



Evaluation of ourBRIDGE for KIDS
YEAR 2
2018-2019

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

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Section I: Executive Summary

I. Executive Summary

A. ourBRIDGE for KIDS Program

ourBRIDGE for KIDS was established in 2013 in response to the needs of newly arrived immigrant and refugee families desperate to find support for their children. During the academic year and through different summer programs, ourBRIDGE for KIDS has served approximately 150 newly arrived immigrant and refugee children from Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, The Gambia, Vietnam, Burma, Bhutan, Thailand, Afghanistan, Iraq, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, among others. This organization supports English Learners (ELs) by providing English support and focused content instruction within a classroom community based on the ethic of care (Noddings, 1992). This community non-profit exists to support young English Learners (ELs) through four tenets of what they call “LERD:” Love, Education, Respect, and Diversity. ourBRIDGE for KIDS is the only non-faith based 501(c)(3) organization in Charlotte and the region that provides socio-emotional and academic support to this population. Their core mission is to “support refugee and immigrant communities by offering a one-of-a-kind enrichment program for newly arrived and first-generation American children.” The organization is committed to developing the English language skills of young learners, supporting their socio-emotional wellbeing, and promoting an appreciation for diversity.

The participants at ourBRIDGE attend high poverty, low resourced schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) system. These schools are racially and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged (EDS), and situated in areas of the community with the highest levels of crime, teacher attrition, and student truancy. Ninety students ($n=90$) completed the pre survey in September and one hundred and twenty one ($n=121$) students completed the post survey in May. Most of the ourBRIDGE kids attend school at Winterfield Elementary, Merry Oaks Elementary, Windsor Park and Eastway Middle School. However, a few students who were able to provide their own transportation came from seven other schools across the district. Specifically, students who participated in the post survey spanned grades K-7 and came from 11 schools: Winterfield ($n = 42, 34.7\%$), Eastway Middle ($n = 34, 28.1\%$), Merry Oaks ($n = 27, 22.3\%$), Windsor Park ($n = 9, 7.4\%$), Charlotte Lab School ($n = 2, 1.7\%$), IIA ($n = 2, 1.7\%$), Winterpark ($n = 1, 0.8\%$), Devonshire Elementary School ($n = 1, 0.8\%$), Veritas Community School ($n = 1, 0.8\%$), and Cochrane Collegiate Academy ($n = 1, 0.8\%$). Most ($n = 112, 92.6\%$) completed the survey in English whereas the other nine (7.4%) completed the survey in Spanish.

B. Purpose of the Evaluation

The goals of ourBRIDGE for KIDS are framed by a focus on academics, family engagement, and cultural awareness of their participants. They also work to support the acquisition and learning of English, academic development, and the socio-emotional development of these students. Through a focused afterschool program that supports students’ daily learning and encourages accountability and participation in the classroom, ourBRIDGE for KIDS provides an environment that promotes positive youth development. Youth participants are able to leave their school classrooms each afternoon and enter a safe space where they are challenged

academically and creatively through purposefully designed activities facilitated by the ourBRIDGE for KIDS team.

There are two main purposes of this evaluation that include (1) to examine the program model to evaluate its effectiveness and 2) to determine the impact of ourBRIDGE for KIDS on the local immigrant community. Thus, the challenge in year two of the project was to find appropriate ways to document the impact of ourBRIDGE the Charlotte immigrant community. To explore these ongoing questions, year 2 of the evaluation expanded the participant pool by increasing the number of student and parent interviews. In addition, staff perspectives were also included in this report. The research team was also expanded to include two graduate students and seven undergraduate students who supported the project by volunteering each week in different classrooms from September of 2018 until June of 2019. The research team spent over 1000 combined hours in the ourBRIDGE classrooms during this period.

The following evaluation report highlights the quantitative results from survey data collected from student participants in year two (2018-2019) of a multi-year evaluation of ourBRIDGE. This evaluation also includes qualitative analyses of one year of field observation in the K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and middle school classrooms taken in the form of field notes. Additionally, the research team conducted individual semi-structured interviews with eleven staff members, twenty-three students, and ten parents. All of the interviews were conducted at ourBRIDGE, lasted 30-60 minutes and were transcribed for analysis. Translators were provided to all participants who requested them. The focus of this year two report focuses on showcasing the lived experiences of the students, families, and staff who make up this organization.

C. Contextualizing ourBRIDGE's History

The origins of ourBRIDGE can be traced back to 2010 when it was known as The Bridge. The Bridge began as a new afterschool program that focused on refugee children in Charlotte's Plaza Midwood neighborhood and was managed by a for-profit tutoring company. Programs, especially those that were non-faith based, that supported newly arrived refugee and immigrant children were rare, making this program critical for newcomers to Charlotte. Sil Ganzo was the Program Director at The Bridge until the program was closed in May 2014. Determined to continue the mission to serve this vulnerable population, Sil led the charge to create a new non-profit organization in 2014 that would serve English Learners (ELs) in a way that affirmed their identities and supported them throughout their schooling and acculturation experiences. Refugee and immigrant children experience traumas such as family separation, life in refugee camps, culture shock. They must navigate schools while trying to learn English and supporting their families as interpreters. Thus, ourBRIDGE for KIDS was born as a community advocacy program that would meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of newly arrived and first generation American children and their families. In 2016-2017, ourBRIDGE for KIDS served 75 kindergarten to fifth grade students from diverse parts of Southeast Asia, Central and South America, Africa, and the Middle East. By the end of 2019, ourBRIDGE reached nearly 150 students from 11 different CMS schools.

2018-2019 marked the second year that ourBRIDGE spent in their permanent space at Aldersgate. Aldersgate has been able to provide the program with a learning space that was separated classrooms with dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces for dining, playing, and large

and small group work. The space was improved slightly this year, more Chromebooks were purchased, and an additional van was donated to help transport kids. Meals were provided by a new vendor, which resulted in a positive response from the students.

D. Curriculum Philosophy

ourBRIDGE believes that its students deserve the most engaging, fulfilling, holistic, and supportive curriculum they can provide. Their curriculum combines research-based and inclusive theories. It is an ESL/ELL curriculum that utilizes STEAM components and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Students experience autonomy and flexibility in their learning experiences. The curriculum (see Figure 2) aligns with Common Core standards and includes many field trips and many out of school enrichment experiences. The program provides one-on-one daily English literacy tutoring to accelerate the students' acquisition of the English language. ourBRIDGE aims to close the communication gap between schools, teachers and families by coordinating home visits, translating school documents, and organizing literacy nights and cultural events for parents at the center. When needed, program staff also provide parents with transportation and translