college span. Some individuals may have only participated in one aspect of Mini-Corps (school year, outdoor, or puppetry components), and may have limited insights leading to few responses. Also, the study will only use two theoretical frameworks (social and situational learning theories); however, other frameworks could have been used. The social and situational learning theories are the frameworks that were selected because they seem to apply to students in the program, tutors, coordinators, and even senior staff
who all possibly share a similar migrant background. In addition, the situational learning theory was selected because in Mini-Corps, the prospective teachers are working at a school setting.

Mini-Corps is in the process of creating a database of past program participants. Upon completion of a college degree, students typically tend to relocate in search of employment. Because of this, the study searched for participants via the Mini-Corps website since the researcher did not have addresses to send surveys to. For this reason, a response rate cannot be calculated.

One hundred five alumni completed the survey. A small sample size is about 30 respondents and may produce weak results in terms of validity and reliability. The study is consistent with a medium sized sample. A sampling size of two hundred alumni is indicative of a large sample and may enhance the validity and reliability of the study. Although the sample size of the alumni is consistent with a medium sample, more respondents would have increased the validity and reliability of the study. The study could have been enriched if a sample size greater than 200 was established.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of several reasons. First, the lack of research pertaining to Mini-Corps alumni is of concern. Because monetary allocations are appropriated to the Mini-Corps Program, research studies are important when making decisions regarding its future. There are only two other research-based studies pertaining
to Mini-Corps, and no studies have been conducted that deal directly with the alumni aspect of Mini-Corps.

Next, the achievement gap is an area that educators are collectively attempting to control. Migrants usually are categorized under the Hispanic subgroup, and in 2005 there were 299,436 migrant students in California. Soon after, a decline in enrollment stemming from more students not being identified as migrant students followed. Ninety-eight percent of the migrant students in California are Hispanic, and the remaining two percent are Hmong and Punjabi. The students are spread out through the state with some areas experiencing a high saturation of migrants and other areas having few migrant students. Of the total student population who are classified as migrants, Hispanics encompass the largest group who are classified as migrants (California Department of Education [CDE], 2007). As more research studies evolve, which focus on students who are at the lower end of the achievement gap spectrum, educators may accrue a better perspective in proceeding to educate migrant students.

Educating migrants is important because of the negative implications associated with dropping out of school. Hankivsky (2008) believed the effects of dropping out of high school include lower wage earnings, poorer health care, greater chance of unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, and delinquency. Bushway et al. (2009) agreed with Hankivsky (2008) that when students drop out of school they have a greater risk of becoming a burden on the economy. For these reasons, educators must find paths to increase graduation rates of at-risk populations. In conclusion, this study is significant because of the research that was provided which addresses impacts on the achievement of
migrant students; a group of students which is at the lower end of the spectrum in terms of achievement gaps.

Conclusion

With migrants experiencing difficulties in graduating from high school or college, it is important that programs assist children who are disadvantaged. This study will contribute to the existing literature by better understanding the level of impact that Mini-Corps has on completing an undergraduate degree, completing a credentialing program, obtaining employment, professional development, and the establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. Adding to the limited body of literature related to Mini-Corps will give educators more insights when making decisions with regard to working with disadvantaged students. Because migrant children have a unique situation of transiency, programs designed to provide consistency may prove to be invaluable to their academic success. Migrant students have some of the highest drop-out rates in the country and some of the lowest college attendance rates. Oftentimes, they will not cross economic lines because of their lack of education. California would benefit from migrant children attending colleges because of the economic boost that an increase in wage earnings would provide the state as well as the positive effects experienced by individuals who attend universities.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In examining Mini-Corps it is important to understand why the programs such as these were established. Programs designed to improve conditions for families who may need assistance with health care, education, or issues which may arise out of poverty were established by the federal government. Beginning in the 1960s, programs aimed to provide assistance to underserved populations such as migrants commenced on both a national and global scale. Although many programs arose out of this necessity, few research studies demonstrating the impact of these programs are available. Some of these programs include Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Migrant Education Advisor Program (MEAP), and Mini-Corps. They all strive to improve conditions for families who may be in need of governmental assistance stemming from issues related to poverty. The achievement gap that is present throughout the United States appears to be a result of the deplorable conditions with which some populations are confronted. For instance migrant students may relocate often because of the crop patterns that parents must follow. Thus, children may lack consistency in their studies.

A section of this chapter consists of an overview of federal programs that aim to assist families in improving their life circumstances. One such program is Mini-Corps, whose goals and objectives are discussed more in-depth later in the chapter. Moreover, the purpose of the study was to identify the perceptions of Mini-Corps' alumni regarding
the relationship between their participation in the program as undergraduates and the impact it has had on their professional career. Mini-Corps is designed to assist migrant students by partnering former migrant college students with current K-12 migrant students. Their participation in the program provides instances to expand their instructional teaching strategies through the professional development offered during their span as an undergraduate. In addition to these professional development opportunities, the tutors work with a teacher who directly learns instructional strategies during small group instruction within a classroom setting. From this exposure, the tutors may view the cooperating teacher’s strategies and reflect on the impact that the strategies have as they relate to teaching. The tutor may then view those methods that assist the migrant children in learning, and acquire the approaches for him or herself. Given that a multitude of challenges are present for migrant populations, as well as the lack of research on Mini-Corps’ alumni, an in-depth study into the benefits of participation in Mini-Corps is important. Working with migrant populations requires sensitivity and patience because of the hardships that migrant children face on a daily basis.

The following research brief outlines some challenges of migrant students. First, similarly to low income children, migrant students tend to arrive at school hungry and tired which leads to an increase of difficulty in learning. Freudenberg (2008) wrote a policy brief for the Interstate Migrant Education Council (IMEC). Migrant families typically encounter social, emotional, or economic hardships in both their school and home environments. The research brief indicated that many migrant students are not demonstrating mastery of key concepts due to nonacademic reasons. Students are
capable of experiencing academic success; however, their learning deficiencies may be a consequence of their lifestyle and their migratory status.

Educators must overcome many challenges when narrowing the achievement gap of migrant students. Having knowledge into where the migrant students are located becomes crucial as resources must be allocated accordingly. When compared with other states, California has the largest number of migrant students. In 2005, 299,436 students were classified as migrants; this figure began a downward trend in enrollment since then. Ninety-eight percent of the migrant students in California are Hispanic, and the remaining two percent were Hmong and Punjabi. Migrant students are spread throughout the state in a multitude of school districts. Some school districts may experience higher volumes of migrant students, while in some parts of the state few migrant students reside within district boundaries (CDE, 2007).

Many obstacles to learning are present for migrant children. First, absences may accrue because of the high mobility rates causing students to feel incapable of academic success. Second, the constant change of schools further compounds the social and emotional issues. Students need to feel accepted by their peers. Third, educators who work with a migrant population stated that gang affiliations continue to be a major problem for migrant youths. Freudenberg (2008) ascertained that, “if students do not feel accepted in the mainstream of a school or have developed low self-esteem due to academic failure and alienation, gangs may fulfill an important emotional need for acceptance” (p. 5). Fourth, Freudenberg (2008) discussed the cultural attitudes toward the school. Some parents may believe that females do not need to obtain a high school
diploma, much less a college degree. It seems that parents lack the knowledge to offer guidance to their children, possibly contributing to a disengagement from school.

Freudenberg (2008) offered interventions that may assist the educational attainment of migrant students. Primarily, migrant students need strong relationships with every member of the school community. Educators must ensure that students feel welcomed when they enroll in a new school. An individualized approach to educating the migrant students through mentoring and monitoring of achievement is vital in boosting academic success. Ensuring that migrant students experience success requires parental involvement. Next, a culturally aware staff is necessary for migrant students to thrive academically.

Through collaboration and mentorship, Mini-Corps strives to increase the achievement of migrant students, and assist in narrowing the achievement gap. In fact, enrichment opportunities are provided in an apprenticeship environment in which the tutor is learning instructional strategies modeled by the cooperating teacher. The tutor works in the classroom alongside the teacher and becomes exposed to instructional strategies, possibly leading to an enhancement of the repertoire of strategies encompassed by the tutor. Although exposure may not be sufficient for teacher development, it may give tutors valuable insights into the realm of education. Mini-Corps provides both a school year component, as well as a summer enrichment program so that migrant students may be exposed to extra learning opportunities throughout the entire year. These extra learning opportunities are valuable as they promote achievement of subject matter and
keep the students engaged throughout the entire year (Butte County Office of Education [BCOE], 2006c).

Mini-Corps provides a multiplicity of opportunities for its prospective teachers to be exposed to professional growth. This enables undergraduates to have exposure to the teaching field before entering a credentialing program. Specifically, Mini-Corps prepares its participants for working with some of the lowest performing students in the country. In working with K-12 students early in the tutors’ college career, undergraduate students may discover that they enjoy the teaching field. On the contrary, undergraduate students may realize that the teaching field is not an area for them to concentrate in, and may change their major. Prospective teachers must be well-equipped with methods in boosting achievement. As an educator it is important to have knowledge about proven strategies that increase the achievement of a diverse group of students. This is imperative as NCLB illuminates the achievement of all students (Atch et al., 2009).

Also discussed in Chapter two is NCLB, a legislative enactment that occurred in 2001. This act requires schools to demonstrate proficiency on state exams, and the test data is then disaggregated by various subgroups. Usually the subgroups may be categorized by ethnicity, economic status, or by students who are second language learners. The NCLB act has demonstrated the gap in achievement between groups of students. A provision of this act states that students must demonstrate proficiency by 2014 or sanctions may be imposed on their schools. NCLB made the achievement gap visible and challenged educators to incorporate innovative strategies to meet the needs of learners. Migrant students tend to fall within the Hispanic, low socioeconomic status,
and English Language Learner (ELL) groups. The achievement gap clearly reminds educators that the Hispanic population is lagging behind their White counterparts (Jehlen, 2007). Gandara (2010) agreed with Jehlen (2007) by stating that Latino achievement in reading and math is not as high as that of other groups of students, and there may be a multitude of reasons for this pattern. Many Latinos are dropping out of high school and are not obtaining a bachelor’s degree at the same rates as other groups of students. A lack of financial resources tends to be a major contributor to the slow academic progress of Latino students. Migrant families typically experience lower wage earnings; even less than poverty levels that are established by the government. In addition to an ethnic achievement gap, an ethnic income gap also exists. Figure 2 depicts the average annual salary of different ethnic groups throughout the United States. The average yearly income for African Americans and Hispanics is nearly half of the average yearly income of White families. If families have increased income then they may have more resources to allocate to the education of their children.
In addition to the data presented in Figure 2.1 above, another theory that may be related to achievement is a culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach. In narrowing the gap of achievement between students, Taylor (2010) described the importance of teachers developing a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and infusing a CRT approach. A CRT approach affirms students by acknowledging who they are, how minority students perceive themselves, and giving teachers’ insights into how the world perceives the students. A CRT approach allows students to feel valued and builds their self-esteem; both are critical factors in optimizing instruction. All of the aforementioned themes are related to Mini-Corps and surface in the review of related literature section.
Supplemental Programs

It seems that the United States government noticed the need to address poverty on both a national and global scale. Although many programs were established to assist in bridging social and educational gaps, four main programs are discussed. In other countries, especially third-world countries, poverty contributes to poor living conditions. Education may become secondary because it is important for children to feel safe and secure prior for learning to transpire. McLeod (2007) described the hierarchy of needs which identifies the importance of students’ physiological needs to be met prior to learning to occur. McLeod (2007) stated that as humans, the needs for survival must first be met such as food, shelter, air, and water. When this need is not met education may become secondary, and students may not be focused on learning. Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, MEAP, and Mini-Corps were all created to assist the needs that may arise because of conditions that may be associated with low wage earnings.

Peace Corps is an organization whose goals consist of improving life circumstances for families who are in need of assistance. This organization was created in the United States; however, many of its volunteers work in underdeveloped or poor countries. Peace Corps works directly with 77 nations and the volunteers strive to build partnerships with host nations who need assistance. There is a wide-range of services that Peace Corps offers. First, it may strive to assist individuals who are victims of natural disasters such as earthquakes, or hurricane victims. In addition, Peace Corps volunteers were deployed in 2009 to Rwanda to teach about the importance of HIV prevention to its citizens (“Examining today’s,” 2011).
Similarly to Peace Corps, AmeriCorps strives to improve circumstances for individuals who encounter poverty related issues. The difference is that AmeriCorps focuses its efforts within the United Stated instead of other countries. AmeriCorps has about 75,000 volunteers nationwide whose main focus is to improve the living situations throughout the communities. The program focuses on tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged students, teaching adults to read, increases access to health care, construct affordable housing, teach computer skills, keep parks and streams in sanitary conditions, create after school programs for at-risk students, respond to disasters, and build the capacity of organizations. Due to its wide-range of programs AmeriCorps is comprised of three main programs that include AmeriCorps state and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Community Civilian Corps). Together they strive to fulfill the organizational mission of improving lives, strengthening communities, and civic engagement through service and volunteering. In accordance to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it first improves the conditions of families; a rise in achievement may soon follow (McLeod, 2007).

Some students, especially migrant students, have psychosocial needs because of the constant relocation of schools that may lower achievement. As a result of this, the MEAP was created. MEAP began because of the few migrant students who graduate from high school causing a lack of matriculation to college. In addition, the program’s goals include creating more counselors who have knowledge of working with migrant students in a counseling setting. The college tutor, who is of migrant background, works directly with the school counselor and learns counseling strategies while they are
undergraduates at a university. By first addressing the physiological needs of the students achievement may increase. Finally, the program was replicated using the same design as Mini-Corps (BCOE, 2006d).

Mini-Corps is a program that recognizes the conditions of migrants and attempts to increase the quality of life by increasing educational achievement. Basurto et al. (2006) stated that Mini-Corps’ main goal is to provide instructional assistance to migrant students and to increase the number of bilingual and cross-cultural teachers throughout the state. The ladder is a secondary goal or a by-product of tutors working with migrant students. These goals are achieved by the constant training and exposure to the intricacies associated with working with a migrant population. Former migrant students who are tutors mentor and teach migrant students in a K-12 setting. A mentor/mentee relationship between individuals from a migrant background may be established within Mini-Corps.

Background of Mini-Corps

Mini-Corps began on the campus of California State University, Chico in 1967. Originally, the program was composed of undergraduate students devoted to enriching the lives of migrants throughout the summer months (BCOE, 2006a). For 10 years, Mini-Corps was only a summer enrichment program; however, the school year program that serves migrant students continuously began in 1974. Mini-Corps has provided assistance to thousands of students throughout the past 40 years (BCOE, 2006b).
Since the 1960s, there have been a high number of individuals who are classified as migrant students therefore legislation was needed in allocating governmental assistance to migrant families. Throughout the United States’ history, legislation has been enacted to assist students from underprivileged groups. The first was the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, which provides financial assistance to school districts that serve students who are considered to be disadvantaged. In addition, Public Law 89-10 provides the financial resources for the programs that help disadvantaged youth such as migrant students. Legislation led to the MEP being funded with approximately $394,771,000 to assist in educating migrant students (US Department of Education, 2011). In addition to these laws, the McAteer Act designated the State Board of Education to develop policies and provide administrative oversight of implementation of services in congruence with the California Master Plan for the Education of Migrant Children (CDE, 1970).

The California Plan for the Education of Migrant Children provides for supplementary programs to work with school districts that serve migrant students. School officials work with an outside agency in obtaining the services for their migrant student population. By working with this agency that specializes in migrant education, learning may be optimized. As outlined in the plan, the state is the operating agency whose primary responsibility is to deliver educational services to the migrant students. In addition, Mini-Corps is one of several programs that reports to the MEP (CDE, 1970).

The California Department of Education (1970) constructed a plan for the education of migrant children. Migrant children were not succeeding in school because
of numerous factors such as high mobility, poor health care, and a family’s limited economical resources. The plan is designed to increase the achievement of migrant students throughout the state both in reading and math. The objectives of the plan are as follows:

- To provide supplementary educational programs for migrant children who will ensure a mean of at least month to month progress in school subject matter areas for each month of attendance in the participating schools.
- To provide assistance to school districts in maintaining school attendance levels of migrant children equivalent to those of resident children.
- To provide supplementary health services for migrant children to alleviate health problems that interferes with the learning process of these children.
- To provide resources to school districts for the training of professional and non-professional personnel in special skills required to meet the needs of migrant children.
- To participate with other states in interstate programs to facilitate continuity of educational services for interstate migrant children (CDE, 2007, p. 12).

Initially the United States’ government focused on the health needs of migrant families and programs. Assistance with housing, work conditions, or employment training soon followed. Since 1967, “The MEP serves more than half a million children in 49 states. The federal government’s commitment was $386.5 million for the 2007 fiscal year. Because a migrant student’s lifestyle is challenging, the funds help “overcome barriers arising from mobility and educational disruption” (National
Without the funds, students may have less exposure to learning opportunities. These learning opportunities are needed because typically, a migrant student may have numerous obstacles to learning (National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education [NASDME], n. d.).

One of the programs that began from this legislation is Mini-Corps. Mini-Corps is designed to have migrant students who are undergraduates at a university work in a classroom setting with K-12 students as well as assist migrant families in educating their children. The undergraduates provide tutoring services both in-school and at-home in core subject areas, assist in developing an awareness of the importance of college attendance and career pathways, and assist in expanding the K-12 students’ academic English language (BCOE, 2006b). Migrants, along with students who may be labeled at-risk may require extra learning opportunities to increase achievement because of factors arising from the difficult living conditions that may not be conducive to learning.

Within Mini-Corps there is a multitude of instances for learning to occur. Undergraduates in Mini-Corps provide enrichment opportunities to migrant K-12 students at their respective schools and sometimes at the migrant camps. Migrant camps are places where migrant families live while they are harvesting crops. Usually, the migrant families experience poor working and living conditions at these camps. The activities that the tutors engage the families in promote the same concepts that students are exposed to during their instructional day. The Butte County Office of Education (2006c) defined the goals of Mini-Corps as the following:
- To provide direct categorical services to migrant children which match or exceed performance standards prescribed by the California Master Plan.
- To increase the number of professionals who are sensitive and committed to the needs of migrant children (p. 1).

Furthermore, K-12 students who are participants of Mini-Corps not only benefit from the mentorship established but also from enrichment opportunities. Migrant students are exposed to various projects that target the specific needs of the students. During the indoor portion of Mini-Corps, tutors coordinate after-school activities and home visitations, assist in parent-teacher conferencing, and receive ongoing training in enhancing or refining their instruction. From these experiences, tutors may gain valuable insights regarding lesson planning, instructional strategies, and lesson delivery. Some tutors are in their first year of college, so early exposure to the teaching realm is crucial when making decisions regarding their career (BCOE, 2006c).

The summer enrichment component consists of an outdoor education program. The BCOE (2006c) described the outdoor portion as the following:

Teacher assistants serve as bilingual lead instructors and advisors to the K-12 migrant students. They receive training that prepares them to work with the migrant students who are actively engaged in learning about the natural world when they are at camp. The Mini-Corps teacher assistants learn to apply the five senses to the learning of science in an outdoor setting, exposing the migrant students to “live science” to enjoy and respect nature. The new students are also introduced to active learning via readings, listening, and discourse that allow them
to do investigation in their everyday learning activities. Science in the outdoor education program is enjoyable and full of learning opportunities. Migrant students are also provided with diverse learning opportunities such as ropes courses, overnights, survival wilderness leadership development, nature walks, and hikes. (p. 2)

Some of the themes studied in the outdoor education program are the water cycle, the ecosystem, and the human impact on nature. These concepts are intertwined with reading, math, and writing in expanding students’ vocabulary and activating their prior knowledge. Program evaluations indicated that 84.55% of the participants in the outdoor education program consisted of first time summer participants. This is important because oftentimes students from a migrant background may not be exposed to enrichment opportunities (CitySpan Technologies, 2011).

The third piece of the summer enrichment program consists of the puppetry program. Mini-Corps’ students develop skits using puppets to send a positive message about the importance of abstaining from drugs, alcohol, and smoking. Some of the skits include a message about the strong pressures that peers can interject into students’ lives. Furthermore, the puppets stress the importance of both promoting a healthy lifestyle and increasing the students’ self-esteem. The puppet performances are usually conducted during the summer months as an enrichment opportunity for students (BCOE, 2006c). In addition, CitySpan Technologies (2011) elaborated that the puppets are used to teach the important aspects vital to the development of positive citizens. Primarily, good nutrition and building the students’ self-esteem is a focal point of the presentations. They engage
the students and promote critical thinking skills in the decision-making process. Typically, the puppets may interact with the audiences in making important decisions, especially when experiencing pressures instilled from their peers. The puppets also convey a message about fire and water safety. This was one of many reports that CitySpan Technologies (2011) generated for Mini-Corps.

CitySpan Technologies (2011) created reports pertaining to the number of schools that participated in Mini-Corps, the number of participants in the program, and various other reports. Figure 3 below indicates the number of schools that participated in Mini-Corps between 2001 and 2009. The graph indicates that Mini-Corps had more participation between 2003 and 2006. In 2007 and 2008 the downward trend of participatory schools continued, but in 2009 more schools participated in Mini-Corps. This is imperative because of the importance of contextualizing the number of schools with which Mini-Corps develops partnerships.

Figure 3 Number of Schools in the Mini-Corps Program (CitySpan Technologies, 2011).
As Mini-Corps’ undergraduates progress throughout the program, numerous opportunities for professional growth arise. Training of the undergraduates is crucial to ensure success of Mini-Corps’ goals. Tutors regularly attend conferences throughout the state to increase their skills in working with migrant youths. The staff is exposed to practices which best ensure that the students’ needs are met. By focusing on standards, they assist in building their literacy strategies and receive trainings in the areas of career development and teacher preparation (BCOE, 2006a). In addition to the trainings, Mini-Corps’ undergraduates serve as role models in working with migrant students. The undergraduates make home-visits to the K-12 students’ homes, and from spending time in the students’ home environments the tutors may develop an understanding of the barriers that prevent students from learning (BCOE, 2006a).

CitySpan Technologies (2011) ascertained that Mini-Corps’ tutors share some of the same characteristics that migrant students encounter. Gay (2001) referred to this theory as establishing a CRT approach because the tutors have knowledge regarding the students’ culture and challenges to learning. The following statistics are indicative of a CRT approach because implications of sharing the same cultural background arose. First, 90% of fathers and 78% of mothers of the tutors have been employed in agricultural work. Fifty percent of the tutors reported that their families had moved as a result of their parents obtaining employment in the agricultural industry. When asked about how the tutors perceived their ethnic background 69% answered “Mexican,” 15% responded “Chicano,” and only 13% replied “Latino/Hispanic.” Moreover, 92% of respondents indicated that Spanish was the language that was spoken in their home. The statistics
indicate that tutors share the same cultural attributes as the K-12 students. Sharing the same experiences may enable teachers to incorporate meaningful lessons into the curriculum by using a CRT approach. In the last section of chapter two a CRT approach is thoroughly discussed.

It is important to contextualize the size of the Mini-Corps Program in California because then the amount of impact can better be understood. According to CitySpan Technologies (2011), the number of tutors throughout California has been roughly about 1000 tutors per year. Figure 4 below depicts the number of tutors who have assisted in providing migrant students educational services. More tutors were employed during the 2003-2006 academic years. A decrease in tutors is observed during the years 2007 and 2008. In 2009, more than 1000 tutors were employed by the Mini-Corps program. In Figure 4 for each year, the researcher added the tutors who participated in the fall, spring, and summer sessions into one year. This may have led to a duplicity of numbers because some tutors who participated in the spring also participated in the summer and winter months.

The Mini-Corps bilingual tutors serve as a link between the school, migrant families, and the community. Mini-Corps tutors conduct home visits with migrant parents and students in an effort to build a bridge between the school, migrant parents, and the students. Their efforts help encourage and strengthen communication between the school and community. In 2009-2010 Mini-Corps tutors conducted 3,595 home visits with migrant families during the school year program. (CitySpan Technologies, 2011, p. 19)
Enrollment of participants has fluctuated throughout the years. CitySpan Technologies (2011) reported that a total of 122,452 students have been served through Mini-Corps between 2001 and 2009. Figure 4 illustrates how the number of participants peaked in 2003 and 2004 with 15,342 and 12,848 participants respectively. Between 2007 and 2009 it appears that a decline in the enrollment of students participating in Mini-Corps was experienced. Migrant students have benefited from legislation that began in the 1960s. Mini-Corps may have assisted the migrant community in experiencing academic success.
Figure 5 above illustrates the number of students who have been served since 2001. These students have benefited from legislation that arose in the 1960s. As mentioned in Chapter One, legislation first targeted the health concerns of migrant families and subsequently centered on improving their quality of life by enriching the educational opportunities of migrant students. Some of these legislative enactments include Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, Public Law 89-10, the McAteer Act, and the California Master Plan for Higher Education.

Teacher Preparation Programs

It is important to understand teacher preparation programs in California because of the secondary goal of Mini-Corps, which is to create a pool of bicultural and biliterate educators. By understanding literature pertaining to teacher preparation programs and
juxtaposing the programs to the Mini-Corps structure, a comparison regarding the similarities and differences between them may arise. This section encompasses the CLAD and BCLAD requirements, Teach for America, teacher preparation within Mini-Corps, and an overview of teacher preparation programs in general.

Carlson and Walton (1994) discussed the evolution of the CLAD and BCLAD emphasis when obtaining a teaching credential. Before the mid-1990s, California was not effective in preparing teachers to work with a diverse population. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, in a partnership with the Bilingual Cross-cultural Advisory Panel sought to improve the preparation of teachers so that upon completion of a credentialing program they are well-equipped with strategies to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

In 1987, the commission formed a panel that consisted of 18 members to identify steps in improving the credentialing experience of teachers. This panel found that there were two instructional needs of limited English proficient students needed to address. First, the development of students in the English language, and also access to the subject matter are critical needs that need to be addressed. Teachers must be trained to work with populations during their credentialing programs (Carlson & Walton, 1994).

Carlson and Walton (1994) ascertained that CLAD empowers teacher by expanding their knowledge of culture, and language development strategies, and applying that knowledge in a diverse setting. In addition, BCLAD refers to the bilingual teachers who also have adequate knowledge of culture, and language development strategies. In obtaining a BCLAD teachers must demonstrate proficiency in the areas of listening,
speaking, reading, and writing. Some students require that instruction be given in their primary language so that learning the English language occurs. Teachers are also expected to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy and to earn the trust and respect of the students.

The culturally and linguistically diverse student population in California made it clear that the previous policies for the preparation and credentialing of teachers for limited-English proficient students were inadequate. Working with its Bilingual Cross-cultural Advisory Panel, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing has developed, and is in the process of implementing, an important set of reforms in this area. California educators have enthusiastically embraced the new CLAD/BCLAD system for the preparation and credentialing of teachers for limited English proficient students. There is widespread agreement that the new system will rectify the inadequacies of the previous policies and that limited English proficient students will be better served in the future. (Carlson & Walton, 1994, p. 19)

An attempt to serve students from linguistic and diverse backgrounds came from a program called Teach for America. This teaching program began 19 years ago in an effort to staff schools that have high teacher turnover rates. These schools are typically located in high poverty areas. The program’s mission is to help underprivileged students succeed. Teach for America recruits high-achieving college students who commit for two years to teach at a low-income school. Opponents of this program argue that simply placing a person who has a 4.0 grade point average in a low-income school will not affect
students’ achievement. Teacher preparation programs are essential to develop the teachers’ expertise toward working with a diverse group of students (Heilig & Jez, 2010).

In addition, Donaldson and Johnson (2011) studied the teacher turnover rates of participants of the Teach for America program as they surveyed 2,029 individuals. The survey data was analyzed using a discrete-time survival analysis. The findings indicated that about 66% fulfilled their two year commitment to teach at the underprivileged school. Another finding of the study indicated that less than 25% of the teachers who were hired to staff these schools remained in their original placement after three years. In fact, 75% of the teachers had found alternative forms of employment. When schools are difficult to staff, the achievement gap exhibited by the students usually fails to become narrower.

Mini-Corps strives to curtail the achievement gap in a variety of ways. First, Mini-Corps offers professional development to its participants. Second, students who are tutors work alongside the classroom teacher in a school setting and are exposed to the intricacies associated with education. Because of this, tutors learn instructional strategies in an apprenticeship environment as early as their freshman or sophomore year in college. This early exposure may have profound effects on an undergraduate, leading him or her to the decision to pursue a teaching career or to the realization that teaching is not an area of interest, so that they may then change their major early in their academic careers. Participation as early as their first year in college may further strengthen the aspiring teacher’s decision to pursue a profession in education.
The discourse of teacher preparation programs must include courses designed to work with a wide range of learners including the migrant students mentioned above. It is important for teachers to have direct knowledge on how to adequately educate gifted students, ELL students, migrant students, students with special needs, and various other types of students. For this reason, the following section includes an outline of teacher preparation programs. Because 98% of migrants are usually Spanish speaking Hispanics, it is important for teachers to have courses that promote multicultural education or strategies to work with different types of students (CDE, 2007).

The trajectory with regard to credentialing programs that teachers enroll in varies throughout the state of California. Ateh et al. (2009) stated that teachers in California undergo a credentialing program through a variety of institutions. The California State University system prepares 53% of teachers. Teachers who obtained a teaching credential in another state and teach in California account for 15% of the teaching workforce. Private and independent universities assign credentials to 42% of California’s teachers, while the University of California (UC) system accounts for only five percent. Some programs have a cohort-based learning structure that enables participants to move together from one class to the next.

A popular model used by teacher credentialing programs is the cohort model. This is significant because Mini-Corps is also designed in a cohort model where the tutors progress through the program together while providing a sense of support for each other. By using this approach, the tutors support each other and discuss each other’s experiences. Desai, Gimbert and Kerka (2010) described the cohort model to learning.
In the cohort model, students’ progress from one class to the next and learn from each other as well from the staff. The cohort model lends itself to interaction among supervisors, teachers, faculty, community members, and creates a network of individuals who are an integral part of the learning process. In addition, pre-service teachers must learn from the cooperating teacher, and usually the cooperating teacher demonstrates effective instructional strategies in the classroom and teaches the tutors the approaches in a class setting.

Teacher preparation programs in California aim to prepare teachers to work with a diverse population; however, recently declining enrollment in these programs is concerning. Moreover, a major concern has been that about one-third of newly appointed teachers resign from their positions within the first three years of acquiring employment and 46% resign within the first five years of teaching. A constant supply of teachers is vital in maintaining an adequate amount of educators who have knowledge about the latest strategies used to teach a diverse group of learners (Ateh et al., 2009).

One group of learners can be described as the ELL subgroup. Soto-Hinman (2010) described ELL students as needing to work twice as hard because ELL students attempt to understand the concepts taught while they are developing an understanding of the English language. Oftentimes, linguistic and cultural gaps arise between the teachers and the students. Many educators are not adequately trained in effective ELL strategies. This may be determined by viewing teacher preparation programs that require its participants to have a limited amount of courses that are specifically designed to work with an ELL population.
In most states, including California, teachers in credentialing programs are required to demonstrate some knowledge in working with ELL students. When teachers are in their credentialing program they are required to take a class that prepares them to work with an ELL population. Upon completion of their ELL class, teachers may not be required to have additional professional growth opportunities with regard to ELL students. The National Staff Development Council (2009) stated, “Teachers are not getting adequate training in teaching special education or limited English proficiency students. More than two-thirds of teachers nationally had not had even one day of training in supporting the learning of special education, or limited English proficiency students” (as cited in Soto-Hinman, 2010, p. 3).

In educating all students including special education and ELL students, Desai et al. (2010) advised that teacher preparation programs should incorporate elements of equity in preparing teachers. Educators who view issues through a social justice lens tend to develop a passion for creating a more just society. Bransford and Darling-Hammond (2005) outlined four strategies needed in preparing teachers to work in a diverse environment. The following are the four key strategies:

- Reach student teachers early and interest them in urban teaching.
- Ensure that all teachers understand the sociocultural, economic, and political factors of the urban community, and examine their own cultural norms.
- Implement multi-year induction programs that give pre-service teachers high quality support and feedback.
- Have experienced P-12 teachers co-teach education courses. (p. 36)
In addition to the strategies above, Desai et al. (2010) stated the importance of acquiring direct knowledge of the students’ experiences. Once their experiences are known, the teacher can cultivate an environment in which the students’ cultures, values, and beliefs are exhibited throughout the classroom, making learning more meaningful to the students.

California has a focus on reforming teacher preparation programs that include working with a diverse group of students for quite some time. Teachers must be adequately prepared to work with students from various backgrounds because of the diversity within the state of California itself. When teachers are prepared to meet the challenges that students face, the students’ achievement may rise. Many schools in an urban environment are difficult to staff, and achievement ranks among the lowest levels when compared to trends throughout the nation (Hafner & Maxie, 2006).

Ramirez (2010) studied ethnic minority college students in understanding their perceptions regarding teaching. Figures 12 and 13 may be interpreted as ethnic minorities not entering education as often as other groups. The study found that ethnic minorities learned about the negative aspects of the occupation from their high school teachers and counselors. Negative remarks about the teaching profession were etched into students’ minds by the same teachers whose responsibilities include educating the students. Furthermore, ethnic minority students articulated the perceptions of the low social status of teachers and how it was linked with low wage earnings. Because of issues such as low wage earnings, negative school experiences, and a lack of respect, prospective teachers elected other concentrations to study. Ramirez (2010) ascertained
that there is a need to recruit ethnic minority teachers because of the insights that they may bring to the teaching profession. When the diversity of the teachers increases, there are fewer referrals into special education programs. In addition, absenteeism decreases and parental involvement increases.

In addition to the negative perceptions toward the teaching profession, many ethnic minorities are aware of the increased time required to become a teacher. For instance, after a bachelor’s degree it may take up to two years to receive a preliminary credential. Students also must pass at least three examinations in which the implications of failure translate into a student who will never receive his or her credential, thus not permitted to teach. Low wages and government regulations are hindrances that impede ethnic minorities’ decisions to join the teaching profession. Should a teacher adequately complete the credential program, they must complete a two-year induction program upon being hired (Ramirez, 2010). Initially, the induction program began because many teachers were quitting within the first three years of beginning their teaching careers.

Due to the high teacher turnover rate, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program provides newly appointed teachers with guidance as they navigate themselves through the first two years of their teaching assignment. Should a teacher successfully obtain a teaching credential, he or she is required by law to complete an induction program. Senate Bill 2042 is a legislative enactment that mandates induction programs such as the BTSA for new teachers. Newly hired teachers must complete a two-year program as they are partnered with an experienced teacher. Together the pair reflects on lessons, seeking to deepen their understanding of teaching
practices. The BTSA program was initiated because, as previously stated by Ateh et al. (2009), too many teachers were leaving the teaching profession within five years of being hired (Cavazos, Lovo & Simmons, 2006). In addition, Cavazos et al. (2009) stated, “Most of the existing BTSA programs provided beginning teachers with a repertoire of well-honed professional development strategies which allowed for teacher growth through self-assessment and inquiry, and resulted in higher levels of new teacher retention, and the promise of increase in student achievement” (p. 57). Achievement and accountability are pivotal because of the accountability instilled on teachers as stated in the NCLB Act.

The BTSA program’s main goal is to retain teachers and decrease the turnover rates. Experienced teachers may have an opportunity to refine their skills. Teachers who reflect on their teaching practice while enhancing their skills may be teachers who continuously strive to grow as educators. BTSA aims to decrease the teacher turnover rate, and in doing so an increase in student achievement may surface. The gap of achievement among students who are from various subgroups is present throughout the country. This gap surfaced when NCLB first emerged in 2001.

Challenges of Migrant Students

Over the past 50 years it seems that the federal government understood how a child’s living conditions effects achievement. Typically, when a child has many obstacles to overcome, achievement may decrease. Because of this, legislation was enacted to assist in increasing achievement which may arise from the economic gap.
Migrant students may experience a difficult time in schools because of the conditions that surround them. Low wage earnings, poor societal perceptions, lack of health care, and transiency may contribute to the deplorable conditions of migrant families.

First, students who come from a migrant background have numerous obstacles to learning. The migrant population toils long hours either in the fields, fishing, lumber, or dairy industries, yet earnings are minimal. For instance, migrant families typically earn about $11,000 to $16,000 per year. When children also work they contribute to the family income causing a family’s earnings to ascend. Children from migrant families are subjected to sub-standard housing and poor health care. Because of these and other factors, a decline in student achievement exists among the migrant populations. In addition, migrant students may not be viewed positively throughout the United States’ society (Jaramillo & Nunez, 2009).

Stereotypes toward migrant immigrants may exist throughout American society. Portes and Rivas (2011) stated that, “Racial stereotypes produce a positive self-identity for White and Asian students, but a negative one for Blacks and Latinos, and racialized self-perceptions among Mexican American students endure into the third or fourth generations” (p. 219). Furthermore, because Hispanics have immigrated into the country in large numbers, many have not had a reason to assimilate to the United States’ culture because of their ability to navigate in a Spanish-speaking community. Even though Latinos are the fastest growing minority group, many students are not motivated to learn English and are content with the everyday functions within their community (Portes & Rivas, 2011).
The National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (n. d.) agreed with Portes and Rivas (2011) and Gandara (2008) by mentioning that Latinos are the fastest growing group in the United States. One likely cause for this is that many Mexican workers were recruited through the Bracero Program between 1944 and 1964. This program brought Mexican workers to labor in the fields, and upon completion of the harvest the workers were required to return to their native country of Mexico. Many chose to stay in the United States and raise their families illegally. Because of the high number of Mexican workers, they have quickly become vital to the United States’ economy.

Migrant families live and work in the United States under difficult conditions. Oftentimes, little protection is available to migrant workers who become injured in the workplace. This leads to an increased level of stress for families who cannot physically perform manual labor, thus not earning income for their families. Acquiring the basic necessities for survival such as food, shelter, and clothing becomes difficult, and few families have knowledge of organizations that are available to provide assistance. Also, even though the existing laws prevent minors from working in the fields, few employers enforce the laws. Children work alongside their families which may contribute to a disengagement from education (NMSHSCO, n. d.).

The National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (2009) ascertained that of the migrants who had children, about 66% of them relocated from one town to another following crop patterns. The high transient rate of the children may diminish continuity in their curriculum, and also with regard to health care, the mobility
may create a loss of medical records throughout health centers. Because of this, it is
difficult to obtain continuous school and health records. In a survey of migrant children
conducted by the National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (2009),
48% of children stated that they had worked in fields still wet with pesticide residue. For
this and many other reasons, programs that assist with educating the migrant population
and health care are vital in working with migrant children. Teachers have an important
role since they may assist in improving the quality of life through educational attainment.

The conditions discussed above may be linked to the gap in achievement of
migrant students. Disparities arise stemming from lower wage earnings such as the fact
that fewer Hispanics or Blacks own a computer when compared to Whites or Asians. In
addition, when Hispanics are compared to their White or Asian counterparts, more
Hispanic mothers are high-school dropouts. Across the United States, Hispanics are the
largest growing minority group so educators must find pathways to increase graduation
rates. Although over the past decade the achievement in reading and math has risen for
migrant students, graduation rates are still lagging behind other groups. This
achievement is measured through state assessments because of the NCLB act of 2001.

NCLB has illuminated the gap in achievement among various groups of students.
Currently, the NCLB Act is still in existence in the United States. The NCLB Act of
2001 is a reauthorization of the Title I portion of the ESEA of 1965. NCLB has four
educational reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and
local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis of effective teaching
practices (CDE, 2004). Along with providing additional financial resources, the NCLB
added important accountability provisions to Title I of ESEA and established a framework for timely progress in increasing student achievement and parent involvement. The accountability provisions require states to set timelines for improving student achievement with particular emphasis on closing achievement gaps between low-income and minority students, and their peers from higher income or non-minority households. The new reporting provisions ensure that parents and the public will have a better sense of how schools are progressing (US Department of Education, 2004).

Even though NCLB does not disaggregate the data by migrant students, it does report the achievement data by the Hispanic subgroup. Ninety-eight percent of migrants are from the Hispanic subgroup and they are not achieving at a rate as advanced as other groups of students. It seems that inequities perpetuate throughout a migrant’s life, and because of these inequities the results may manifest in the school system.

Educators must find more effective ways to increase the rates of educational attainment of migrants and at-risk populations. Current trends suggest that a gap in achievement is present between various subgroups of students. Statistical information indicates that about one third of high school freshmen in the United States will not complete their degree within four years. In terms of Hispanics and African Americans, it is estimated that half will not complete high school in four years (Bushway et al., 2009).

Under NCLB, California requires that students score at the proficient or advanced levels by 2014. Special education, migrant, homeless, immigrant, and foster students are not exempt from state testing. Nationwide schools are struggling on how to meet the requirements of NCLB for special education students without excluding them from the
assessments. Consequently, many teachers throughout the country are teaching techniques pertaining to test taking strategies and failing to incorporate other subjects such as art, life skills, science, social studies, and music into the curriculum (Jehlen, 2007).

An aspect of NCLB is that the achievement gap is apparent for educators to view. States receiving federal funds must report students’ scores as measured by standardized testing. The goal of illuminating the gap is to demonstrate the groups of students not meeting the state benchmarks, and to infuse effective teaching strategies into the curriculum. Some of the students who persistently score at the lowest levels are economically disadvantaged students. The achievement gap may demonstrate to educators where additional resources may need to be allocated (Blank, 2011).

The achievement gap persists throughout a multitude of schools throughout the United States. The following statistics exist in addition to Blank’s (2011) study: 41% of African American students, 31% of Native Americans, 30% of Hispanics, 28% of Pacific Islanders, 15% of White students, and 10% of Asian Americans drop out before completing their high school requirements for graduation. A large achievement gap across various ethnic groups is visible in the data. The state of California encompasses 2215 schools labeled as a Program Improvement (PI). Of these schools, 355 have been classified as chronically failing schools for five consecutive years. Many minorities including Latinos are attending the lowest performing schools classified as PI schools (Reason Foundation, 2006).
Achievement gaps are one of the most serious matters that states across the country are confronted with. Educators have yet to successfully narrow the gap of achievement among various subgroups of students. Typically, Whites and Asians are score at greater rates than African Americans and Hispanics. Latinos have not been demonstrating achievement at the same rates as other students. Across the nation, Hispanic and African American high school students have high probabilities of dropping out. Of the students who graduated from high school and pursued a college education, Hispanics and African Americans are twice as likely to drop out of college when compared to White students (National Governors’ Association, n. d.).

Aguirre and Martinez’ (1994) study provided more insights into the education of Hispanics. They believed that there was an educational crisis present for the Latino student population. Gandara (2010) further affirmed that Latinos were suffering from an educational crisis. Latinos are undereducated because of social and cultural isolation within the school. The Latino students’ isolation from other groups of students may prevent them from being exposed to children from different backgrounds. Aguirre and Martinez (1994) believed that in the near future educational attainment must be used as a pathway for social change.

According to the article “Latinos in School, Some Facts and Findings”, Latinos are less likely to receive a head start in their academic careers (ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, 2001). Latino children under the age of five are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood educational programs when compared to non-Latinos. The enrollment of Latino children in preschool increased when the parents’ educational level
increased. Furthermore, fewer Latinos have access to a computer at home compared to non-Latinos (ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, 2001). Many Hispanics and African American students have huge barriers to overcome. A multitude of factors hinder educational success, such as language, culture, and immigration status. These key issues affect student motivation that leads to a decline in achievement (UC Davis, 2006).

Gandara (2010) also agreed with Aguirre and Martinez (1994) that there is a Latino educational crisis. From the moment that Latinos are enrolled in kindergarten they are less prepared than some of their counterparts. The Latino population in schools nearly doubled between 1987 and 2007 from 11% to 21% of the United States’ students. Furthermore, it is projected that by 2021 one-fourth of the students throughout the United States will be of Latino descent. Poverty is a major contributor to the lack of progress of Latino students. More than 40% of Latina mothers lack a high school diploma, compared to only six percent of Anglo mothers. Ten percent of Latina mothers have a college degree, and nearly 33% of White mothers have obtained this same degree. All of these factors may contribute to inequities because of family circumstances and the educational achievement gap.

Gandara (2010) stated that Hispanics typically perform lower academically when compared to the achievement demonstrated by other ethnic groups. In California, the students from a Hispanic background make up more than one half of the student population within the school system yet they are the lowest performing among all of the ethnic groups. Throughout the past 30 years all ethnic groups have demonstrated an increase in college attainment except Hispanics. One of the contributing factors to low
performance in school appears to be poverty. Hispanic children are more than twice as likely to be poor when compared to White children. Figure 6 illustrates the percentages of bachelor’s degree completion by ethnicities over the last 30 years. It appears that at all levels of education including college, Hispanics (some who may be migrant) have not experienced the gains in achievement that other subgroups had.

Gandara (2008) stated there is a Latino educational crisis. Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic minority in the country but academically, they have fallen behind their non-Hispanic peers. In 1975, the percentage of Whites who received their bachelor’s degree was 24%, and in 2005, that number rose to 34%; an increase of 10 percentage points. In 1975, the number of Latinos who earned a bachelor’s degree was nine percent, and in 2005, it was 11%. The Latino population rose two percentage points over the last 30 years. These statistics confirm Latinos are falling behind their White counterparts.

Figure 6 Percentages of Bachelor’s Degrees Completed (Gandara, 2010).
Little achievement data was available regarding migrant students because theirs was not a subgroup that was disaggregated by NCLB. Gathering data pertaining to the achievement of migrant students is crucial in understanding the strategies that are effectively being implemented and identifying the strategies that may need to be refined. For this reason, CitySpan (2011) presented longitudinal achievement data specific to migrant students in California for 2010 and found that migrant student achievement had increased despite the struggles that the students encountered. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the performance on the state benchmarks of migrant students in second through eleventh grades. More migrant students are attaining proficient or advanced levels on state examinations.

Figure 7  Percentages of Migrant Students’ Results on the California State Test (CitySpan, 2011).
Figure 8 Percentages of Migrant Students’ Results on the California State Test in Math (CitySpan Technologies, 2011).

Figure 9 below shows data that was collected by CitySpan Technologies (2011) between 2003 and 2010. With regard to ELA, in 2003 the percentage of migrant students who were at the proficient and advanced levels was 10%, and in 2010 the percentage was 30%. Throughout the previous eight years this has been an increase of 20%. In addition, the data clearly shows the percentage of students who have been at the lowest level (Far Below Basic) has declined over the past eight years from 25% to 16%. This data seems to indicate that educators have more success in meeting the needs of migrant students. If current trends continue, projections into the future appear to be positive.
CitySpan Technologies (2011) reported the achievement data of migrant students as measured by the California state test. Again, the data clearly indicates a surge in test scores by migrant students throughout the last eight years. In 2003, 17% of migrant students were proficient and advanced, and in 2010 36% of migrant students scored at these same levels. This is a 19% increase over the last eight years. When viewing the lowest level (Far Below Basic) the data shows this level became smaller in scope. In 2003, 16% of migrant students scored at the Far Below Basic level and in 2010 only 11% scored at this level. This is a five percent decrease in students scoring at this level.

Programs such as Mini-Corps appear to have a direct effect on the educational achievement of migrant students.
Gandara (2010) previously mentioned poverty appears to be the culprit in preventing Latinos to advance in education. According to the NMSHSCO (2009), migrant field workers earn between $11,000 to $16,000 dollars per year. This is indicative of wage earnings that may be at the poverty level. Figure 11 illustrates the societal inequities that occur when a child first begins school, depicting that a higher number of minority students do not own a computer, are experiencing poverty, come from single family homes, or are from a family whose mother dropped out of school when compared to their White counterparts. The economic state of minorities is not equivalent to that of the dominant group. This disparity in economic status may lead to more resources becoming available to minority students. Owning a computer unlocks the door to infinite online learning possibilities. Students whose family owns a personal
computer may have easy access to additional information when completing their homework or school projects.

A correlation may exist between parents’ educational attainment and student learning. Students who have more educated parents tend to achieve school success at higher rates. Better educated parents tend to value education at increased rates and subsequently may demand better school performance from their children. Similarly, students who did not finish high school tend to live among the same poverty levels and educational expectations as their parents. More often than not, children will not value education if their parents also fail to value education (NPR, 2009).

Figure 11  Family Circumstances when Schooling Begins (NPR, 2009)
Nearly all educational progress stalls for Latinos during high school. The Kaiser Family Foundation (2004) conducted a survey finding that students’ attitudes may have hindered progress in high school. The survey revealed that Latino students believed that they were not treated fairly at school. Latino students thought that teachers could not bridge the cultural divides within their classrooms (Gandara, 2008). According to Hernandez (n. d.), Latino students were least likely to be enrolled in algebra, chemistry, or physics classes in high school. Although Latino students represented 42% of all students in California, only 16% were identified as gifted or talented. Hernandez (n. d.) further stated the factors that made education difficult included poverty, educational level of parents, and inadequate health care. This statement coincides with Gandara’s (2010) remark regarding poverty as a hindrance to educational attainment.

Mini-Corps strives to bridge the cultural divides between migrants and schools. Tutors understand the struggles of migrant in the educational setting. Mini-Corps tutors work directly with the families both at school and at the migrant camps. The tutors may serve as role models with regard to education and provide guidance to the K-12 migrant students as they learn how to navigate throughout the educational system. The tutors may be able to understand the migrants’ culture due to time spent in the student’s environment or because many tutors are former migrant students themselves.

Furthermore, the Kaiser Foundation (2004) noted that many Latinos were deterred from receiving higher education because of the high cost of tuition. The need to earn money and contribute towards the family income was a major factor that led to an increase in drop-out rates for Latinos. Many Latinos acquired employment during high
school, thus dropping out of school by the age of 16. The most studied aspect of family background is low socio-economic status. Immigration status and language proficiency also influenced educational attainment. Due to the aforementioned trends, a plan to enhance the educational successes of Hispanics must be implemented throughout the United States.

The major contributor to the achievement gap appears to be the budgetary reductions that California has experienced. The California Department of Education (2008) stated that “California has the most challenging student population in the nation yet per pupil spending is $1,892 below the national average when adjusted for cost of living” (p. 7). The lack of funding has contributed to programs that are designed to narrow the gaps in achievement that schools are experiencing. Some causes of the achievement gap also include access, culture and climate, expectations and strategies.

In terms of access, some recommendations in addressing this were to provide high-quality programs prior to entering kindergarten. In addition, better alignment between grade levels is needed. Oftentimes, middle schools are unsure of how elementary schools are preparing students, and high schools are unsure of how middle schools are preparing them. By the time some students arrive at the end of their high school years, they are not ready to enter college because of the time they spent in remediation courses (CDE, 2008). Addressing the educational needs in terms of culture and climate in schools is also a recommendation. Educators in California must have a cultural understanding themselves in working with a diverse population. The CDE (2008) further noted,
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is a key step in addressing the lack of connection between scholars and educators. California needs to develop a comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive strategy for educators that will help them become the kind of educator who can teach any student effectively. (p. 6)

This appears to coincide with Gay (2001) who in the next section discussed a CRT approach to education.

Mini-Corps is designed for undergraduate tutors who are former migrants themselves. Because the tutors are former migrants, they tend to have knowledge of the migrant lifestyle. Having knowledge about the intricacies associated with migrants’ lifestyle may provide tutors with insights that only someone who had lived the lifestyle would have knowledge about. Possessing these insights may be valuable when educating at-risk populations. Mini-Corps appeared to use a culturally relevant approach in educating migrant youths. In the next section, a culturally relevant teaching approach is thoroughly discussed.

Culturally Relevant Education

As educators strive to increase achievement within their classrooms a CRT approach may be a tool that promotes learning. Teachers who use CRT may use the students’ culture to activate the students’ prior knowledge. In addition, understanding this form of intervention may lead to teachers thoroughly analyzing the curriculum to identify if it is a culturally rich curriculum. In addition, being competent with regard to
the various communication styles of different ethnicities may provide insights into increasing achievement.

Mini-Corps may infuse a CRT approach into education. The structure of the program is one in which former migrant students help current migrant students. Since the tutors have lived through the same experiences as the K-12 students, they may be able to select curriculum that migrant students can identify with, create a welcoming atmosphere for families, and foster student learning in a cultural sensitive way. Migrants have multiple challenges to overcome both in the home and school environment. It appears that a special type of academic socialization may be present because of the ability of Mini-Corps’ tutors to understand the students’ culture. It is imperative that teachers understand the challenges that students experience both in the home and work environment. Once teachers understand the challenges, steps to overcome them must follow. A challenge for educators may be directly related to the ethnic demographic change of the past 30 years. In 1980, 83.1% of the population was White, 11.7% African American, and 6.4% Hispanic. Nearly 30 years later those demographics have shifted and currently consist of 75% White, 12.4% African American, and 15.4% Hispanic. The percentage of Whites decreased during this period, while the Hispanic population rose by nine percentage points. Evidence exists that demonstrates the changes in demographics of the United States’ population (Brown, Cooper & Jewell, 2011).

Although the ethnic demographic shift is present among students, the teachers are not as diverse as the students. For instance, Mini-Corps serves as a program that assists migrant youths with a secondary goal of developing an ethnically diverse, bicultural, and
biliterate teacher workforce. Figures 12 and 13 below illustrate the ethnicities of the teacher workforce both in California and in the United States of America. The figures clearly demonstrate the lack of an ethnically diverse teacher workforce in California.

Although the following data presented does not indicate the degree of the level that teachers are culturally aware or biliterate, it does depict the teacher ethnicities in California and the nation. In California 72% of teachers are White, while on the national level 82% are White. The African American teachers in California and the United States are five percent and eight percent respectively. American Indian teachers constitute one percent of the teacher workforce both in the state and across the nation. Asians account for seven percent of the teacher workforce in California and only two percent throughout the nation. Also, the Hispanic teacher workforce in California is 16% and on the national level, eight percent of teachers are of Hispanic descent.

Figure 12  Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Teachers in California (CDE, 2008)
Taylor (2010) described the disconnection between a teacher’s instruction and students’ cultural experiences. The cultural disconnect between home and school environments may contribute to a decrease in achievement of Latinos. Educators must create pathways in making material comprehensible for the students. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs do offer courses in multicultural education; however, more professional development is needed to keep up with the changing demographics of the United States. “Culturally responsive teachers believe that culture deeply influences the way that children learn, and when given the responsibility of teaching students of diverse backgrounds, their attitudes reflect an appreciation of the cultural, linguistic, and social characteristics of each of their students” (Taylor, 2010, p. 26).
Brown et al. (2011) ascertained that as the demographic shift is intensifying the need to develop a CRP among educators is crucial. Because teachers may not have had experiences similar to their students’, a teaching gap or disconnection may develop. Teachers must promote positive home-to-school connections and establish a welcoming environment that nurtures all of the cultures represented within the school. Race must be considered in developing lessons so that the lessons become meaningful to the learner. Figure 14 below outlines the key characteristics of a CRP. “The delivery of CRP is in part the acknowledgement of who children are, how they perceive themselves, and how the world receives them. Therefore, the complexities of the social construction of race must also be explored” (Brown et al., 2011, p. 70).

Figure 14  Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Brown et al., 2011)
Billings (2008) stated that the primary goal of a CRT approach is to narrow the achievement gap between students of color and the dominant group. The focus must transfer from educators viewing students based on their deficiencies (e.g. poverty, linguistic barriers) to one that views schools as failing to meet the needs of diverse students. Oftentimes, students’ environment is blamed for lack of achievement in school. CRT is a pedagogical theory that believes that culture is directly tied to various aspects of education. “Central to the theory of CRT is the recognition that many educators have adopted low expectations for minority students, a stance that sets the stage for their underachievement” (Billings, 2008, p. 1).

Teachers who embrace a CRT approach have a repertoire of strategies that can be infused throughout the school day. Educators may display cultural objects around the classroom representative of the students’ culture. Teachers may have class discussions regarding cultural holidays or they may assign culturally based projects to the students. All of these strategies will enable students to feel valued because of the affirmation of their culture in a school setting (Billings, 2008).

Even though some teachers are exposed to multicultural education, researchers have discovered that educators do not feel confident in teaching diverse groups of students (Hadaway & Flores, 1987; Irvine, 2003; Jones & Fuller, 2003; Sleeter, 2008). Educators may not have explored their own biases regarding minority children’s literacy abilities, or not understand the existence of racial inequality. Other educators may not raise expectations for students of color, or fail to infuse culture into the delivery of
lessons. These are characteristics of many teachers across the nation (Castro, 2010; Edwards & Kuhlman, 2007; McIntyre, Hulan & Maher, 2010).

CRT is an instructional approach that is important to study by educators who may be experiencing deficiencies in achievement among students of color. Because these students are not achieving at the same rates as students from the dominant group, a CRT approach may assist in increasing achievement. CRT helps teachers in activating students’ prior knowledge. When a student can view newly presented information and associate it to a life experience, the information becomes more meaningful and relevant. As a result the students will place the information in their long-term memory, and will be more apt to remember it for longer periods. Gay (2001) discusses the following as essential components of a culturally rich experience for students:

- Develop a knowledge base about cultural diversity
- Incorporate cultural diversity content into the curriculum
- Build learning communities
- Communicate effectively with ethnically diverse students
- Respond to diversity in the delivery of instruction

According to Gay (2001), numerous teacher preparation programs fail to adequately prepare teachers to teach diverse student populations. The knowledge that teachers need to have needs to be more than simply a respect for various cultures. The teacher needs to gain sufficient knowledge about the students’ traditions, values, and societal perceptions to enhance the educational experience. Oftentimes, the only exposure to other cultures is through the media. The portrayal of African Americans as
rappers or athletes and not scientists, lawyers or other respectable professions may contribute to societal perceptions. Teachers who have a culturally rich knowledge base will also have an ability to analyze the curriculum and determine if it identifies with the students’ cultural backgrounds.

Billings (2008) declared that the curriculum should be rigorous yet accessible and should be tied to students’ lives both at their school and personal environments. Diversity within the curriculum may be beneficial for a diverse group of learners. After a teacher has been trained on how to review the curriculum, the teacher may decide if it is representative of the students’ cultural backgrounds. If teachers discover that students’ culture is not represented by the existing curriculum, the teacher must know how to infuse the students’ culture into the lesson. Gay (2001) stated that lessons about leadership, power, and authority should be taught using examples of individuals who exhibit cultural and gender differences. In addition to this, students’ culture may be displayed on bulletin boards or even in cultural celebrations at the school site. This leads to the establishment of learning communities throughout the school.

Building a community of learners is essential for achievement to occur. Gay (2001) described how students of color are raised in environments in which the welfare of the group is more important than their own personal well-being. Each member of the group attempts to help each other. As a teacher, it is important to set the boundaries that promote respect of students’ differences. Once this is in place it is vital to have students in learning communities where they can assist each other with the learning process. Helping each other may already be an essential component of the students’ culture and
can be used as a pathway for learning to take place. This may be contrary to the dynamics of schools where the teacher attempts to teach the individual student. The teacher must identify which learning method is best when working with his or her respective students.

Furthermore, Billings (2008) argued that in some cultural groups including African American families raising the children is the work of all individuals within the community. Authority tends to be distributed over several individuals; this is contrary to European traditions in which the authority figure seems to be more centralized. “In response to these differences CRT has incorporated cooperative learning into their classrooms that involves collaboration and group decision-making among students as well as between students and teachers” (Billings, 2008, p. 3). In addition to authority being distributed, communication styles may also vary by ethnic group.

Communication styles vary by ethnic group. First, a didactic communication style is the more traditional style used in education in which one person speaks, and the other person listens. Different ethnic groups in the United States tend to be more dialectic, and may engage in more of a discussion. If a teacher is not aware of the students’ dialectic speech patterns then the student may be viewed as rude or incompetent, when in fact it is the normal way for the student to communicate. In addition, teachers must educate about the importance of code-switching. Gay (2001) defines code-switching as the language or actions used within a given setting. Many students are exposed to higher order vocabulary words; however, they do not understand why they are learning the words. Code-switching provides an opportunity to discuss the
importance of expanding a students’ academic vocabulary, as well as stresses the importance of using vocabulary within a context.

Billings (2008) affirmed Gay (2001) that communication styles vary by ethnic group. Teachers must be cognizant of the varying styles as the students may practice both verbal and nonverbal communication styles. Sometimes teachers who work with urban African American students may interpret their communication styles in a rude fashion. These students may have an expressive communication style in their home setting. This participatory–interactive communication style is typical of African American congregations, and widely used in a variety of contexts. This form of communication is also used by Hispanics and Native Hawaiian peoples and is not intended to show disrespect; rather, it is an assertion of agreement or disagreement. In addition, nonverbal communication styles such as eye contact or posture may be viewed as disrespectful by the teachers. For instance, Apache children are taught not to make eye contact because of the disrespect it conveys. All of the communication styles must be considered when constructing lesson plans.

Gay (2001) advised that teachers strive to make lessons engaging for all learners. Because of this, it is important to incorporate the students’ culture into the lessons. The level of engagement for the students may increase because of their interest in learning about their culture. When this occurs, the students’ prior knowledge will attach to the newly learned information more easily. Once a teacher learns about the students’ culture, the teacher has knowledge to embed examples directly from the students’ experiences.
This may enhance the educational achievement for the students by making it more meaningful.

Chicola (2007) agreed with Gay (2001) regarding the importance of developing teachers’ cultural competence. The rapid population growth of minorities in combination with the greatest amount of immigrants has increased the number of minority students within the United States. Concurrently, the demographics of teachers have not changed at the same rate of the students. Developing prospective teachers into educators who will demonstrate proficiency in working with diverse populations will enhance the educational system. “Helping candidates confront their own biases and reflect on ways in which those biases may impact on their attitudes and behavior in future classrooms is the first step in the journey to becoming a culturally responsive teacher” (Chicola, 2007, p. 218).

Billings (2008) described a component of the CRT approach called the warm demander pedagogy. Teachers who use this style have proven success with students of color by using a combination of high standards, a disciplined environment, and caring behavior. These teachers rarely raise their voices yet command respect within their classrooms. Teachers are firm, fair, and convey expectations about class requirements, homework completion, and behavior. Students routinely rise up to meet the expectations set forth by the teacher.

When teachers fail to incorporate a CRT approach into the curriculum, students of color may feel alienated. Frye and Vogt (2010) described struggles that African American Gifted and Talented Students in Education (GATE) students face within the
First, there were disproportionate numbers of African Americans represented in the GATE program. Nationwide, African American students encompass about 16% of the United States population, and only 8.4% are in GATE programs. Upon entering in the GATE program, African American students have a difficult time relating to students who do not share the same culture they do during a pivotal identity building time. Oftentimes, there is a need of peer allegiance, and students of color may act as if they are not GATE students so that they can be in the same courses as their peers.

Teacher preparation programs have a responsibility to prepare prospective teachers with the competencies needed to promote academic success of minority students. Although Mini-Corps is not an official credentialing program, it may increase tutors’ cultural knowledge regarding the migrant population. African Americans need mentor teachers who will assist in building their identity as academic scholars. In addition, teacher preparation programs must carefully select teachers who can view the potential of each child regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or limited linguistic abilities. Fry and Vogt (2010) ascertained that, “After carefully selecting teacher candidates, the program must challenge the teacher candidates’ beliefs and provide them with knowledge about inequities and injustices that exist in our educational system” (p. 12).

Gregory, Morrison and Robbins (2008) examined 45 classroom-based CRT studies in doing a meta-analysis of the literature. The research affirmed that when looking at census data, the United States’ demographics of students are shifting into a wide-range of ethnicities. Because of this, educators must learn about diversity and teach
students in a culturally sensitive way. In speaking about Radford University the researchers mentioned that,

Although our teacher education programs, like others includes readings and assignments that give students opportunities to consider and appreciate the relevance of culturally relevant teaching, we consistently find that our teacher candidates lack the ability to translate theory to pedagogy in their field of experience (Gregory et al., 2008, p. 433).

A multiplicity of components within the CRT approach is required in effectively educating diverse learners. CRT is an approach that requires teachers to possess sociocultural consciousness and caring in maximizing the learning experience of all children. Sociocultural consciousness can be defined as exploring one’s own biases and viewpoints, as well as examining other’s viewpoints. CRT incorporates high academic standards into the curriculum and students are aware of the high expectations set forth. CRT closely monitors student progress to re-teach students concepts or to continue to the next lesson. Teachers usually found ways to activate the students’ prior knowledge before more advanced concepts were taught. This created a foundation for more advanced concepts to surface. The students believed that teachers were invested in successfully completing the standards (Gregory et al., 2008).

Furthermore, CRT created a learning environment that promotes a positive sense of community among the students. This is consistent with Mini-Corps as a provider of many community building opportunities. Teachers created nurturing and cooperative environments in which students could work in cooperative groups which led to building
their self-efficacy. A cooperative group setting lends itself to students wanting to do their best in working with their peers. Activities such as morning circle, sharing events, classmate interviews, assemblies, picnics, and field trips promoted a positive sense of community among the students (Gregory et al., 2008).

Teachers who interacted with students using their languages affirmed the students’ identity. Educators viewed the students’ home language as a vehicle for teaching English. “Teachers did this for purposes ranging from providing translation, helping students grasp English concepts better, modeling the strengths of code-switching (using words from both languages simultaneously), relating to students, or simply as a way to express themselves” (Gregory et al., 2008, p. 439). Various ethnic groups have numerous patterns for interaction, and teachers need to acknowledge that these patterns exist and are an integral component to the students’ learning. Teachers routinely used cognates that surface in both the English and Spanish languages. Cognates refer to words that nearly have the same spelling in each language. The cognates often sound the same, thus making them easier to decode.

Conclusion

Migrant students have many barriers to overcome if they are to escape the daily struggles that confront them within an educational setting. Education can be a vehicle to navigate from the poor conditions of the migrant lifestyle and into an enhancement of their quality of life. Jaramillo and Nunez (2009) discussed the long hours and the low wages of the migrant farmworkers. They mentioned that wages are between $11,000 to
$16,000 dollars per year and that migrant students tend to lack health services. These factors make educational attainment insurmountable as students may be in a survival mode instead of a state that is ready to learn. Arriving to school hungry, tired from working in the fields, or disengaged from learning are all factors that may contribute to a decline in achievement for migrant students.

Since the 1960s, numerous measures have been taken to increase the number of students using education as a means to exit the poor conditions imposed by the migrant lifestyle. Legislation to assist families from migrant backgrounds has been enacted, leading to a creation of the MEP. From the MEP, programs such as Mini-Corps have served a multiplicity of migrant families. Mini-Corps prepares prospective teachers to work with a disadvantaged population through professional development and a cohort model to learning. Finally, as the ethnic demographic shift incorporates more students of color into the classrooms, the importance for teachers to have knowledge pertaining to working with a wide-range of students is also imperative. Because of the ethnic demographic shift of students within the United States, teachers in credentialing programs must acquire instructional strategies and insights into working with a more diverse population by establishing a CRP. A teacher who uses the CRT approach may contribute to narrowing the achievement gap of students.

Infusing a CRP into the curriculum may increase achievement among students of color. Over the past 30 years the United States has been experiencing a demographic shift from mostly White students into a more diverse population. For this reason, strategies such as the development of a CRP become important to understand and
incorporate into an instructional setting. Teachers who have a CRP tend to understand how the current European structured system may be contributing to the low attrition rates of students of color. Programs such as BTSA and teacher credentialing programs are required to have a focus on working with a wide range of learners; however, the amount of exposure designed to work with a diverse population may not suffice for the necessities of the students within the classroom.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to identify the impact between participation in Mini-Corps and alumni’s professional career. First, the research question is what is the impact of participation in Mini-Corps on completion of an undergraduate degree, completion of a credentialing program, obtaining employment, on professional development, and on establishing a mentor/mentee relationship? This chapter describes the procedural components of the study.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used in the study and it is divided into eight sections that discuss the research design. This section is followed by the role of the researcher where the researcher’s role pertaining to the study is discussed. The role of the researcher is followed by the instrumentation, materials, data collection, and analysis sections in which the instruments that were used are thoroughly discussed. The following section deals with both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interviews and participant observations) approaches to data collection.

Research Design

The study gathered data in two phases by using a mixed methods approach that included a qualitative phenomenology and a quantitative Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient analysis. The qualitative aspect also included participant observation in which Mini-Corps tutors were observed during their Saturday workshops.
The first phase of the study consisted of a quantitative approach that entailed an online survey that was completed by 105 participants. In the second phase of the study, a qualitative approach was used. For this phase, five participants were asked in-depth questions to gain a deeper meaning of the data. In addition, the participant observations was also infused in the study as this section focused on tutors who provided insights into the daily operations of the Mini-Corps Program. The perceptions of the alumni that were interviewed, in combination with the undergraduates’ experiences provided more data for the researcher to analyze.

The mixed methods design lends itself to the triangulation of surveys, interviews, and participant observations. Creswell (2009) referred to the triangulation of data as combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches in answering the research questions. A mixed methods approach was selected because the increased amount of data collected allows for more insights to surface. Creswell (2009) further asserted that a mixed methods design facilitates a wider understanding because both quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined, or parts of each approach can be studied independently to obtain more insights into the phenomena that present it. Once all of the data is collected, Creswell (2009) defined the concurrent triangulation strategy as an approach where the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously and compares both results to determine similarities or differences that emerge.

Once the data from phases one and two was collected the researcher used the phenomenological approach in search of common themes. This approach was used
because as the researcher triangulated the data it could better be understood. Moreover, Moustakas (1994) described the phenomenological approach to research as an inquiry method where the researcher captures the experience of humans through narratives from the participants and identifies the phenomena that emerge. Understanding the experiences of the participants is important to conducting the study, and studying a small number of subjects through extensive engagement allows for the phenomena to emerge. The phenomenological approach to the study is concerned with participants’ experiences that surfaced through the use of coding techniques in search of common themes.

In addition, a phenomenological approach was selected because in using this method, the researcher selected various phenomena to study. Using phenomenology, the researcher interpreted the data that was collected from the alumni. Data analysis was conducted by carefully studying all of the responses and categorizing the responses into themes that emerged. Upon completion of phase one and two the data was triangulated. Data gathered from the literature review, the online surveys, the participant observations, and the interviews were compared with each other in search of similarities and differences.

Several methods were analyzed in deciding which approach would be the best fit for the study. Grounded theory, case study, and narrative approaches were analyzed as possible strategies of data collection. Creswell (2009) outlined the grounded theory approach as an inquiry where the researcher studies the action and then establishes the views of the participants. The grounded theory approach was not pursued because the data collected was not compared with other groups. The case study approach did not
suffice the data collection’s needs because with a case study, the organization is studied over a long period of time. In addition, the narrative approach was not used because the researcher was never a Mini-Corps participant. In using this approach, the views from one select group is compared with the views of the researcher; however, the researcher must remain neutral. Phenomenology was selected because the researcher believed that this approach would gather the data in a more succinct manner (Creswell, 2009).

The study began with the survey that consisted of 16 questions designed to gain insights into the impact that Mini-Corps has on various aspects of the alumni’s educational attainment, and careers. At the end of the survey, alumni were asked to write down their electronic mail address if they were willing to participate in the interview portion of the study. The survey questions were answered on a Likert scale of one to five. The Likert scale was selected because a Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient analysis of the data was implemented in determining if a low, medium, or high correlation existed. During this analysis, if a score of a one or two was identified, this was interpreted as a low correlation between the dependent and independent variables. In addition, if a score of a three was detected, then a medium correlation between the variables exists, and a score of a four or five indicated that a high correlation between the dependent and independent variables exists. In addition, five people who are Mini-Corps alumni were interviewed using purposeful criterion sampling methods and their responses were coded accordingly. Creswell (2009) described the purposeful criterion sampling methods as a selection of participants who will best provide responses...
to the study’s research question. A prerequisite to participating in this study is that the subjects must have participated in some aspect of Mini-Corps.

Role of Researcher

The researcher was the primary person collecting and analyzing the data. The researcher does not come from a migrant background, but does have insights into the subtleties of agricultural and dairy work. Because of few interactions with Mini-Corps, the researcher is confident that bias will not interfere with this study and the researcher can remain in a neutral stance when synthesizing the data. Furthermore, because of the implementation of the mixed methods approach and the triangulation of the data during the analysis, potential bias will be decreased. Triangulation allowed for the researcher to view more data in search for common threads and lowered the chance of bias.

Context Setting and Sample

Since 2001, there have been many tutors in the state of California. A prerequisite to participate in the study is that the alumni must have participated in some aspect of Mini-Corps as an undergraduate. Mini-Corps has been in existence for more than 40 years, and alumni were asked to specify the time frame of their involvement by selecting the year(s) of participation. The survey was designed to provide insights into the impact that the alumni’s participation in Mini-Corps had on their career.

Mini-Corps maintains some data available pertaining to the ethnicities of undergraduates who have participated in the program in California. From the alumni’s
responses, the year(s) in which they participated in the program, as well as their demographic data and other characteristics were revealed. Alumni with occupations such as teachers, school administrators, government workers (state or federal), district directors, and college professors participated in the study. The intent of the researcher was to gather participants who were in the realm of education.

Instrumentation, Materials, Data Collection, and Analysis

The survey, interview questions, and participant observations were designed to identify if a relationship between the independent variable (participation in the Mini-Corps), and the dependent variables (completion of an undergraduate degree, impact on completion of a credentialing program, impact on obtaining employment, impact on professional preparation, impact on establishing a mentor/mentee relationship) exists. A Likert scale was used in tabulation of the responses, and the interviews consisted of open-ended questions (Appendix C). The open-ended questions were designed so that alumni could describe their experiences in Mini-Corps pertaining to the variables discussed.

Quantitative Procedures (Phase One)

In phase one, the survey instrument sought to gain insights into the research question. In viewing other studies it was evident that the instruments that were used would not suffice for this study’s purposes. Due to this, the researcher created an instrument for data collection. The researcher studied Angel’s (2004) survey, but because the study only focused on teaching aspects, the survey would not have gathered
the necessary data pertaining to alumni that was required for this study. Because of the limited data that this survey could generate, it was decided that another survey instrument provided more comprehensive data.

Zoomerang (2011) is a software program that was designed to generate data through an online survey. The program organized the data according to the number of years involved in Mini-Corps, the year in which that participation occurred, the alum’s ethnicity, gender, occupation, age, and type of employment. The survey instrument (Appendix B) was constructed by first gathering information regarding the alumni’s characteristics.

This was followed by the 16-question survey that was designed to gain insights into the level of impact that certain aspects of Mini-Corps has on the Alumni’s’ career. Questions such as the duration of participation in Mini-Corps and the years of participation were asked. The survey questions were designed to extract data that provided insights regarding the impact that Mini-Corps has on obtaining a degree or certification, obtaining employment, impact on professional development, and mentorship were asked in gaining insights.

Once the data was collected an analysis ensued. From the online survey, 105 surveys were completed and used for this study. The independent variable (participation in the Mini-Corps program) and the dependent variables (the impact of completing an undergraduate degree, the impact of completing a credentialing program, the impact of obtaining employment, the impact of professional development, and the impact of establishing a mentor/mentee relationship) were analyzed in deciding if a low, medium,
or high correlation existed. After the data was entered into SPSS, the Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient determined the effect size. Green and Salkind (2008) described an effect size of .1 as a low correlation between variables, a .3 effect size as a medium correlation between the variables, and a .5 effect size as a strong correlation between variables. Green and Salkind (2008) referred to the Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient as:

Assessing the degree [to which] quantitative variables are linearly related in a sample. Each individual or case must have scores on two quantitative variables. The significance test for \( r \) evaluates whether there is a linear relationship between the two variables in the population. (p. 257)

By using the Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient, the variables of the study were compared to see if correlations arose from the data. Furthermore, prior to the dissemination of the survey instrument, it was piloted with 10 educators to verify that the questions are clear and concise. Alumni needed to allocate approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Qualitative Procedures (Phase Two)

The qualitative procedures that were used were semi-structured informal interviews of five Mini-Corps alumni, and participant observations of Mini-Corp’s tutors. By using a semi-structured format the researcher could use probing questions to allow for clarification of responses. The alumni responded to 11 open-ended questions that were designed to gain insights into the impact between participation in Mini-Corps and
completion of an undergraduate degree, completion of a credentialing program, obtaining employment, on professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship (Appendix C). The duration of the interviews lasted approximately an hour in length and permission was sought to audio record the interviews.

The interviews provided insights into the research question. The interviews were transcribed, and then coded in search of common themes. During the coding stage each interview question was written and beneath each question were all five responses. By juxtaposing all five responses, the researcher allowed for themes to emerge from the data. Once the researcher identified patterns, they were coded accordingly by color. For instance, if a pattern that was visible was teaching strategies then every time alumni discussed anything related to teaching strategies the statement was coded a certain color.

The participant observations were also part of phase two of the study. During this portion the researcher observed two state universities and one junior college. Each institution had a Mini-Corps coordinator who oversaw about 20 tutors. The researcher attended a Saturday workshop at each institution to gain additional insights with regards to the structure of the Mini-Corps Program. By overseeing participant observations, the researcher compared the alumni’s perceptions about Mini-Corps with the researcher’s observations of a Mini-Corps setting.

During the participant observations the researcher took field notes based on the observations made during the class session. Although the Saturday workshops were tailored to undergraduates, the research question pertaining to alumni remained the focal point of the inquiry. Afterwards, the researcher coded the field notes in search of
emergent themes. Once the field notes were coded, the researchers searched for common themes and then compared them to the research question.

Measures Taken for Ethical Protection of Participants and Participant Rights

A variety of steps were taken in the protection of the individuals and the organizations involved. In fact, the only identifiable name that was used was Mini-Corps because permission was given to use the name from the director of the program. The online survey did not have identifiable characteristics such as the alumni’s names. Also, the study was approved as minimal risk by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento. The alumni were required to acknowledge that they had read the survey and consented to participate in the study by selecting the “I agree” button prior to gaining access to the survey. The alumni were informed that their responses were going to be reported in combination with other responses. Alumni were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the participation in the study whenever they would like. If alumni withdrew from the study then their data would not be used as part of this study.

The online survey generated data pertaining to phase one of the study. The researcher gained access to the data by using a password and username to gain entry into the data files. The data was inputted into SPSS, a sophisticated data analysis software program, to assist the researcher in identifying trends that were collected from the alumni. Finally, at the end of the study, all transcripts and data collected were destroyed to ensure confidentiality.
Conclusion

Because of the aforementioned reasons, a mixed methods approach to data collection was used. This approach provided more of an in-depth analysis of the data so that the online survey, interviews, and participant observations were triangulated in search of common themes. Prior to the dissemination of the surveys, the instrument was piloted by 10 educators so that clarity of questions could be established, and the data collected from the study was entered into SPSS. A Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient was used in determining the level of relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The correlation was either low, medium, or high between the independent variable (participation in Mini-Corps) and the dependent variables (completion of an undergraduate degree, impact on completion of a credentialing program, impact on obtaining employment, impact on professional preparation, impact on establishing a mentor/mentee relationship). Finally, measures were taken in protecting the identities of all participating parties, including the identity of most of the organizations associated with the study except for the Mini-Corps Program. Again, the only identifiable organization was the Mini-Corps Program because permission was sought to use the organization’s name from the director of the program (Appendix I). Upon completion of the study all materials were destroyed to ensure confidentiality by all participants.
Pedro, Imelda, and their son Patricio, a fourth grader, are undocumented immigrants who live in a small farming community in Northern California. Pedro works in the olive orchards while Imelda tends to maintaining their modest apartment. Upon their arrival from Mexico, Imelda discovers that down the street from her house is an adult school where she can learn English. The mother becomes excited to learn English as she truly enjoys school. Soon she realizes that lurking in the shadows are border patrol agents, and they are arresting and deporting some of her friends. Imelda closes the blinds, locks the front door and refuses to step outside because of fear of being deported. When Patricio, their son, has back-to-school night, open house, and parent conferences at school, Pedro and Imelda refuse to attend because the family risks being captured and deported back to Mexico. Because of the perceived lack of parent participation, school officials may view the family as lacking participation in school, when in fact the family cares immensely about education. It seems unfair that a family must endure being a prisoner in their own home. In fact, for numerous migrant families this becomes a way of life.

Introduction

This study illuminated the relationship between participation in Mini-Corps as an undergraduate and alumni’s professional career. Although this study was not directly related to K-12 migrants, it did focus on Mini-Corps participants who completed an undergraduate degree and are former migrant students or children of farmworker parents. The study explored the impact that participation in the program had after graduating. The study’s design was a mixed methods approach in which three different forms of data collection methods were employed. First, the software program Zoomerang (2011) was used in phase one to collect data from an online survey, and an analysis of the data using SPSS ensued. In addition to the survey, participant observations of college institutions (two California state universities, and one community college) were conducted in phase
two of the data collection portion of the study. The third section included the interviews of five alumni of the Mini-Corps Program. By collecting data from three different sources, the findings are enriched because of the increased amount of data that was available to the researcher.

Data Collection

The study was segmented into two phases so that the data could be organized into sections. Data extracted from both phases allowed for the triangulation of the data in search of themes. The survey, interviews, and participant observations were part of the mixed methods approach to data collection. Once the data was disaggregated and coded to search for emergent themes, the results from phases one and two were triangulated and four main assertions arose. The research question guides the structure of the interview because the study attempts to identify the level of impact Mini-Corps has on obtaining a college degree, completing a credentialing program, acquiring employment, professional development, and on establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. By using a Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient in analyzing the survey data, the level of impact between the variables could be established as either a low, medium, or strong correlation.

In interpreting the output sheet (Appendix H) the value of Pearson’s $r$ refers to the effects size of the correlation. An effect size of .1 indicates a small correlation, .3 equates to a medium correlation, and .5 is indicative of a strong correlation. Furthermore, statistically significant means that the correlation is not coincidental and the probability of an accurate correlation is greater than 95%. The variable $p$ denotes the statistical
significance that was derived using SPSS. If the \( p \) value is between .01 and .05 then the correlation is considered to be statistically significant. For example, if \( p = .05 \) then this indicates that there is a 95% rate that this correlation did not occur by a coincidence.

Lastly, the variable \( N \) refers to the number of respondents of the sample. The correlation between two variables will be presented as \([ r =, n =, p = ]\).

Moreover, phase two of the data collection process includes responses from five Mini-Corps alumni, all of whom have employment that entails working with at-risk or underrepresented populations. Underrepresented groups typically have higher drop-out rates and may have a multitude of obstacles to overcome in experiencing a surge in educational attainment. The alumni agreed to participate in the interview portion of the study by entering their electronic mail addresses in the survey. The alumni were asked 11 open-ended questions designed to elicit information regarding their Mini-Corps experience as it relates to their current position. In addition, probes where used to permit the alumni to elaborate on their responses.

Based on information gathered from phases one and two, assertions were established as common threads. The first assertion dealt with the relationship between completion of an undergraduate degree and the apprenticeship environment that Mini-Corps provides. The second claim ascertained that Mini-Corps alumni felt confident entering the credentialing program or establishing professional behaviors because of the strategies that Mini-Corps fostered while the alumni were undergraduates. The third assertion dealt with developing the participant’s bicultural skills in working with a diverse population. The final assertion was that Mini-Corps established a viable
networking system that assisted participants with increasing their teaching competencies as well as gaining access to employment opportunities. It appears that Mini-Corps provides a special kind of socialization that may lead to educational success.

A Mixed Methodology

The data collection process consisted of three main components divided into two phases. A survey was given to 105 respondents in phase one. In order to qualify to complete the survey, the alumni must have had prior participation as a tutor within Mini-Corps. In combination with the online survey, participant observations and interviews were used to gather increased amounts of data. The interviews and participant observations were coded in search of common themes. Next, the survey, interviews, and participant observations were triangulated and four assertions arose. In the next section a description of the individuals who participated in the study is outlined.

Table 1
Survey Responses (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>5.3143</td>
<td>2.85992</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cred</td>
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<td>.87622</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
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<td>.78528</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>4.1714</td>
<td>1.01391</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>4.3048</td>
<td>.86740</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The description of the alumni’s’ answers are depicted in Table 4.1. On average, the alumni participated in the program for 5.3143 semesters. The remaining variables were answered on the Likert scale with a selection of one indicating a strongly disagree and a five as strongly agree. In addition a score of a two indicated disagree, a selection of a three indicated a neither agree nor disagree and ‘a’ if a four was chosen the indication was that the response was agree. The mean response for all of the variables was a score of at least a four so that indicates that most alumni agreed that Mini-Corps does have an impact on obtaining a degree, completing a credentialing program, obtaining a job, professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship.

Figure 15   Length of Participation of Tutors in Mini-Corps (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011)
As depicted above, the alumni were asked to select the number of semesters that they participated in Mini-Corps. Of the alumni, 78% participated in Mini-Corps between two to eight semesters. As illustrated in Figure 15, the outliers to the data set consisted of only one alum who participated in one semester and 11 who participated in ten semesters. The figure further illustrates that 18 alumni participated in four semesters of Mini-Corps; this was the most frequent selection. The range of participation in Mini-Corps was between two and eight semesters. This figure means that alumni generally participated for at least two years.

Figure 16: Summer Participation in Mini-Corps (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011).

How many summer sessions did you participate in the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate student?

- 0 semesters: 13%
- 1 semester: 16%
- 2 semesters: 23%
- 3 semesters: 17%
- 4 semesters: 16%
- 5 semesters: 11%
- 6 semesters: 2%
- 7 semesters: 0%
- 8 semesters: 1%
- 9 semesters: 0%
- 10 semesters: 1%
During the summer session of Mini-Corps, 96% of the alumni participated between zero and five summers. The remaining four percent appeared to be the outliers, from the remaining data. The most frequent response was two summer sessions with 23% of alumni responding as such. One selection of ten summers equates to ten years of participation in Mini-Corps during the summer session. This may indicate that one individual was an undergraduate for ten years or that he or she did not understand the question. Although there is a decrease in participation during the summer, when Mini-Corps first began it only operated during the summer months. For 10 years, Mini-Corps was only a summer enrichment program; however, the school year program that serves migrant students continuously began in 1974 (BCOE, 2006c).

Figure 17 Participation in the Outdoor Education Component of Mini-Corps (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011).
This question regarding the alumni’s participation in the outdoor education component of Mini-Corps revealed that 53% of alumni had not participated in Mini-Corps in this capacity. Nineteen percent of alumni participated for only one summer and 15% participated in only two summers. One selection of eight refers to an alum who participated in the outdoor education component for eight summers. This equates to eight years of participation as an undergraduate. The BCOE (2006c) described the outdoor portion as the following:

Teacher assistants serve as bilingual lead instructors and advisors to the K-12 migrant students. They receive training that prepares them to work with the migrant students who are actively engaged in learning about the natural world when they are at camp. The Mini-Corps teacher assistants learn to apply the five senses to the learning of science in an outdoor setting, exposing the migrant students to “live science” to enjoy and respect nature. The new students are also introduced to active learning via readings, listening, and discourse that allow them to do investigation in their everyday learning activities. Science in the outdoor education program is enjoyable and full of learning opportunities. Migrant students are also provided with diverse learning opportunities such as ropes courses, overnights, survival, wilderness, leadership development, nature walks, and hikes. (p. 2)

Some of the topics covered are the water cycle, the ecosystem, and the human impact on nature. These subjects are integrated with reading, math, and writing as a goal is to expand students’ vocabulary and activate their prior knowledge. Program
evaluations indicated that 84.55% of the participants in the outdoor education program consisted of first time summer participants. For many K-12 migrants, this was their first experience participating in a summer camp. This is important because oftentimes students from a migrant background may not be exposed to enrichment opportunities (CitySpan Technologies, 2011).

Figure 18  Mini-Corps Tutors’ Participation in the Puppetry Program (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011)

The puppetry component strives to teach students about the making positive choices. Mini-Corps students develop skits using puppets to send a positive message about the importance of being drug, alcohol, and smoke free. The skits include a message about the strong peer pressures that students can experience. Puppets stress the importance of both promoting a healthy lifestyle and increasing his or her self-esteem.
The puppet performances are usually conducted during the summer months as an enrichment opportunity for students (BCOE, 2006c). Because the puppetry program takes place during the summer months, many undergraduates may not be employed as tutors because they may have traveled back to their hometown. The survey indicates that 88% of alumni did not participate in the puppetry segment of Mini-Corps. CitySpan Technologies (2011) elaborated that the puppets are used to teach the important aspects vital to the development of positive citizens. Nutrition and building the students’ self-esteem are focal points of the presentations. Oftentimes, the puppets may interact with the audiences in making important decisions especially with issues of peer pressure.

Most of the alumni did not participate in the puppetry program. Puppets are used in primary classrooms and are a teaching strategy when working with small children. This aspect of Mini-Corps is important to conceptualize because of the interaction that exists among the alumni. First, in preparation of the performances and rehearsals alumni may interact with each other for long periods of time, creating an atmosphere where a mentor/mentee relationship could arise. Although most alumni did not participate in this capacity because it occurred during the summer months, it may provide an avenue for establishing a mentor/mentee relationship.
The majority of the alumni selected Hispanic, Latino, Mexican American, or Mexican as his or her ethnic background. In terms of ethnicity, 48% of the alumni indicated that their racial identification was Hispanic or Latino. Thirty-four percent selected Mexican American, and 17% identified themselves as Mexican. One percent of the alumni selected Hmong. There were no alumni who were from African American, Native American, Asian American, Middle Eastern, or Punjabi descent. This is significant because 98% of migrants are from the Hispanic subgroups. Because most students in Mini-Corps are Hispanic the majority of the tutors are also Hispanics. In doing this the migrants may have role-models and a mentor/mentee relationship may thrive between the two migrants.
The alumni were also asked to select their gender. When the alumni responses were disaggregated by gender, 68% selected female and 32% selected male. This indicated that more than twice as many females participated in the study. In contextualizing the respondents to the greater population, Oda (n. d.) stipulated that nationwide out of 3,000,000 educators only 21% are male. In addition, at the elementary level only nine percent of all elementary teachers are male. It seems that a higher percentage of the males completed the survey than the national average of male educators.
Figure 21   Tutors’ Participation in Mini-Corps (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011)

Mini-Corps alumni participated throughout various years. The alumni indicated that they had participated in the program between 1971 and 2011. Seventy-five percent of the alumni respondents participated in Mini-Corps between 1991 and 2005. The largest selection was 31%, who participated between 1996 and 2000.
Ninety-six percent of the alumni who completed the survey indicated that his or her occupation was related to education. In terms of employment, 43% of the alumni identified themselves as a kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers. Only four percent said that their job was not related to education. Thirty-five percent of the alumni selected “other” as their occupation was not listed as a possible answer choice. Even though this survey question asked for their current occupation it may be possible that prior to their current occupation he or she was in a teaching related field. A selection that was available was that my job is not related to education. Therefore, it may be concluded that the 34% refers to an occupation that is related to education yet it was not listed as a possible selection. The following occupations of professor at a community college, administrator of a community college, assistant superintendent, administrator of a
university, professor at a university, and preschool teacher were each one percent of alumni. The data concludes that most of the alumni who completed the survey were teachers. Because Mini-Corps’ goal is to build a pool of bicultural and biliterate teachers, this question was important as it gave insights into the career choice of alumni.

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews were incorporated in the qualitative portion of the study. The alumni who were selected for the interview have occupations where they work with at-risk students. Four of the alumni interviewees are female and one is a male. The four females are elementary school teachers and one male is a workforce development officer who assists foster youth into the workplace arena. All of the individuals interviewed were in their 30s and all had chosen to work with at-risk populations. More specifically, two of the teachers work at the kindergarten level and the remaining two teach first grade. All five alumni who were interviewed are of Hispanic origin and former migrant students.

First the interviews were audio recorded and then they were transcribed in search of common themes. The themes generated from coding the responses included that the alumni had a positive experience; they developed their teaching strategies while he or she was an undergraduate at a university, mentorship was established, and the alumni had experienced discrimination because of their migrant lifestyle. The discrimination usually came from individuals who viewed themselves as superior to migrants.
In addition to the interviews, the participant observations were conducted at educational institutions in California. Two state universities and one community college were part of the qualitative portion of this research study. The participant observations provided insights into the data derived from the survey, as well as from the responses of the interviews. The observations gave an opportunity to experience Mini-Corps during the Saturday workshops. Each institution consisted of one coordinator whose responsibilities included the planning and development of 20 to 25 tutors. The tutors are partnered with current migrant students and work directly in the home and school environment.

First, field notes provided a multitude of insights into the Mini-Corps experience. From writing field notes at all three universities, the field notes were coded in search of common themes. Networking and the development of teaching strategies were two themes that manifested throughout the Mini-Corps Program. Tutors were exposed to a wide-range of teaching strategies as he or she develops as an educator.

Conducting the survey, interviews, and participant observations provided many insights on the impact that Mini-Corps participation has on preparation for teaching and a career in education. First, all of the alumni spoke positively of the program and how it assisted in their development as educators. Networking, establishing a CRP and the early development of educators appear to be integral components of the program. Based on triangulation of the data, four assertions arose as emergent themes. These assertions are discussed in depth in Chapter Five.
Analysis of Data

The survey consisted of 16 questions designed to gain insights into the mechanisms of Mini-Corps. In analyzing the data it is important that the research question remains at the center of the inquiry. The research question is: what is the impact of participation in Mini-Corps on completion of an undergraduate degree, completion of a credentialing program, obtaining employment, professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship? The design of the survey aimed to develop insights into Mini-Corps in relation to the research question of the study. From triangulation of the data, assertions were derived. A salient finding from the survey was that Mini-Corps has a medium correlation ($r = .25$) on completion of an undergraduate degree. The interviews and participant observations described the various components of the program that assisted alumni in graduating. Networking, professional development, and understanding the K-12 students’ environment are all factors that may influence educational attrition rates. The apprenticeship environment promotes the situated learning theory that was the theoretical framework of the study.

The apprenticeship environment is consistent with the situated learning theory. This theory believes that learning occurs best when participants are placed in an actual setting. In this case the setting refers to a classroom environment in which students may apply their newly learned strategies (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As a result of being in the atmosphere of teaching, the tutors’ confidence may rise and the increased confidence may lead to admittance into a credentialing program or obtaining a job. Tutors may
become knowledgeable about the challenges that at-risk youth, primarily migrants, are confronted with because of experiences in their personal lives and in Mini-Corps.

Furthermore, once a tutor graduates he or she tends to complete a credentialing program. The survey, interviews, and participant observations indicated that Mini-Corps may have had an influence on completing a credentialing program. Although an influence may exist, some alumni believed that by the time they enrolled in a credentialing program they already were determined to complete the program and pursue a teaching profession. Although this may have been the case, the networking that was established during Mini-Corps was available throughout graduate programs and their professional years. The correlation coefficient of these two variables is $r = .399$. This indicates that a high correlation exists between both variables. In addition, the correlation is statistically significant as $p <1$, and the number of participants is $N= 150$. Although the survey data could not establish a direct relationship between participation in Mini-Corps and completion on a credentialing program, an indirect correlation could be inferred. Because Mini-Corps does have a medium correlation to obtaining an undergraduate degree and the undergraduate degree has a high correlation to completion of a credentialing program, it may be suggested that Mini-Corps has an indirect influence on completion of a credential.

In addition to the survey results above, the interviews indicated that by the time the tutors entered a credentialing program they were certain that teaching was the correct career path. Question eight asked, “Do you feel that participation in the Mini-Corps Program influenced your decision to pursue a teaching credential? If so, please
The alumni stated that participation in Mini-Corps had a profound impact on their decision to pursue a teaching credential. One alum remarked that,

Because of Mini-Corps, I got to know some of the staff. The professors were going to be the [same] ones for the teaching credentials. I felt more comfortable applying to that credentialing program than I did applying to the others, so in a way it would kind of like just seem like I was moving along. It didn’t seem like a big transition from graduating to getting into a credential program. The work was a lot in the program but I felt that I had been trained already.

The alum also ascertained,

Working in the classrooms with the migrant students, and seeing the necessity you know of the role models helping the students was amazing. Spanish speaking persons were helping these Spanish speaking students learn English; that made me want even more to be a teacher, so Mini-Corps clarified for me what my goal was.

The participant observations coincided with alumni’s remarks regarding the professors of the credentialing program. During one of the observations at a university, the graduate coordinator whose responsibilities included overseeing the credentialing program walked into the room and introduced herself to the Mini-Corps tutors. During her introduction she mentioned how she recently was promoted and looked forward to working with the tutors in the credentialing phase of their professional growth. This was a direct example of networking that occurs throughout the Mini-Corps Program.
From the survey, interviews, and participant observations it appears that participation in Mini-Corps has a strong impact on the decision to pursue a teaching credential. First, by involvement as a tutor, participants learned the intricacies associated with a teaching career. Some educators already knew they wanted to pursue a teaching credential and their beliefs were solidified by their involvement in Mini-Corps, whereas others changed their major to liberal studies during the time they were undergraduates. Mini-Corps had a major influence on the alumni’s decision to enter the teaching realm.

In summary, completion of an undergraduate degree has a strong impact \((r = .39)\) on completing a credentialing program. Once in the program, the prospective teachers were certain that they had made the correct decision to pursue a teaching profession because of the Mini-Corps Program. This experience included an apprenticeship environment that gave the tutors a firsthand view into the teaching realm. During the Saturday workshops, tutors were introduced to personnel such as the graduate coordinator of the university. From her welcoming introduction, the students seemed to envision themselves applying to the credentialing program in pursuit of an educational career.

Furthermore, exposure into the teaching field as undergraduates may have clarified for the tutors their decision to pursue a teaching credential. Mini-Corps provides the tutors an apprenticeship environment in which they may have spent up to five years working with teachers and learning the intricacies of the teaching field. In addition, the time allocated to working at the migrant camps and experiencing the deplorable conditions that migrant children are exposed to may have reinforced their decision to pursue a teaching credential. It is evident that there is a strong correlation between these
two variables as tutors had vast knowledge regarding teaching prior to enrollment in a credentialing program.

Another relationship that surfaced was that completing an undergraduate degree has an impact on professional development. First, the survey data indicated that obtaining a college degree had a strong impact \( (r = .48) \) on professional development. The findings revealed that the values were statistically significant as \([r = .48, p < 1, n = 105]\). The survey also established that there may not be a direct correlation between participation in Mini-Corps and professional development, but an indirect relationship may exist.

Indirectly, participation in Mini-Corps has a medium correlation to obtaining an undergraduate degree. Completing an undergraduate degree had a strong correlation to professional development. For this reason, it may be suggestive that Mini-Corps may be indirectly related to professional development. The data collected from the interviews and the participant observations describe the instances of professional development that occurs in Mini-Corps.

Phase two indicated that tutors are routinely exposed to professional development strategies designed to increase their knowledge regarding working with a diverse group of students. The professional development was both formal and informal. Formally, data gathered from the interviews ascertained that the workshops and the trainings were designed to enhance the tutors’ skills to work with a diverse population. Alumni discussed the Saturday workshops where they explored instructional strategies. One alum commented,
Well, all of the workshops helped me a lot. I developed my professional binder, they helped me write a lesson plan and they showed me how to write a cover letter and resume. They even taught us how to fill out a job application when you are going to apply for a teacher position.

Some training was held in distant cities where room and board was provided to the tutors. The alumni stated how impressed they were with the program and how they felt like Mini-Corps cared about their development as an educator. Another alum remembered a training and remarked, “They took us to Fresno for a three day in-service. For me being away from home and being in a new environment where they were giving me support, giving me ideas, giving me experiences that I didn’t have before was great.”

The alumni also revealed that trainings were a routine part of Mini-Corps. The Saturday workshops were important as many tutors learned from the coordinator and from each other. Workshops focused on lesson design and implementation, as well as on working with families and ELD populations. An alum stated, “The three day workshops were the most helpful. They were held at the university for three days. They taught us how to get involved with the community, how to help with FAFSA, or issues that we were dealing with throughout the year.”

The participant observations also affirmed the professional development discussed above. The program coordinator was always aware of the educational environment, and noticed that an ELD expert was presenting at a multicultural conference held on the campus, and assured that the Mini-Corps tutors were in attendance. This direct form of professional development enriched the students as their
teaching strategies evolved. Furthermore, the Saturday workshops revealed the tutors learning with regard to instructional strategies, expanding their teaching vocabulary, and working to increase their knowledge about the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). From an informal perspective, alumni stated how they also grew professionally based on learning from each other. An alum remarked,

They were giving me workshops and ideas, and we were like thirty-five in that group, and thank you to the thirty-five students that were members of the Mini-Corps Program at that time; we were very close together, so we developed really good relationships and we supported each other. gave ideas to each other on how to continue working with the migrant students in the classrooms.

In addition to the data gathered from the survey, interviews, and participant observations, the situated learning theory focuses on the applicability of real life situations. This theory believes that learning is created through actions, and it is by doing that an individual optimizes the learning experience. Because Mini-Corps is designed in an apprenticeship environment, undergraduates learn teaching by working in the educational arena long before they are in a teaching assignment. Brown et al. (1989) stated that “Cognitive apprenticeship supports learning in a domain by enabling students to acquire, develop, and use cognitive tools in authentic domain activity. Learning both outside and inside school advances through collaborative social interaction and social construction of knowledge” (p. 1). Because of the design of Mini-Corps, professional development opportunities were prevalent throughout various stages of Mini-Corps and
tutors were placed in a work environment in which newly learned strategies could be practiced.

Based on the triangulation of the data, Mini-Corps does impact professional development. Although the survey neglected to find a statistical significant result, the interviewees and participant observations provided rich insights pertaining to professional development that occurs within the scope of Mini-Corps. First, a strong correlation \( r = .48 \) between obtaining a degree and professional development exists. Second, a medium relationship \( r = .253 \) exists between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining an undergraduate degree. This suggests that Mini-Corps has an indirect impact on professional development. The situated learning theory ascertains that professional development transpires throughout the apprenticeship environment (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Tutors are consistently exposed to teaching strategies while participating in Mini-Corps. Finally, the networking system that has been cultivated for many years may provide employment opportunities for members of Mini-Corps, as well as serve as a resource for future teachers.

Conclusion

Mini-Corps has a positive impact in developing a workforce that understands the academic needs of migrant students. Through collaborative partnerships, Mini-Corps participants develop an understanding of bilingual and bicultural education, and because of this understanding Mini-Corps participants develop a passion in working with some of the neediest students in California. Because of the insights developed pertaining to
migrants’ environment, tutors may strive to enhance the quality of life of migrant students though education. Education may be a vehicle for tutors to escape the difficult migrant lifestyle, and because of this experience tutors may want to ensure that other migrants use education as a means to improve their quality of life. Mini-Corps’ tutors may be viewed as leaders throughout the migrant community, and as a result of being in a leadership role Mini-Corps participants may bring positive change to a greater number of individuals. Although the original hypothesis was feasible, data from the study had additional revelations.

Mini-Corps influenced the alumni’s decision to complete an undergraduate degree, as well as on obtaining a teaching credential, employment, professional preparation, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. There is a networking system present throughout various aspects of the program designed to enhance the quality of life through educational attainment of both current and former migrant students. In addition, the development of an understanding of the struggles that migrant families are confronted with emerges because of the exposure to the difficult environment of migrants. The data seems to indicate a positive correlation between working as a tutor and his or her current employment practices. By networking, themes such as professional development, mentorship, the program’s components, and the impact on obtaining an undergraduate degree surfaced.

Phase two, which consisted of interviews and participant observations, provided a foundation for the researcher to understand the operations of Mini-Corps. The Saturday workshops led by the coordinator allowed for participants to debrief and discuss their key
findings throughout the workweek. Also, the assignments appeared to foster the teaching vernacular in increasing the students’ vocabulary. The tutors were exposed to numerous instances that allowed them to grow as educators. Alumni discussed the confidence that they felt when they were seeking employment. Observations at higher educational institutions reiterated that the tutors were entrenched in the teaching profession for a number of years prior to being employed as a teacher. This was evidenced by the activities and group dynamics present at all of the institutions that participated in the study. Participants routinely discussed best practices and debriefed during the Saturday workshops. The coordinator was cognizant of all participants’ progress with regard to the K-12 students’ goals, and offered advice pertaining to the education of migrant students.
Because we are migrant people, a lot of people may judge us like we are poor, that we don’t have experiences or backgrounds or certain things. I say we are being misjudged because I’m a migrant. I grew up as a migrant child; we are not empty shells. –Mini-Corps Alum

Some of the early struggles of migrant families were captured by this study. During the 1960s, news reporters discovered the deplorable conditions that migrants must endure for survival. First, migrants’ working and living conditions are substandard, and typically they earn a salary below the poverty threshold which drastically lowers opportunities for economic advancements. For many migrants, survival is the main concern and the cycle of poverty perpetuates from one generation to the next. The United States government took action by passing legislation aimed at assisting first with health concerns and improvement of education. However, in 2011, migrant students are not achieving at the same rates as their White counterparts.

The rise of migrants’ achievement may have begun with the policies and regulations that were designed to increase the quality of life through education for migrant families. The literature seems to indicate that migrants face social and emotional difficulties arising from the transiency of their work and low wage earnings. Mini-Corps’ goals include creating a support system for migrant students pertaining to education, with a secondary goal of increasing the pool of biliterate and bicultural teachers throughout
California. In addition, the achievement gap and its implications on society (high prison rates, higher unemployment rates, and lower wage earnings) are discussed.

When student achievement is disaggregated by ethnic groups, Hispanics tend to be one of the lowest performing groups. Migrant students are not an independent subgroup as measured by the NCLB Act; therefore, organizations such as CitySpan (2011) have compiled achievement data for migrant students through contracts with the CDE. The achievement trends compiled by CitySpan (2011) indicated that while the achievement of migrant students is on the rise, migrants are not achieving at the same rates as their White counterparts. To increase achievement in students of color, researchers suggested that a CRT approach to teaching is important to infuse into the curriculum (Billings, 2008; Brown et al., 2011; Hadaway & Flores, 1987; Irvine, 2003; Jones & Fuller, 2003; Sleeter, 2008).

This study focused on Mini-Corps and the impact that it has on its alumni. In gathering data, a mixed methods approach to collecting research benefited the study because of the increased amounts of data that could be triangulated. Phase one entailed the quantitative approach in which an online survey collected data from Mini-Corps alumni. One hundred five alumni of Mini-Corps completed the survey and provided many insights into the Mini-Corps experience. Next, a Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient was implemented using the SPSS analysis software as correlations between the dependent and independent variables surfaced. Low, medium, or high correlations arose between the variables. In addition to this, phase two of the data collection process consisted of a qualitative approach. In this phase, alumni interviews
combined with participant observation were completed. In hindsight, using this type of approach proved to be effective because in phase one correlations between the variables could be established. The qualitative aspects of the study highlighted and greatly assisted in the interpretation of the correlation. Phase two provided an explanation of the correlations that were present.

From the data that was collected, four assertions were made regarding Mini-Corps. The assertions were derived from coding the data in search of common themes. The findings suggested that Mini-Corps assisted its alumni with completion of a college degree, establishing a repertoire of teaching strategies, developing their biculturalism, and expanding their networking of contacts. Evidence from coding the data suggested that the assertions discussed in chapter four are vital to Mini-Corps’ daily operations.

Interpretation of Findings

The study aimed to gain insights into the level of impact that participation in Mini-Corps has on alumni’s completion of an undergraduate degree and post graduate experience. The aspects of the alumni’s professional career that were studied were: the level of impact of completing an undergraduate degree, the impact of completing a credentialing program, the impact of obtaining employment, the impact of professional development, and the impact of establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. The results of the survey indicated that a medium impact existed between participation in Mini-Corps and completion of a college degree. Table 2 below illustrates the correlation.
Table 2

Correlation Between Mini-Corps and Undergraduate Degree (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011)

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<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
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<td>Participation in Mini-Corps and Completion of an Undergraduate Degree</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>.009</td>
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The survey found a medium correlation between participation in Mini-Corps and completing an undergraduate degree. In regard to the remaining variables, obtaining employment ($r = .411$), establishing a mentor/mentee relationship ($r = .323$), and impact on professional development ($r = .487$) (Appendix H). It appears that graduating from the university has major implications pertaining to the remaining variables. It is suggested that these variables are impacted by the assistance Mini-Corps provides to tutors in the graduation process and in obtaining an undergraduate degree. In completing an undergraduate degree, obtaining a credential, acquiring employment, establishing a mentor/mentee relationship, and professional development all are impacted.

The survey revealed data that indicated the aforementioned correlations; however, triangulating the survey results with the interviews and the participant observations indicated four main assertions. Similarities arose from the analytical portion of the study that first established an assertion, but then the assertion was enriched by phase two of the study. Phase two of the study described why the relationships exist.
ASSERTION 1

The Mini-Corps Program has a multi-pronged approach that includes an apprenticeship environment and assists in completion of an undergraduate degree. Mini-Corps’ influence in degree attainment was evidenced during the triangulation of phases one and two of the data collection process. The survey affirmed that a medium correlation existed between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining an undergraduate degree (Table 2). In addition, insights from the interviewees revealed that oftentimes, Mini-Corps staff offers guidance outside of their job responsibilities. For instance, alumni stated that coordinators assisted them with course homework. Tutors received direct assistance with homework from the coordinator. In addition, the participant observations ascertained that the cohort model to learning provides an environment for Mini-Corps staff to assist and support tutors in developing into effective teachers.

Mini-Corps has a structure that consists of networking, professional development, and cultural literacy, therefore contributing to the development of bicultural and biliterate teachers in California. Tutors who are former migrants assist in promoting the educational success of current K-12 migrants. Moreover, the opportunity of Mini-Corps’ tutors to learn teaching strategies from workshops and have the structure to infuse those strategies directly into a classroom setting may benefit the prospective teacher. Mini-Corps’ tutors are exposed to workshops or training opportunities where they can view the implementation of the newly learned strategies at their respective school sites. For instance, because tutors are assigned to a classroom setting they may collaborate...
alongside the classroom teacher and see the strategies being implemented. A tutor may receive training pertaining to the development of reading and upon entering the classroom setting the material may be reinforced by viewing the newly learned strategies firsthand. This type of structure is indicative of the situational learning theory that states that learning may flourish when placed in the environment (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In addition to the survey data above, the interviews of Mini-Corps alumni affirmed that participation in the program influences completion of an undergraduate degree. One interview question asked, “Has the Mini-Corps Program helped you in obtaining your degree(s)? If so, how has it helped you?” All alumni indicated that Mini-Corps had an enormous impact on them to complete a college degree. The impact that the program had can be illustrated using the next example. An alumna stated that she arrived from Mexico when she was 18. Because of this, she had not received instruction in English and attended school in Mexico where she received Spanish instruction. Upon entering high school in the United States, it appeared that she had to overcome two challenges: learning English and the subject material that was taught. Although these were enormous challenges, the interviewee stated that upon successful completion of community college she transferred to a state university. At the university, the Mini-Corps coordinator tutored her by helping her with her homework, assisting with course readings, and providing extra support with her studies. It appears that the Mini-Corps coordinator directly assisted the tutor in completing the assigned homework. Based on the data collected it seems that the tutors and Mini-Corps staff members help each other succeed; this may be exactly what is needed in narrowing the achievement gap.
The Kaiser Family Foundation (2004) discovered that students’ attitudes may have hindered progress in high school for Latino students. The alumna above did not experience a negative attitude as she sought help with Mini-Corps faculty. In fact, many Latinos believed that they were not treated fairly at school. Latino students thought that teachers could not bridge the cultural divides within their classrooms (Gandara, 2008). It appears that the alumna refuted the findings made by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2004) and Gandara (2008) as the Mini-Corps system of former migrants assisting migrants may have led to the educational success of the alumna. Perhaps if there was a system in place in high school similar to Mini-Corps, graduation rates for disadvantaged children may increase.

In addition to the testimony above, some alumni indicated that they already knew that they wanted to be a teacher, and participation in Mini-Corps reiterated that belief. The alumni alluded that their original plan was to pursue other career pathways. One alum stated, “I wanted to go to law school. I wanted to be a lawyer because it is so prestigious, and I went through the UC system. The more I thought about it, it was in my heart. I enjoyed teaching.” After participating in Mini-Corps, some interviewees changed their major to teaching because of the positive impact they felt they could make with migrants. Another alum also remarked, “I changed my mind when I began working for Mini-Corps. I was thinking about engineering, but then I changed my major to liberal studies.” Based on discussions with the alumni, it was evident that Mini-Corps’ secondary goal of increasing the level of bicultural educators was effective, because as learned from the interview some educators changed the trajectory of their careers due to
experiences acquired in the Mini-Corps Program. Also, because of the environment that the tutors were assigned to, their desire to complete their degree may have increased. The tutors experienced the challenges that the migrant students encountered, and this may have developed a passion for improving the educational success for migrants.

During the Saturday workshops, there appeared to be a strong networking system between the tutors and the coordinator. The tutors asked the coordinator for advice as they continuously strove to increase their instructional strategies. The institutions provided an atmosphere that promoted learning from each other’s experiences while working in the field. Similar to numerous teacher credentialing programs, the cohort model created an atmosphere for learning to be interchangeable from one tutor to the next. This is significant because Mini-Corps is also designed in a cohort model where the tutors progress through the program together while providing a sense of support for each other. By using this approach, the tutors may support each other and discuss each other’s experiences. Desai et al. (2010) described the cohort model to learning, where students progress from one class to the next and learn from each other as well as from the staff. The cohort model lends itself to interaction among supervisors, teachers, faculty, community members, and creates a network of individuals who are an integral part of the learning process. The participant observations reiterated the Desai et al. (2010) statement regarding the functions of the cohort model.

Furthermore, the interviewees all discussed the importance of working in the migrants’ environment and how those experiences have impacted their educational path. An interview question asked, “Do you believe that your career has been enhanced
because of your involvement in the Mini-Corps Program? If so, please describe how your career has been enhanced.” The alumni stated that they believed participation in Mini-Corps definitely had an impact on their career. They felt better prepared to obtain employment because they had been in an educational setting prior to being interviewed. The alumni interviewed stated feeling prepared for their teaching assignment even before they began working. This feeling of confidence was because of preparedness that may have manifested itself during employment interviews or throughout the credentialing program. The workshops were a major factor in the development of these educators.

One alum remarked,

They were giving me workshops, and ideas, and we were like thirty-five in that group, and thank you to the thirty-five students that were members of the Mini-Corps Program at that time; we were very close together, so we developed really good relationships and we supported each other, gave ideas to each other on how to continue working with the migrant students in the classrooms.

The alum thanked cohort members during his or her interview because of the support that was provided.

The cohort model to learning is vital for exchanging ideas about the best methods to assist migrants in promoting achievement. A barrier to learning that may be present is the difficult migrant lifestyle by which migrants are surrounded. The environment that tutors directly work in may reveal the realities of a harsh migrant lifestyle. The insights developed by the tutors regarding the challenges that migrant students confront may have in essence created a passion for the tutors’ development as an educator. From the
interviews, the alumni recalled that the workshops and the trainings were designed to enhance skills to work with a diverse population. Alumni discussed the Saturday workshops where they explored instructional strategies in working with migrant students. The alumni also elaborated that the workshops were sometimes held in other cities where room and board was provided to the tutors. The alumni added how impressed they were with the program and how they felt like Mini-Corps really cared about their development as an educator. An alum described it as such: “They took us to Fresno for a three day in-service. For me, being away from home in a new environment where they were giving me support, giving me ideas, giving me experiences that I didn’t have before was great.”

Many tutors are former migrant students and may have been raised in an environment that has limited economic resources. For some alumni, this was the first time in which a conference or training required hotels and traveling expenses.

An impact exists between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining a college degree. The survey data suggested that there was a medium correlation between Mini-Corps and completion of an undergraduate degree. The correlation between these two variables is $r = .25$, $n = 105$, $p = .009$. The relationship is statistically significant as $p < .01$. Pearson’s ($r=.25$) suggests that there is a correlation of medium strength between both of these variables and the number of participants ($n = 105$). Furthermore, the survey indicated that obtaining a college degree did impact acquiring employment, professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship.

As per the interviews and survey data, the apprenticeship environment allowed for the development of teaching strategies. The tutors were observed at three institutions and
the development of teaching strategies were prominent topics of discussion in all three institutions. At the first state university students were placed in small groups and asked to collaborate. Each student selected a specific, measureable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound (SMART) goal so that learning could be measured. SMART is a process in which the tutors along with the coordinator establish goals for individual migrant student(s) depending on academic needs. First, the tutors selected a goal and assessments were given that indicated growth. For this activity, the tutors were in groups according to similar goals. Students discussed teaching strategies in small groups with each other that they have experienced in the classroom pertaining to multiplication facts and to enhance students’ spelling skills. Some tutors reported that their migrant students had already achieved the SMART goals that they had set at the beginning of the year. In this case the coordinator advised that a modification of the goal would be appropriate. It seems that working with at-risk students by setting goals may influence the tutors to graduate so that they may have a greater impact on exerting change throughout his or her community.

The development of teaching strategies also manifested itself during phase two. It appeared that the focus of the undergraduates was on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. The tutors’ assignment was to observe in a classroom and seek evidence that the teacher is implementing standards for the teaching profession. For example, a tutor discussed how the teacher used marbles to reinforce positive behavior that is indicative of keeping all students engaged in learning. More importantly, the tutors were given time in small groups to discuss their findings, and this structure
appeared to be empowering for the students as they routinely shared teaching strategies practiced by teachers in the field.

In ensuring that SMART goals are mastered, tutors must work together with the cooperating teacher and discuss the migrant students’ needs and then develop a plan of action to address those needs. For example, the standard that tutors select to implement must be measured both before and after receiving instruction, through assessments. First, the tutor strives to achieve his or her goal and reports back to the coordinator regarding the students’ progress. For instance, the tutor may report that his or her SMART goal is for the students to pronounce correctly or spell 20 high frequency words for their assigned grade level. The tutor teaches the concept and administers pre and post-examinations to demonstrate growth and progress in achieving this goal. Based on the outcomes from the examinations the tutor may continue working on the goal or if the goal is attained the tutor may consider changing the goal.

Participation in Mini-Corps promotes a multi-faceted systems approach that assists in the completion of a college degree. It appears that when former migrant students work with current migrant students and strive to achieve a goal together, the tutor may exert more energy into his or her studies so that he or she may have a greater impact. Tutors view teaching as having more of an impact into the migrant community than simply working as a tutor. Mini-Corps’ structure provides tutors with countless opportunities for learning to occur. Due to the fact that tutors routinely work in the migrant camps, an understanding of the obstacles that migrants are faced with may develop. In addition, the support system that is intact adds to tutors’ repertoire of
strategies, thus leading them to possibly become more bicultural and biliterate. Mini-Corps’ infrastructure allows for the development of teaching strategies between the tutors, coordinators, cooperating teachers, migrant youths, and senior staff.

ASSERTION 2

The undergraduate experience provides the foundation for Mini-Corps tutors to develop as teachers prior to graduating. When the tutors reach the credential program, there is an ethos of possessing a repertoire of practices with regard to teaching-related professional behaviors which assist in completing a credentialing program and obtaining employment.

Mini-Corps tutors become well equipped to handle the challenges associated with working with a diverse populace. Because the tutors understand the challenges of migrants, they may be better prepared for entering a credentialing program and ultimately may have more confidence with teaching. In addition, tutors may be more knowledgeable regarding interactions with migrant youth and parents than a student who has not had similar experiences. For example, the alumni mentioned the importance of learning how to write a lesson plan even before the credentialing program. Alumni further stated that Mini-Corps assisted in developing a professional binder, and how to write a cover letter and resume when seeking employment. Mini-Corps even assisted in filling out applications for teaching positions.

It appears that Mini-Corps enhanced alumni’s instructional strategies associated with working with migrants. For instance, the fourth question of the interview is, “What specific skills did participation in the Mini-Corps Program foster or help you develop?
How have these skills impacted your career?” The responses indicated that skills pertaining to understanding the struggles of migrants, interacting with parents, constructing a professional binder, best practices in working with students in the classroom, and reflecting on the tutors’ instructional practices were routinely practiced. The alumni stated that they became more of a parent advocate, and their skills pertaining to working with parents were honed in because of their involvement with Mini-Corps. One alum also remarked,

I learned how to talk to families, how to recruit more families, you know, or teach parents how to help their kids do their homework. It was a lot of workshops that helped me become a better participant of the program and deliver more to my kids in school.

The alum believed that Mini-Corps should be a certified credentialing program: “Like, you’re out there, you go and do the home visits, you talk to real people you know. You talk to abuelitas.”

From the responses it was clear that Mini-Corps facilitated communication with the families of migrant students. Chapter Two discussed migrant families and how they live in oppressed societies due to of fear of speaking up against injustices, or a lack of speaking English altogether. The fear of speaking up may be linked to their immigration status, and oftentimes going against injustices could mean taking away their only means of survival (NMSHCO, 2009). Because tutors are in direct contact with the migrant families in their home environments, and because tutors may have an understanding of the struggles of migrants, tutors provide educational services to the family as well.
Alumni mentioned that tutors teach the parents how to assist with completion of their children’s homework.

The participant observations also coincided with the data compiled from the interviews and the survey discussed above. The tutors’ confidence toward teaching may have led to success in the completion of a credentialing program as well as the development of professional behaviors. First, by comparing and studying all three institutions it was evident that students were exposed to training opportunities that assisted them in obtaining a job. The coordinators described the development of a portfolio and the relationship of this portfolio to future employment. It appeared that teaching strategies discussed enhanced the tutors’ knowledge pertaining to the teaching realm, consequently increasing their knowledge of the teaching field. This increased competence pertaining to teaching led to acquiring future employment. In addition, the coordinator modeled techniques that teachers routinely implement in the classroom such as random name-calling or establishing group norms.

Moreover, at the community college the Mini-Corps session had recently begun. It was apparent that the tutors along with the coordinator were conducting introductory lessons that were designed to lay the foundation for future learning to occur. This was evidenced by the icebreaker that entailed learning each other’s names and by the establishment of group norms. First, the icebreaker asked students to explore the meaning behind their name and to share nicknames that they may have. Similarly, to a classroom teacher, the coordinator established group norms by soliciting input from the entire class. Norms or rules are techniques used to guide behaviors so that learning may
be optimized. In addition, the coordinator used Popsicle sticks with students’ names written on each stick for random name calling. Although students did not actively discuss their experiences in working with a migrant populace, the coordinator did model teaching strategies for the tutors that may assist students when they enter the teaching field. Random name calling ensures that all students are called upon during a lesson. This strategy was one of several present during the participant observation period.

Furthermore, the undergraduates were studying the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. Having prior knowledge of the standards may help develop the tutors’ teaching skills before they are even admitted into a teacher credentialing program, thus increasing the future teachers’ marketability with regard to employment. During the Saturday class session, the tutors’ assignment was to become knowledgeable about the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), and observe a classroom teacher applying those standards within the classroom setting. The students were required to observe and identify the standards the teachers were using and which strategies were used for meeting the standards for the teaching profession. For example, a tutor stated that the teacher promoted class engagement by giving the class marbles and group points for positive behavior. Every time the class demonstrated a positive action, students were rewarded using a point system, or if it were a behavior demonstrated by the whole class then marbles were given to the students.

Teaching strategies may arise when tutors conduct home visits by developing an understanding for migrant culture. This form of learning may foster a CRT approach. Billings (2008) stated that the CRT approach is a teaching approach that may narrow the
achievement gap between students of color and the dominant group. The focus must transfer from educators viewing students based on their deficiencies (e.g., poverty, linguistic barriers) to one that views schools as failing to meet the needs of diverse students. Oftentimes, the students’ environment is blamed for lack of achievement in school. CRT is a pedagogical theory that believes culture is directly tied to various aspects of education.

Based on data compiled from the survey, the interviews, and the participant observations, it appears that the undergraduate experience makes the tutors better prepared to enter a credentialing program and infuses a multitude of instructional strategies. Tutors are routinely exposed to various teaching behaviors that promote learning among at-risk students. Also, the tutors may understand the challenges of migrants as well as develop practices best suited to teaching migrant students. Moreover, the program teaches prospective teachers how to conduct home visits that may lead to educating parents as well. Mini-Corps even assists in developing a professional binder, writing a cover letter, and creating a resume. The tutors are even exposed to the CSTP prior to entering a credentialing program. Analyzing the CSTP may provide an advantage to the undergraduates when they enter a credentialing program or obtain employment as a new teacher.

By the time tutors enter a credentialing program they may have already been highly trained. Mini-Corps tutors may already know how to be advocates of migrant families and students as well as understand the environment of the students. Acquiring insights into the home environment of migrants may prove to be pivotal in working with
an at-risk population. Tutors may have a vast repertoire of teaching strategies because of their involvement with the Mini-Corps Program. These developed strategies may give the tutor a sense of confidence during interviews and subsequently help them to obtain employment. Furthermore, the enhancement of teaching strategies may enable the teacher to be more effective during the delivery of lessons.

**ASSERTION 3**

Mini-Corps provides undergraduates with professional development opportunities leading to the development of a bicultural workforce.

Mini-Corps provides its tutors with opportunities to develop as teachers by exposing them to a wide-range of professional development. The program requires that tutors participate in 54 hours of professional development during an academic year. Some of the areas of focus include math, reading, writing, and instructional strategies. The strategies include writing the objective for the lesson, developing graphic organizers, infusing thinking maps, and incorporating ELD strategies. Because the strategies learned are subsequently used at the school site the tutors may have an opportunity to practice the newly learned material.

Data from phase one and two seems to indicate that tutors who participate in Mini-Corps may understand the struggles confronted by migrants, as many of them had lived a similar lifestyle. The survey, in conjunction with the interviews and participant observations, provided insights into the development of a bicultural and biliterate workforce. It appears that tutors who spend time in the migrant’s environment have
insights and an understanding for educating migrant students. This may be a reason why some remain working with an at-risk population.

Although the survey indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between participation in Mini-Corps and professional development, an indirect reference can be made. First, the survey data revealed that a medium ($r = .253$) impact between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining a college degree was present. In addition, a relationship between obtaining a college degree and professional development was significant. The correlation between these two variables is [$r = .48$, $n = 105$, $p = .000$]. This is statistically significant because $p < 1$. Because of these relationships, it may be suggested that Mini-Corps has an indirect impact on professional development. Phase two of the data collection process indicated that professional development is routinely practiced in Mini-Corps.

Furthermore, the data derived from the survey, alumni interviews, and participant observations agreed that Mini-Corps provides an environment that promotes awareness of the migrant culture. For instance, in the second question of the interviews given, alumni were asked to, “Describe your experience as an undergraduate related to participation in the Mini-Corps Program.” This question was aimed at gaining insights into the daily operations of Mini-Corps. Alumni enjoyed educating migrant students but were saddened at the deplorable conditions with which migrants were confronted. The Food Security Learning Center (2008) agreed with the remarks made by the alumni with regard to living in deplorable conditions. Trends among the migrant population indicate that
poor health conditions may be associated with the poor work and living conditions that migrants endure within the context of their environment.

The Food Security Learning Center (2008) publicized the following trends related to migrant families, and the alumni ascertained that these trends may be factual:

- Migrant families’ life expectancy is 49 years, compared to the national average of 73 years.
- The infant mortality rate among migrants is 25 percent higher than the national average.
- The miscarriage rate for female farmworkers is seven times the national average.
- The migrant death rate is 25 times higher than the national average for tuberculosis and other communicable diseases, and death from influenza and pneumonia is 20 percent higher.
- The migrant’s two most chronic conditions are diabetes and hypertension; both require continuous ongoing care.

Educators must understand the trends that affect migrant students if they are to bridge the achievement gap and decrease college attrition rates. Most of the migrant students in California are categorized in the Hispanic, low socioeconomic class, and ELL subgroups. The achievement gap demonstrates to educators that Hispanic students are not achieving at the same rates as their White counterparts. Gandara (2010) and Jehlen (2007) both agreed that Hispanics may be in an educational crisis and are in desperate need of intervention. Many Latinos are dropping out of high school and not obtaining a
bachelor’s degree at the same rates as other groups of students. Lack of financial resources tends to be a major contributor to the slow academic progress of Latino students. The average yearly income for African American and Hispanic families is nearly half that of White families.

It is important for educators to understand the challenges and current trends that migrants endure daily. In addition to the obstacles discussed above, migrants may also face negative social stereotypes. Gay (2001) discussed that numerous teacher preparation programs failed to adequately prepare teachers to teach diverse student populations such as migrant students. Teachers must gain sufficient knowledge about the students’ traditions, values, and societal perceptions to enhance the educational experience of families. Mini-Corps appears to effectively prepare teachers to work with diverse populations.

An alum commented,

I was aware of the migrant communities because my dad worked in the fields, so knowing that kind of background kind of, you know, made me feel that I was serving my community, my family, and it also made me feel reflective of where I came from.

Another alum also remarked on the societal perceptions encountered:

I’m American but sometimes I feel the prejudice of the White descendants, who, because of my color or the way I speak would judge me and make me feel that I am not educated, and I have many of those experiences but I just feel that migrant students need that type of encouragement.
Yet another also reiterated this sentiment regarding prejudice by stating,

> Because we are migrant people, a lot of people may judge us like we are poor, that we don’t have experiences, or backgrounds or certain things. I say we are being misjudged because I’m a migrant. I grew up as a migrant child; we are not empty shells.

The alumni demonstrated that they understood the struggles confronted by migrant students and showed empathy toward their struggles by virtue of their responses. In addition, they reiterated the importance for educators to view each individual student in a positive fashion, one where students are perceived as having background experiences, and it is the teachers’ responsibilities to extract those experiences that promote a culturally relevant learning experience.

Next, the alumni discussed the development of their ability to work with a diverse population. Question seven asked the alumni, “Please describe the kinds of professional development that were most helpful.” The responses reflected the workshops offered throughout the program; some were designed to work with migrant students while others focused on developing as a professional. Specifically, the workshops focused on lesson design, the enhancement of the tutors’ job skills, and teaching strategies. Alumni discussed the three-day workshops that were most helpful. They stated, “They taught me how to get involved with the community, or how to help fill out the FAFSA paperwork. They also taught me how to develop lesson plans.” An obstacle for migrants may be that many are oblivious to the steps needed in acquiring financial aid or lack knowledge regarding the process of gaining acceptance into the university system. Finally, the
alumni discussed how their teaching abilities evolved regarding English learners and in teaching core subject areas such as science, reading, and math. Even though the alumni were undergraduates, they were acquiring teaching experiences before entering a credentialing program or obtaining a teaching assignment.

Tutors who were directly related to working with migrant families may have developed a passion for working with the underperforming migrant population. Having been former migrants themselves, tutors understood the struggles that many migrant students face. This may be a primary reason some tutors changed their majors and pursued a teaching profession. For instance, question eight determined the perceptions regarding alumni’s participation in Mini-Corps as it directly relates to their decision to pursue a teaching credential. The alumni were asked, “Do you feel that participation in the Mini-Corps Program influenced your decision to pursue a teaching credential? If so, please describe.” The alumni agreed that lessons learned while in Mini-Corps persuaded all of them to pursue a teaching credential. Some alumni stated that they already knew they wanted to be a teacher but the program clarified their decision to pursue a teaching credential. One alum reflected,

Working in the classrooms with the migrant students, and seeing the necessity, you know, of role models, Spanish speaking persons helping these Spanish speaking students learning English; that made me want even more to be a teacher. Mini-Corps clarified to me what my goal was.

Another also agreed by stating, “Mini-Corps is what got me hooked on teaching.”

The alum agreed that Mini-Corps had an enormous impact in his or her decision to
pursue a teaching credential. The alumni’s remarks regarding the Spanish speakers helping these Spanish speakers learn English may be indicative of understanding the challenges with which migrants are confronted.

The Mini-Corps experience provides tutors with an opportunity to develop their skills pertaining to working with a migrant population. For example, a question asked was, “What do you feel is/are the biggest benefit(s) of the Mini-Corps Program?” Alumni discussed having the opportunity to teach whole class lessons while working as a Mini-Corps student. An alum remarked, “The classroom teacher was sick and the substitute didn’t know what was going on so I actually taught the class. I was still an undergraduate but I was teaching the entire classroom.” Furthermore, another ascertained, “I learned how to work with the families. I learned about the migrant students in the classroom, how to understand their situation in this country, and how to better provide for them.” From this statement, it is clear that Mini-Corps’ alumni understand the struggles of migrant youths.

In addition to the data compiled from the survey and interviewees, the participant observations shed some light into the development of a bicultural teacher workforce. During the participant observations, it appeared that tutors were increasing their awareness of bicultural literacy by directly working with migrants both in a school setting and in the home environment. Tutors may be better able to understand the migrant culture when the tutors spend time and learn from the migrants’ environment. This may enable the tutors to develop an understanding for the challenges that confront migrants
throughout society and then the tutors may develop a plan of action to assist the migrants in overcoming obstacles that may be present.

The majority of the migrant students speak Spanish as a first language. This classifies them as an ELL student. Because of this, the coordinators understood the importance of building the tutors’ repertoire of teaching strategies pertaining to ELD. An annual multicultural conference was held at the university and the coordinator specifically selected an ELD training from the workshops that were offered. The literature review noted that 98% of migrants are Spanish speaking Hispanics; therefore, it is important for teachers to have courses that promote multicultural education or strategies to work with a diverse populace (CDE, 2007). Although numerous other workshops were being offered, the coordinator was aware that the ELD population throughout Mini-Corps is vast and strategies to better assist the education of ELLs must continue to evolve.

Ninety-eight percent of migrant students are of Hispanic descent, and the remaining two percent are Hmong and Punjabi (CDE, 2007). Because of the diversity within Mini-Corps, undergraduates routinely learn about others’ experiences and background in building a community of learners that may be essential for achievement to flourish. Based on the participant observations, the coordinators were establishing a pathway for learning to occur by conducting activities that would allow participants to speak about their cultural backgrounds. Tutors appeared to be of both Hispanic and Middle Eastern descent. From observing at this institution it seemed that the class had recently begun and students had limited knowledge regarding the background of one
another. For this reason, the tutors’ assignment was for everyone to state their names and nicknames and provide reasons regarding why their name was given to them by their parents. From this experience it was apparent that the tutors were learning about the significance of cultural traditions associated with names. Also, as the class session progressed, it appeared that the tutors were becoming more comfortable with each other and assisted each other with solving problems. This is indicative of Gay’s (2001) theory, as she described how students of color are raised in environments in which the welfare of the group is more important than their own personal well-being. Each member of the group attempts to help each other. As a teacher, it is important to set the boundaries that promote respect of students’ differences. Once this is established, it is vital to have students in learning communities where they can assist each other with the learning process. Helping each other may already be an essential component of the students’ culture and can be used as a pathway to optimize learning. In this class, the tutors were learning about each other’s cultural traditions because of the explanation of the origins of their names.

Based on the triangulation of the data derived from the survey, interviews, and participant observations, it seems that Mini-Corps provides undergraduates with a work environment that enables tutors to develop their skills pertaining to working with a migrant population. Because many tutors were former migrants, they may have firsthand knowledge regarding the challenges of migrants. For instance, trends presented by the Food Security Learning Center (2008) suggested that migrants may have a shorter life span and health concerns because of the deplorable conditions in which they reside.
These health concerns, along with the migrants’ transient lifestyle, may compound the difficulties of migrant students excelling in their educational studies. The gap in achievement between the Hispanic students and their White counterparts may be a result of these trends presented by the Food Security Learning Center (2008). The tutors’ work environment promotes a CRT approach, and Gay (2001) ascertained that this approach to teaching is pivotal when working with students of color. Finally, the passion that tutors possess may fuel their decision to pursue a teaching profession and seek employment with at-risk students.

It seems that the tutors understand the struggles of migrant students. This may be the case because of two reasons. First, tutors are former migrant students, which enable them to understand the migrant lifestyle. Second, the professional development received in the Mini-Corps Program was designed to increase tutors’ aptitude in working with a migrant population. Both of these may be reasons why tutors strive to complete their degree, complete a credentialing program, and possibly obtain a teaching job. Mini-Corps tutors want to enhance the quality of life for migrants because of the shared similar experience, and the desire to improve the quality of life through educational attainment.

ASSERTION 4

Mini-Corps provides multiple opportunities to establish a network system for its participants which may lead to employment opportunities. The data collected indicated that establishing a mentor/mentee relationship had a strong correlation on obtaining employment \[ r = .53, p < 1, n= 150 \]. The results were statistically significant as \( p < 1 \). This means that there is more than a 99% chance that
this is not due to a coincidence. Although the survey could not establish a direct relationship between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining employment, an indirect relationship was strongly suggested.

The survey data found that an impact between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining a college degree was present. The correlation between these two variables is \( r = .25, n = 105, p = .009 \). The relationship is statistically significant as \( p < .01 \). Second, obtaining a college degree does have an impact on establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. The data generated from the survey indicated that there is a medium correlation \( (p = .32) \) between obtaining a college degree and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship. The correlation between these two variables is \( r = .32, n = 105, p < 1 \). This is a statistically significant variable because \( p < 1 \). The inference that may be suggested is that participation in Mini-Corps is related to degree attainment, and degree attainment leads to establishing a mentor/mentee relationship, therefore an indirect relationship exists between participation in Mini-Corps and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship.

The interviews and participant observations agreed with the inference made by the survey data. Establishing an environment that was conducive to networking was visible and this may have created an atmosphere for mentorship to occur. The participant observations appeared to have a positive tone between the coordinator and the students as a positive rapport was visible. For instance, the climate was inviting as all three institutions offered snacks prior to the start of the class. Students were eager to share as they participated in all activities designed to enhance their teaching skills. Organization
by the coordinator of each class was at an optimal level as agendas were distributed and a conscientious effort was exerted in ensuring that the agenda items were met. All of these factors assisted in establishing networking relationships.

Furthermore, the data indicated that acquiring access to employment opportunities increased because of the networking system that the participants may have established within the educational community while they participated as tutors. For instance, an interview question asked, “Do you believe the Mini-Corps Program had an impact on acquiring employment? If so, please describe.” All of the alumni offered a positive response and believed that they obtained employment by either establishing a networking system or by feeling prepared for the interview process because of their experiences within Mini-Corps. The alumni thought that Mini-Corps provided a networking system that assisted in obtaining a job. An interviewee stated, “If it wasn’t for Mini-Corps, I wouldn’t have had this big of a chance over other people who wanted, to work in the same district.” Some alumni believed that the knowledge they learned regarding teaching strategies assisted them during the interview process, and as a result they obtained employment. An alum declared, “Without a doubt, I felt prepared; I wasn’t nervous. I felt good; I knew what I was going to do because of the Mini-Corps experience.” In addition, the next question asked, “What do you feel is/are the biggest benefit(s) of the Mini-Corps Program?” Alumni suggested that one of the biggest benefits of Mini-Corps was the networking among the educational community.

Another question asked was, “Did you experience a positive mentoring relationship as a result of your involvement with the Mini-Corps Program? How?” The
results from the interview indicated that all alumni had established some form of mentorship. Some alumni are still in constant communication with individuals from Mini-Corps. One alum who is a kindergarten teacher stated, “I talk to Mini-Corps almost on an everyday basis; we try and stay together and connected. Sometimes they will call me or I will call them.” It even appeared that coordinators were seeking individuals who were former Mini-Corps students for promotions within the Mini-Corps Program.

Another alumna remarked about her coordinator, “She still comes around every now and then, and she’ll ask me, ‘How are you doing? You know, you really should consider doing administration. You would be a great supervisor.”

In fact, alumni discussed the mentorship that was given to K-12 students. One alumna remembered a migrant student who was undocumented and needed a role model to give her advice regarding her educational future. The alumni maintained communication for a number of years with this K-12 migrant student as she wanted to help her fill out college applications. In addition, the alumna gave great insights about the possibility of gender biases within families. She articulated, “There’s a level of confidence and expectations for males more so than females. At the camps I felt that males were outspoken, but females were not as outspoken and instead reserved. They lacked confidence.” According to this statement, stereotypes may perpetuate within the migrant family structure which may favor males and suppress females from educational attainment. Portes and Rivas (2011) commented that, “Racial stereotypes produce a positive self-identity for White and Asian students but a negative one for Blacks and Latinos, and racialized self-perceptions among Mexican American students endure into
the third or fourth generations” (p. 219). In addition to the stereotypes described above, it seems that within the family unit gender stereotypes may perpetuate from one family to the next.

From coding the interview data, it was clear that the alumni agreed mentorship or establishing a networking system was present at some point in their careers in the form of directly providing tutoring services or providing guidance, even after the participants were no longer part of the Mini-Corps Program. The alumni affirmed that Mini-Corps provided a multitude of opportunities to develop a mentor/mentee relationship. Some alumni viewed networking as an enormous benefit of the program, and were encouraged by the coordinator to establish professional relationships whenever possible.

When the alumni were asked about the greatest benefit of participation in Mini-Corps, the response was clear. The next question that clarified it asked, “What do you feel is/are the biggest benefit(s) of the Mini-Corps Program?” From analyzing the responses to this, three themes emerged. First, networking among the educational community was an integral piece of Mini-Corps. Alumni illustrated this point by stating, “My biggest benefit was just, you know, getting to know the right people.” Second was the development of teaching strategies and learning to work with diverse families. A major theme that emerged from the interviews was the ability to network with other educators while working as a Mini-Corps tutor. In addition, the alumni demonstrated the desire for establishing a mentoring relationship with students. For instance, an alumna remarked, “I had a lot of role models too, like teachers, not so much like people that were Spanish speaking, but just adults around me that were very supportive and I wanted to be
that person for the other kids.” It appeared that alumna had the desire to work with underprivileged students because of her past experiences working with at-risk students.

Whether working with students or with Mini-Corps staff, networking was established between various people within the Mini-Corps infrastructure. Oftentimes, Mini-Corps tutors and educators not affiliated with Mini-Corps established professional relationships. Another example of building professional networks came when an alum mentioned,

When I worked as a tutor I met two principals named Louis and Isabel and other teachers from the district. Louis is a big influence in this district and helped me have a wonderful experience. To this day, I see them and they know me by name. My biggest benefit was just getting to know the right people.

It appears that being present within the school setting enabled tutors to develop relationships with administrators. This may have had an influence in acquiring a job because potential employers already had experienced the tutors’ performance in a workplace setting.

Based on the triangulation of the data, a mentor/mentee relationship is a common practice of Mini-Corps participants. The fifth question of the interview asked, “Did you experience a positive mentoring relationship as a result of your involvement with the Mini-Corps Program? How?” One alum answered, “To this day, I talk to the coordinator. I speak to her on a daily or weekly basis.” Another alumna also gave great insights pertaining to mentoring as she stated,
In terms of mentoring students I felt like I’ve mentored a lot of students who I connect with that still come around and talk to me; we still keep in touch. I remember one undocumented high school student who was overwhelmed. She thought that there was no way she was going to get through school. I told her about staying focused and encouraged her. I told her that I would be there for her to fill out college applications. I feel that I mentored a lot of females that were in high school.

The alumni provided the migrant students with a sense that they could accomplish their goals. Some migrants do not have role models who understand each other’s cultural background. Having a mentor may assist migrants throughout the educational process, as a role model may be beneficial to the migrant students.

The theme of networking also arose when asked about recommendations that may enhance Mini-Corps. One alum stated,

Perhaps keeping in touch with their alumni… I think if someone had kept in touch with me I would’ve had my master’s by this time. I only have my bachelor’s at this time and would love to get my master’s. But I don’t know, just pushing people.

It appears that this alumni understood the value of networking and continuing to have the support system that Mini-Corps provides, even after graduation.

Although the data presented above was directly related to acquiring employment, the results of the participant observations were indirectly related because tutors are still undergraduates and have not yet sought employment. Based on the observations, the
tutors were at various stages of their undergraduate phase. Even though they were not alumni, they still provided insights into the establishment of a mentor/mentee relationship.

During one observation, a woman entered the room to introduce herself to the Mini-Corps students. She mentioned that part of her new job responsibilities included graduate programs such as the teacher credentialing program that all of the Mini-Corps students aspired to gain admittance into. She met all of the students in the program and stated that she was eager for them to enter the teaching field. Eventually, when students graduate and apply to the credentialing program, the woman in charge of the credentialing program may view the tutors’ resume and see that the applicant participated in the Mini-Corps Program. This may influence acceptance because many educators in the college setting are aware of the added exposure to the teaching field to which tutors are exposed. Even though this was a direct networking experience, other experiences may not have been as direct.

An indirect networking experience may come from the class’ structure. From the participant observations of all three institutions, cooperative groups appeared to be the norm. For example, the coordinator placed students into groups as they discussed their experiences in working with the migrant students. During this discussion among the tutors, the coordinator provided an opportunity to establish a network for students because the cohort model to learning enables each tutor to establish a networking relationship with each other.
The participant observations also proved to yield rich data in terms of mentorship. Because the Mini-Corps students are in a cohort model, it becomes necessary for learning to occur so as to learn from each other’s experiences. It was learned that some alumni stay in contact with the coordinator, and the observations indicated that the coordinators were supportive and provided a platform for learning to occur. This may be a central reason some tutors might remain in close contact with the coordinator and other cohort members.

Furthermore, the literature review indicated CitySpan Technologies (2011) found that,

Tutors are role models, who because of their own migrant life experiences can be more sensitive and empathize with migrant students and their families. In 2009-2010, nearly half of the Mini-Corps tutors were from families who had, at least once in the past, migrated in search of employment in the key migrant industries. In a way, they serve as “cultural brokers” to migrant students by providing cultural literacy skills and various abilities necessary to take advantage of future opportunities and careers. They also act as role models and motivators, encouraging migrant students to accomplish their goals. Activities such as goal setting, literacy workshops, literacy conferences for migrant students, school-to-work career presentations, postsecondary college awareness presentations to middle and high school students, and college day tours for migrant students are a few of the ways in which doors to future possibilities are opened. (p. 20)
One goal of Mini-Corps is to build a mentor/mentee relationship between the tutor and the K-12 migrant students. The college coordinator is responsible for training, guiding, and mentoring the tutors that he or she works with, thus there definitely is a conscientious effort to establish a mentor/mentee relationship. Afterwards, tutors also serve as role models for migrant students. Also, a mentor/mentee relationship may be established among the tutor and other staff members. Mini-Corps participants serve as positive role models in a society that may not provide role models who are college attendees.

Role models are related to the social learning theory which states that knowledge is created through reinforcement of various behaviors. For example, a child who is praised by his or her parents for good behavior may have a sibling who, upon witnessing the praise, changes his or her behavior to meet the expectations of the parents. The importance of the social learning theory relies on acquiring new skills or information and changing behaviors simply through watching other peoples’ behaviors (Ormrod, 1999). Mini-Corps is designed to have mentors modeling behaviors of academic success and may assist tutors in the development of strategies.

Establishing a mentor/mentee relationship does have a significant impact on acquiring employment. The data from the survey indicated that there was strong correlation ($r = .53$), as the interviews and the participant observations alluded to this relationship. When it was time to interview for a job, the alumni felt empowered by their proximity to the classroom environment from their undergraduate Mini-Corps experience. The prospective teachers’ confidence rose because of their knowledge of the
teaching occupation. In addition, mentorship was established while the tutors were undergraduates and working at the school site. Relationships were formed with principals within their district, and this may have assisted in obtaining employment.

The structure of Mini-Corps allows for a multitude of networking opportunities. First, Mini-Corps has a cohort-based structure toward learning. Desai et al. (2010) described the cohort model where students progress from one class to another and learn from each other’s experiences as well as from the staff members. By using this structure to learning, interaction among supervisors, teachers, faculty, and community members is frequent and may lead to the establishment of a network of individuals who are an integral part of the learning process. Networking may be established between the tutors and the K-12 students, or the coordinator. In addition, the workshops that tutors attend may also provide a venue for tutors to establish a mentor/mentee relationship.

Discussion of Findings

The four main findings of the study revealed that Mini-Corps has a positive impact on the educational advancement of migrant students during the completion of an undergraduate degree. First, the finding that yielded the most compelling evidence was that Mini-Corps impacted completion of an undergraduate degree. This finding is crucial as it lays the foundation for other indirect correlations among variables. By using the Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient the data revealed that a medium correlation ($r = .25$) exists between participation in Mini-Corps and obtaining an undergraduate degree. In addition, alumni affirmed the networking system that Mini-
Corps promotes through various stages of the program. The survey also suggests that the remaining variables (obtaining employment, establishing a mentor/mentee relationship, and professional development) have a statistically significant relationship when compared to the completion of an undergraduate degree. It is suggested that participation in Mini-Corps may indirectly impact the remaining variables.

Another relationship revealed a strong correlation \((r = .53)\) between establishing a mentor/mentee relationship and the impact on obtaining employment. Phase two provided many insights into the networking or the mentorship that occurs throughout Mini-Corps. Years after the Mini-Corps experience concludes the alumni still keep contact with Mini-Corps affiliates. Furthermore, alumni discussed the networking experiences that occurred while working within the school environment. The alumni discussed working with principals that enabled them to have exposure prior to the interview process. Principals were aware of their work habits because of their placement in a school setting so that when the alum went to apply for a job, he or she already had built a rapport with the administrators who conducted the interviews. The various aspects of Mini-Corps assisted alumni in obtaining employment.

Mini-Corps also may have laid the foundation for professional networking opportunities to occur. First, conferences were held in distant cities, and three-day conferences were held at universities throughout California in which tutors may have established a mentor/mentee relationship. Also, when tutors learned strategies from these professional workshops, they had the ability to incorporate the strategies into their work environment. By infusing these strategies, teachers and administrators may have built
mentoring relationships throughout the duration of the tutors’ employment with Mini-Corps. Upon graduating, tutors had already established professional contacts with school administrators who may have assisted in the hiring process.

The study indicated that professional development was visible throughout various stages of Mini-Corps. Three-day workshops, trainings in distant cities, and Saturday professional development opportunities were the norm for Mini-Corps. Interviewees discussed the importance of professional development and due to these experiences they were comfortable during the interview process as well as during their teaching assignment. Obtaining a college degree had a strong impact ($r = .48$) on professional development. Based on the findings above, Mini-Corps does have either a direct or indirect relationship on completing a college degree, completing a credentialing program, obtaining employment, professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship.

The findings also suggested that there is a unique kind of socialization that is specific to learning that occurs in Mini-Corps. This professional socialization manifests itself between the coordinator and the tutor, or from tutor to tutor. The Mini-Corps structure assists in building collegiality between participants, and develops a support system for migrant tutors. In addition, the proximity to the migrant camps along with the experience of working with this population assist in developing educators who have a desire to work with at-risk students. The socialization that occurs may have lasting effects even after the tutor graduates. The socialization may continue throughout the tutors’ professional years.
Limitations

The study focuses on alumni who have participated in Mini-Corps throughout the state of California. It should be noted that some participants of Mini-Corps began while in their freshman year; others began toward the end of their college span. In addition, some individuals may have only participated in one aspect of Mini-Corps (school year, outdoor, or puppetry), and others may have a different perspective. Also, the study used only two theoretical frameworks (social and situational learning theories) although other frameworks could have been used. The social and situational learning theories are the frameworks selected because they seem to apply to students in the program, tutors, coordinators, and even senior staff who all possibly share a similar migrant background. Moreover, the situational learning theory was selected because in Mini-Corps, the prospective teachers are working in a school setting. The situational learning theory discusses the importance of students learning while placed in the situation that they are learning about.

Furthermore, Mini-Corps is in the process of creating a database of existing membership. Typically upon completion of a college degree, recent graduates tend to relocate in search of employment and updated addresses become scarce. Because of this, the researcher did not have addresses where to send surveys; rather, the study searched for participants via a website. For this reason, a response rate could not be calculated. Although 105 respondents is a medium sample, the data would have been enriched if a sample size of 200 respondents was available. By having a greater number of respondents, the validity and reliability of the data increases. In contextualizing the
responses, a sample size of 30 respondents is indicative of a weak sample. One hundred five respondents is a medium sized sample.

Moreover, in selecting the alumni population who completed the survey the participants of the study may have had a positive perspective on Mini-Corps. Alumni who completed the online survey may have given a positive response because of their participation. Alumni who had a negative Mini-Corps experience may not have completed the survey because of their lack of interest in Mini-Corps. This may have limited the range of responses from the alumni. Including the responses from alumni who had negative experiences may have enhanced the responses from the survey.

Recommendations for Future Study

The recommendations are derived from the literature review and the study’s findings.

First, the research question is, what is the impact of participation in Mini-Corps on the completion of a college degree, completion of a credential, obtaining employment, professional development, and establishing a mentor/mentee relationship? In triangulating the data gathered from the literature review, survey, interviews, and participant observations, there were correlations between the variables listed above. From analysis of the research question, recommendations arose. During analysis of the research question, recommendations emerged from the comparison of the literature review, survey, interviews, and the participant observations.
Expand the Program

Mini-Corps appears to have a strong impact on achievement at various levels. The program’s structure is ideal so that students who are disadvantaged because of linguistic, socioeconomic, or psychosocial (e.g. high mobility or other traumatic experiences) factors may be provided with the extra support that may be needed. Generally speaking, education is a field that includes socialization between constituents. Mini-Corps promotes educational attainment because of its structure, which includes a specific type of socialization. Because of this specific kind of socialization, other groups of students may benefit from a structure similar to Mini-Corps. In addition to the migrant population, other groups may be severely disadvantaged because of other reasons. For instance, Native Americans and foster children are two of the groups who struggle to achieve high rates of academic success. Few foster children are in the college system throughout the United States. Foster children may benefit from a program with a similar structure. Even though mentorship programs may exist, foster children may require the mentorship that Mini-Corps provides. Based on the discoveries of the study, the Mini-Corps structure should be duplicated with other at-risk groups of students.

First, Gandara (2010) stated that there was a Latino educational crisis as Latino students are not entering college at the same rates as their White counterparts. Second, this study seems to indicate that Mini-Corps fosters the completion of an undergraduate degree by its participants; many of whom are Latinos. Third, the recommendations discussed above are essential for educators and policy makers whose aim is to narrow the achievement gap of various disadvantaged groups. As educators strive to find ways to
narrow the gap in achievement, this gap continues to permeate among various groups of students. Increasing the educational attainment of disadvantaged students is essential because of the societal and economic implications discussed in chapters one and two. The study appears to indicate that mentorship is vital to promoting completion of an undergraduate degree.

The program could be replicated using high school students as cross-age tutors who are of legal working age. For instance, if former migrants assist current migrants and there is a statistically significant correlation that arises pertaining to completing an undergraduate degree, then the program should be expanded so that the achievement gap may narrow. For instance, high school students could serve as mentors and tutors to middle school students. Sometimes the mentorship that middle school students establish or the friends that they select may not be positive and a disconnection from education may arise as a result of their friend selection. The achievement gap may increase because of selecting friends who are disengaged from the educational process.

Replicating a program between high school and middle school students in which the similar structure of Mini-Corps is infused may be beneficial to both high school and middle school students. The high school student may undergo professional training pertaining to the importance of providing mentorship or homework assistance, and at the same time establishing professional goals for him or herself. Students need positive mentors when they are building their identity, and a similar program that entails working with various groups of youths may improve current graduation rates and increase the quality of life through educational attainment for many individuals.
In addition, this study illuminated the need for teacher preparation programs to incorporate elements of working with a diverse group of students. Although California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing developed CLAD or BCLAD in an effort to enhance teacher’s expertise pertaining to the cultural background, and language acquisition of students, teachers may not be receiving adequate instruction that is needed when teaching special populations. Desai et al. (2010) suggested that some teacher credentialing programs may only offer a minimal amount of classes that teach about the specific needs of diverse population. This study suggested that the Mini-Corps Program may assist in developing teachers who understand the specific needs of migrant students. Elements such as the apprenticeship environment, mentorship, and professional development should directly be infused into credentialing programs. The student ethnic demographics across the United States are evolving into a student population that is more diverse than in the past, and Mini-Corps may provide prospective teachers with the skills necessary to properly educate the students’ needs.

The recommendations, findings, or the study itself may be disseminated in any way possible. The researcher’s main purpose is to give a voice to the migrant population, which prior to the 1960s did not appear to be heard. This dissertation may be distributed via websites, libraries, or by any other means available. Portions of this study may also be published by the author in educational journals.
Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on Mini-Corps alumni. It appears that only two other studies exist regarding Mini-Corps in the approximately 50 years that the program has been in existence. Also, because resources are being allocated by the federal government through Mini-Corps, more research-based studies are needed to identify the level of impact Mini-Corps has on migrant students. More research is vital surrounding the impact that Mini-Corps has on migrants’ educational experiences. An area of further research may be to focus on how Mini-Corps impacts students and families, possibly including a study pertaining to K-12 students in which the students’ achievement is measured. This study could be qualitative and focus on the perceptions of migrant families toward the Mini-Corps Program. Because this study focused on alumni, other studies may want to view students and parents of migrant students and how Mini-Corps impacts them. In addition, because of the few studies that exist, replicating this study may further enrich the existing body of literature because of the minimal literature pertaining to Mini-Corps that exists.

Another recommendation is to replicate this study using the same research methodology. Because this is the first study pertaining to Mini-Corp’s alumni, other studies of similar characteristics are necessary. With more research-based studies available, policymakers may construct more informed decisions that may affect programs such as Mini-Corps. For instance, the current economic recession has caused a multitude of programs to decrease funding. Therefore, studies that explore the impact of programs such as Mini-Corps becomes eminent. Additional studies are needed regarding the Mini-Corps Program.
In addition, an area for further research may be to study the students who dropped out of the college system but did participate in Mini-Corps for a year. This study added to the existing body of research by studying participants who had successfully graduated the college system. This study did not focus on students who failed the college system. Their viewpoints may offer insights regarding Mini-Corps. Mini-Corps offers a specific kind of socialization that may promote academic success for its participants. By studying Mini-Corps’s drop-outs, the existing body of literature may become expanded.

Conclusion

From this study, the researcher gained many insights into the operations and philosophy of the Mini-Corps Program. The apprenticeship environment appears to provide an ethos of collaboration and mentorship among current and former migrant students. The support system that Mini-Corps encompasses is vital to the rise in achievement exhibited by migrants during the past 10 years. These gains have been documented through state exams. In addition, the networking system established assists undergraduates who are oftentimes former migrant students throughout the educational process. Usually, the college tutors view a reflection of themselves in the K-12 migrant students, and similarly the migrant students may see a reflection of themselves in the college tutors. Furthermore, by the end of the college experience the tutor is very knowledgeable about the intricacies associated with teaching. Because of this acquired knowledge, the tutor may make more informed decision whether or not to pursue a teaching credential and enter the teaching realm. Tutors demonstrate increased
confidence because of their vast experience surrounding teaching even before they are offered employment.

For many migrants, he or she may be a first generation college student whose parents never attended the university system in the United States. Because of this, a multitude of families may not have a professional networking system within the family structure. Mini-Corps provides a networking system for its migrant population. The networking is crucial to career advancement of alumni, or it may promote educational advancement of migrant youths.

Finally, participation in Mini-Corps has an impact on completion of an undergraduate degree. Completion of an undergraduate degree has a direct impact on completion of a credentialing program, obtaining employment, establishing a mentor/mentee relationship, and professional development. Mini-Corps positively impacts the obtaining of a college degree, which permits all of the variables to surface. Without graduation first, none of the other variables would occur. Mini-Corps has a great system for migrants and should be replicated with other populations and grade levels, especially between high school and middle school students.

Expanding the program may benefit other populations and age groups. First, programs such as Mini-Corps should also focus on helping other at-risk populations. For instance, Native Americans and foster students are two groups who may benefit from programs that have a similar mentoring structure to Mini-Corps. Also because of the program emphasizing a mentor/mentee relationship, using a program with comparable characteristics between high school and middle school students may prove to assist in the
educational process. Although this may not be feasible for a variety of reasons, educators must develop an understanding of the influence evoked by mentors. Once these insights are established new programs may arise because of the power mentorship. Some migrants never have role models who are professionals or educated. If migrant students in farmworker families have more professional role models surrounding them or giving them guidance, educational success may occur.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Human Subjects Form

Request for Review by the Sacramento State Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Revised 09/2010)

Submit 11 copies of this form and any attachments to the Office of Research Administration, Hornet Bookstore, Suite 3400, mail code 6111. Please type your responses or use a word processor. Handwritten forms will be returned without review.

Project Title: The Impact of Participation in the Mini-Corps Program as an Undergraduate on Alumni’s Professional Career

Funding Agency (if any): N/A

Name(s) and affiliation(s) of Researchers: Eduardo Gonzalez (Doctoral Candidate, CSU Sacramento) (Fourth Grade Teacher at Woodland Joint Unified School District)

Mailing address (or Department and campus mail code): EDD Office Eureka Hall 328 6000 J Street Sacramento, CA 95819 Mail Code 6079

(530) 554-6180 Eddie.gonzalez@wjusd.org September 27, 2011

Telephone and e-mail address for researcher Anticipated starting date

Dr. Porfirio Loeza E-mail address of sponsor

Name of faculty sponsor (for student research) Loeza@skymail.csus.edu
1. Who will participate in this research as subjects (e.g., how many people, from what source, using what criteria for inclusion or exclusion)? How will you recruit their participation (e.g., what inducements, if any, will be offered)? How will you avoid any conflict of interest as a researcher?

A prerequisite to participate in the study is that the individuals must have participated in the Mini-Corps Program. The maximum number of participants in the study will be 50. I will recruit participants by advertising the research on the Mini-Corps Program’s webpage that this research is being conducted. Aside from this link, I will not recruit participants in any other manner. Once the participants click the link on the website then the consent form will appear. Next, the participants must click the “I agree” tab on the bottom of the consent form to participate. Individuals who have never participated in the Mini-Corps Program will not participate in the study.

In addition, the web-based survey will ask participants if they would be willing to volunteer for an interview. If they are willing to be interviewed, then the participants will voluntarily write their e-mail address upon completion of the survey.

2. How will informed consent be obtained from the subjects? Attach a copy of the consent form you will use. If a signed written consent will not be obtained, explain what you will do instead and why. (See Appendix C in Policies and Procedures for examples of consent forms, an example of an assent form for children, and a list of consent form requirements. Also see the section on Informed Consent in Policies and Procedures.)

Participants will be required to give consent prior to gaining access to the survey. The participants will give consent by clicking the “I agree” tab on the survey to be given access. By clicking the “I agree” tab participants are consenting to participating in the survey portion of the study. They must click the “I agree” tab on the link that will be uploaded to the Butte County Office of Education’s homepage. For the interview portion, participants will first complete the online survey and if they wish to be interviewed, then they must enter their e-mail address. The researcher will then contact participants and be given a consent form. Please see the consent form attached to this document.

3. How will the subjects’ rights to privacy and safety be protected? (See the section on Level of Risk in Policies and Procedures. For online surveys, also answer the checklist questions at the end of Appendix B in Policies and Procedures.)
Informed Consent

- The researcher is having a third party construct the web-based survey so IP addresses will not be available to the researcher. By doing this, the researcher will not have knowledge of the participants unless they voluntarily type their e-mail address and wish to be contacted for an interview. Also, by having the participants read and click the “I submit” button on the consent form (See Attached Consent Forms) they are agreeing to volunteer in the study.
- Yes, the consent to take the survey will be recorded with the time, and date. (e.g. Respondent #12 consented at 1:05 pm on June 3, 2011).

Secure Transmission

- Yes, the survey software does use HTTPS encryption. The hosting company will provide a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificate to enhance security.
- Yes, the Zoomerang software prevents respondents from accidentally entering survey data via the HTTP protocol instead of the HTTPS protocol. The respondent will automatically be re-routed to an HTTPS page.

Database Security

- Yes, access to the research database is limited to authorized persons by means of a username and password. There is a MySQL which will contain an encrypted (MD5) administrative password which only authorized personnel will know.
- No, the software company has not signed a confidentiality agreement.

Server Security

- Are the servers that contain the research data located in a data center that has physical security and environmental controls? Yes, they are secure.
- Is the data backed up nightly? Yes, the data is backed up nightly.
- Is there a limited time period in which a deleted dataset can still be retrieved but after which the data will be permanently destroyed? (The investigator should inquire how long this time period is.)
- No, once the database is deleted it is destroyed and cannot be retrieved.
- Is the respondent’s IP address masked from the researcher?
- Only the server administrator has access to the IP logs of the site via cPanel. IPs will not be matched to the surveys or recorded; therefore, the researcher will not have access.

4. Summarize the study’s purpose, design, and procedures. (Do not attach lengthy grant proposals, etc.)
Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the level of impact between the Mini-Corps Program’s alumni and their professional careers. The Mini-Corps Program is a program that provides direct instructional services to migrant children with a secondary goal of developing future educators while providing support for their professional development. The Mini-Corps Program prepares undergraduates for the challenges of working with a migrant population. Migrant students (K-12) are from families who relocate schools often as their families follow the agricultural crops in search of employment. This study will seek to understand how involvement in the MCP as an undergraduate impacted participants’ professional career.

Design and Procedures

A mixed methods design in collecting data will be used. Phase one of the data collection will be a quantitative approach. The quantitative portion consists of a web-based survey that will be created through a software program called Zoomerang. The program will organize the data according to the number of years involved in the Mini-Corps Program, the year in which that participation occurred, participants’ ethnicity, gender, occupation, age, and type of employment. Once the data is collected, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will generate a Pearson product moment-correlation coefficient to compare the dependent variables with the independent variables and rank the correlation as a low, medium, or a high correlation.

In phase two of the data collection, a qualitative approach will be used. The qualitative procedures that will be used are semi-structured interviews of five former MCP participants. Semi-structured interviews allows for follow-up questions as the researcher may ask for clarification of responses. The participants will respond to open-ended questions designed to gain insights into the experience of the Mini-Corps Program. The duration of the interviews will be approximately an hour in length and permission will be sought to audio record the interview. Afterwards, the interview will be sent to a transcriber to transcribe the interview. The questions are designed to elicit their perceptions into the impact that the MCP has on the following:

- Impact of completion of an undergraduate degree
- Impact on a completion of a credentialing program
- Impact of obtaining a position in education
- Impact on professional development
- Impact in establishing a mentor/mentee relationship
Furthermore, phase two will consist of an ethnographic observation where the researcher will observe the Mini-Corps Program’s tutors and coordinator. The researcher will observe several sessions in gaining additional insights that will assist in the triangulation of data process. Notes will be taken and transcribed to enrich the study. Permission from the Mini-Corps director was obtained and all participants will remain anonymous.

In addition, a phenomenological approach will be selected because in using this approach, the researcher selected various phenomena to study. Using phenomenology, the researcher will interpret the data that will be collected from the participants. Data analysis will be conducted by carefully studying all of the responses and the data will be categorized into themes that will emerge. Upon completion of phases one and two the data will be triangulated.

5. Describe the content of any tests, questionnaires, interviews, etc. in the research. Attach copies of the questions. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

The questions embedded in the instruments (Survey and Interview) are designed to seek an understanding of the participants’ perceptions pertaining to the following:

- Impact of completion of an undergraduate degree
- Impact on a completion of a credentialing program
- Impact of obtaining a position in education
- Impact on professional development
- Impact in establishing a mentor/mentee relationship

I do not foresee any level of discomfort in completing this survey. Please see both instruments that are attached at the end of this document.

6. Describe any physical procedures in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use? (The committee will seek review and recommendation from a qualified on-campus medical professional for any medical procedures.)

There are no physical procedures.

7. Describe any equipment or instruments and any drugs or pharmaceuticals that will be used in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use? (The committee will seek review and recommendation from a qualified on-campus medical professional for the use of any drugs or pharmaceuticals.)
These will not be used.

8. **Taking all aspects of this research into consideration, do you consider the study to be “exempt,” “no risk,” “minimal risk,” or “at risk?” Explain why. (See the section on Level of Risk in Policies and Procedures.)**

I do not foresee any discomfort to the respondents. All of the respondents are consenting adults and will be provided with a full written description of this study. All of the responses will be anonymous and no tracking record will exist that could identify the respondents. I selected “minimal risk” because the probability of harm or discomfort is comparable to a short quiz.

For protocols approved as “at risk,” the researcher is required to file semiannual reports with the committee that describe the recruiting of subjects, progress on the research, interactions with the sponsor, and any adverse occurrences or changes in approved procedures. In addition, the committee reserves the right to monitor “at risk” research as it deems appropriate. Failure to file the required progress reports may result in suspension of approval for the research.

_______________________________  ____________________________
Signature of Researcher             Date

_______________________________  ____________________________
Signature of Faculty Sponsor
(for student research)             Date

Signature of your department or division chair confirms that he or she has had an opportunity to see your human subjects application.

_______________________________  ____________________________
Signature of Department/Division Chair  Date

Questions about the application procedures for human subjects approval may be directed to the Office of Research Administration, (916) 278-7565, or to any member of the committee. Questions about how to minimize risks should be directed to a committee member. Applicants are encouraged to contact a committee member whose professional field most closely corresponds to that of the researcher. See [www.csus.edu/research/humansubjects/](http://www.csus.edu/research/humansubjects/) for a list of committee members and the current year’s due dates for submitting an application.
To assure prompt review of your application,
ALL researchers should complete this checklist:

- Have you written an appropriate answer for each question on the application form? (Please do not attach research proposals, grant applications, etc. as the committee cannot read such documents.)

- Have you answered all of the questions on the application form? (Please enter “N/A” if a particular question does not apply to your research.)

- Have you provided an e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached on the application?

- Have you (and all co-researchers) signed the application form? Has your department or division chair also signed the application form?

- Have you included your consent form with your application? Does that consent form identify you as the researcher and your department?

- Does your consent form clearly describe what participants will be asked to do in your research? Does it clearly describe any direct benefit they will receive as a result of their participation? Does it clearly describe any risks they will be exposed to during their participation, and what you will do to minimize those risks?

- Have you included with your application any screening forms that will be used to determine the eligibility of participants for your research?

- Have you described in your application any potential conflict of interest between your role as a researcher and any other relationship you may have with the participants or with an organization that is a source of your participants? This could occur if some or all of the participants are your students, employees, co-workers, friends, etc. Have you also described how you will avoid any such conflict of interest?

- Have you included with your application all tests, questionnaires, surveys, interview questions, focus group questions, etc. that will be used in your research?

- Have you checked the grammar and spelling throughout all of your documents?

- Have you prepared 11 copies of your complete application packet, including all attachments, for the committee? Does one of those copies have original signatures?

- Have you retained an electronic copy of your application that can be edited and resubmitted with any changes requested by the committee? (This will be forwarded to your Dean.)
STUDENT researchers must also complete this checklist:

☐ Have you met with your faculty advisor before preparing your application? Has your faculty advisor thoroughly reviewed all of your materials before you submitted your application?

☐ Have you provided an e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached on the application? Did you also include your home address on the application?

☐ Have you included the name of your faculty advisor and that person’s e-mail address on your application?

☐ Has your application been signed by you, any co-researchers, and your faculty advisor? Did you submit an original copy of your application with all of those signatures?

☐ Does your department have an approved Human Subjects committee that reviews student research projects? (As of July 2009, the approved departments are Child Development; Communication Studies; Criminal Justice; Economics; Educational Leadership & Policy Studies; Kinesiology & Health Science; Nursing; Psychology; Public Policy & Administration; Social Work; Sociology; Special Education, Rehabilitation & School Psychology; and Teacher Education.) If your research is in one of these departments, it must be reviewed and approved by that department’s committee first. Has your department’s committee completed the following form?

DEPARTMENT HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Project Title: ______________________________________________________________

Student Researcher: _______________________________________________________

Faculty Sponsor: ___________________________________________________________

The ______________________________ Department’s human subjects committee has reviewed and approved this application. It requires review by the CPHS because the research is considered (circle one) Minimal Risk or At Risk.

______________________________________________________________________

Name of department’s human subjects chairperson  E-mail address of chairperson

______________________________________________________________________

Signature of department committee’s chairperson  Date
Appendix B

Mini-Corps Program (MCP) Online Alumni Survey

How many semesters did you participate in the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate student?

Select one: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

How many summer sessions did you participate in the Mini-Corps Program?

Select one: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

How many summers did you participate in the outdoor education component of the Mini-Corps Program?

Select one: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

How many summers did you participate in the puppetry component of the Mini-Corps Program?

Select one: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

What is your ethnic background?

Select one: Hispanic/Latino    African American, Native American, Mexican American
Asian American, Middle Eastern, Hmong, Punjabi, Other

What is your gender?

Select one:

Male   Female

Please select your occupation:

Preschool Teacher        Teacher (K-6)        Teacher (7-8)        Teacher (9-12)
School Site Administrator District Level Administrator Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent    Professor at a Community College    Professor at a University
Administrator at a University    Administrator at a Community College
My Job is Not in Education   Other
During which years was the majority of your involvement with the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate? (Select all that apply)

1965-1970
1971-1975
1976-1980
1981-1985
1986-1990
1991-1995
1996-2000
2001-2005
2006-2010
2011

For the following questions please circle a number from 1 to 5 in accordance with the following scale:

N/A = Not Applicable 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Degree/Certifications

1.) The knowledge and skills gained from the Mini-Corps Program helped me gain entry into a credential program………………………………………………N/A 1 2 3 4 5

2.) The knowledge and skills gained from the Mini-Corps Program benefited me when completing a teaching credential……………………………………N/A 1 2 3 4 5

3.) Participation in the Mini-Corps Program helped me obtain a college degree………………………………………………………………………………N/A 1 2 3 4 5
Employment

4.) The Mini-Corps Program experience assisted me in obtaining a job. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
5.) The leadership skills learned through the Mini-Corps Program provided me with an opportunity to apply them at my place of employment. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
6.) I decided to enter a field other than teaching as a result of my experience in the Mini-Corps Program. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

Professional Development

7.) Mini-Corps helped develop my lesson planning and lesson delivery. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
8.) The Mini-Corps experience increased my knowledge of English Language Arts strategies and skills to help develop student literacy. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
9.) The Mini-Corps experience increased my knowledge of math strategies and skills to help develop mathematical concepts. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

Mentorship

10.) Because of my participation in the Mini-Corps Program, I established a mentor/mentee relationship. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
11) Mini-Corps experience facilitated my ability to complete student teaching. N/A 1 2 3 4 5
12.) Because of my participation in the MCP, I met someone who I consider to be a mentor after graduating. N/A 1 2 3 4 5

If you are willing to be contacted for an interview please write your e-mail address in the box and click “submit.”
Appendix C

Interview Questions for the Mini-Corps Alumni Study

1.) Tell me about your current occupation.

2.) Describe how your experience as an undergraduate related to participation in the Mini-Corps Program.

3.) Has the Mini-Corps Program helped you in obtaining your degree(s)? If so, how has it helped you?

4.) What specific skills did participation in the Mini-Corps Program foster or help you develop? How have these skills impacted your current career?

5.) Did you experience a positive mentoring relationship as a result of your involvement with the Mini-Corps Program? How?

6.) Do you believe that your career has been enhanced because of your involvement in the Mini-Corps Program? If so, please describe how your career has been enhanced.

7.) Please describe the kinds of professional development that were most helpful.

8.) Do you feel that participation in the Mini-Corps Program influenced your decision to pursue a teaching credential? If so, please describe.

9.) Do you believe the Mini-Corps Program had an impact on acquiring employment? If so, please describe.

10.) What do you feel is/are the biggest benefit(s) of the Mini-Corps Program?

11.) What else can you recommend so that the Mini-Corps Program experience has a greater impact on its alumni?
Appendix D

Consent Form for Online Survey

Dear Former Mini-Corps Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study that I am conducting. I am a student in the independent doctoral program at Sacramento State, and as part of my doctoral studies I hope to learn the impact of participation in the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate on your professional career. I am attempting to see if participation as an undergraduate in the Mini-Corps Program is related to your employment. The questions are designed to solicit your perceptions into your experience in the Mini-Corps Program. I am asking for your permission to participate in the study that will consist of the data collection methods outlined below.

If you decide to participate, the 11 questions web-based survey will require about 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by the technology used; however, no absolute guarantees can be given for the confidentiality of electronic data. Every measure will be taken to protect the identities of all participants. In reporting data results, names will not be used and data derived from your answers will be grouped with data from other participants. If a participant completes the anonymous survey and submits it, the researcher will be unable to remove anonymous data from the database should the participant wish to withdraw.

Although the study may provide insights into the Mini-Corps Program, it cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from participating in the study. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Some of the questions may seem personal, but you do not have to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering. If you feel any psychological distress, please contact Sacramento’s Mental Health Crisis Intervention Center at (916) 732-3637. At any time that you feel uncomfortable you may stop the survey. Once you submit the survey, I will be unable to remove the data from the database.
The Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions, please contact me at (530) 554-6180. You may also contact Dr. Porfirio Loeza, my faculty sponsor, at Loeza@skymail.csus.edu. By answering “I agree” below you acknowledge that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research study. If you do not agree, select “I do not agree.” By submitting this consent form, you are agreeing to participate in the research.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Gonzalez, M.Ed.
Independent Education Doctorate Student
California State University, Sacramento
Consent Form for Interview

Dear Former Mini-Corps Participant,

You are invited to be interviewed and participate in a research study that I am conducting. I am a student in an independent doctoral program, and as part of my doctoral studies I hope to learn the impact of participation in the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate on your professional career. The questions are designed to provide your perceptions into your experience in the Mini-Corps Program. I am asking for your permission to participate in the study that will consist of the data collection methods outlined below.

If you decide to participate, the questions that will be asked will require about an hour of your time. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your name will not be written anywhere and no other identifiable characteristics will be reported. Also, I will be audio recording the interview and I will send the recording to a transcriber. The transcriber will type all of the recordings and return them to me without a name. I will not use any information that alludes to you either directly or indirectly.

Although the study may provide insights into the Mini-Corps Program, it cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from the study. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Some of the questions may seem personal, but you do not have to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering. If you feel any psychological distress, please contact Sacramento’s Mental Health Crisis Intervention Center at (916) 732-3637. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you may stop the survey. The Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions, please contact me at (530) 554-6180. You may also contact Dr. Porfirio Loeza, my faculty sponsor, at Loeza@skymail.csus.edu.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Gonzalez, M.Ed.
Independent Education Doctorate Student
California State University, Sacramento
Appendix F

Consent Form for Observation

Dear Mini-Corps Coordinator,

You are invited to participate in a research study that I am conducting. I am a student in the independent doctoral program, and as part of my doctoral studies I hope to learn the impact of participation in the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate on your professional career. I am asking for your permission to observe the Mini-Corps class for several sessions.

During the observation, the names of individuals will be kept confidential. Your name will not be written anywhere and no other identifiable characteristics will be reported. I will not use any information that alludes to you either directly or indirectly. As the researcher, I will be taking notes while seated at the back of the class; however, no identifiable notes will be taken.

Although the study may provide insights into the Mini-Corps Program, it cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from the study. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you feel any psychological distress, please contact Sacramento’s Mental Health Crisis Intervention Center at (916) 732-3637. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you may stop the survey.

The Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions, please contact me at (530) 554-6180. You may also contact Dr. Porfirio Loeza, my faculty sponsor, at Loeza@skymail.csus.edu.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Gonzalez, M.Ed.
Independent Education Doctorate Student
California State University, Sacramento
Appendix G

Consent Form for Observation

Dear Mini-Corps Tutor,

You are invited to participate in a research study that I am conducting. I am a student in an independent doctoral program, and as part of my doctoral studies, I hope to learn the impact of participation in the Mini-Corps Program as an undergraduate on professional careers of alumni. I am asking for your permission to observe the Mini-Corps class for several sessions.

During the observation, the names of individuals will be kept confidential. Your name will not be written anywhere and no other identifiable characteristics will be reported. I will not use any information that alludes to you either directly or indirectly. As the researcher, I will be taking notes while seated at the back of the class; however, no identifiable notes will be taken.

Although the study may provide insights into the Mini-Corps Program, it cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from the study. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you feel any psychological distress, please contact Sacramento’s Mental Health Crisis Intervention Center at (916) 732-3637. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you may stop the survey.

The Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions, please contact me at (530) 554-6180. You may also contact Dr. Porfirio Loeza, my faculty sponsor, at Loeza@skymail.csus.edu.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Gonzalez, M.Ed.
Independent Education Doctorate Student
California State University, Sacramento
Appendix H
Survey Correlations Output Sheet

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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Appendix I

Authorization for Mini-Corps Research

August 31, 2014

Dear Sacramento State University,

I am a student at California State University, Sacramento and currently an educational doctoral student in the Independent Education Doctorate Program. As part of my doctoral studies, I am conducting research on the impact that the Mini-Corps Program has on alumni's professional careers.

I am writing because I would like to conduct a research study that involves participants who have been or currently are working with the Mini-Corps Program. I will collect data from a link that will be uploaded to a Mini-Corps Program website. I would like to discover which experiences in the Mini-Corps Program had an impact on alumni's professional careers.

I am requesting permission to use the Mini-Corps Program's members as my participants. I plan on gathering data from these participants through a mixed-methods approach. The results of the research study may be published, but participant names and location will not be known or used. In addition, participation is voluntary, and participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, participants will be informed that there is no penalty for participating.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact me at (500) 555-0100 or by email at eduardo.gonzalez@wustl.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Lopez, at eduardo.lopez@wustl.edu. I would also be happy to meet with you regarding this study.

Your signature at the bottom of this letter verifies your permission for this study to be completed.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Gonzalez

---

I, Ernesto Ruiz, Director of California Mini-Corps programs, give permission to Eduardo Gonzalez to complete this study as discussed via email communication and in this letter.

Signature:
Ernesto Ruiz, Ed.D.
California Mini-Corps
Appendix J

Results from Survey

Participation in Mini-Corps helped me obtain a degree (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011).
The knowledge and skills gained from the Mini-Corps Program benefited me when completing a teaching credential.

The Mini-Corps Experience assisted me in obtaining a job (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011).
The Professional Development received through the Mini-Corps Program assisted me during employment (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011).

Because of my Participation in the Mini-Corps Program I established a Mentor/Mentee relationship (Mini-Corps Alumni Survey, 2011).
REFERENCES


Freudenberg, K. (2008). *A call for action: Migrant students and the high school redesign movement*. Retrieved July 17, 2011, from http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:zbu6d8elAYUJ:en1.endiva.net/migratedimec/files/literature/1670.3124_A_Call_for_Action.doc+A+call+for+acation+migrant+students+and+the+high+school+redesign+movement&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgib6lFxUWR3Sgw1Vy8CozkkILWswhcl1XZ58JTWX14iCpz7YVa96h0EHFaee6hL34OeEy0BtGoiuRDtkP4_umGjaZfL9re2NNyMU5sDw5SOI7YUeQCAb8Qp9pWnq5nbMA0M&sig=AHIEtbQREyF5gruTvjp7qgpWeRIwLeUb7A


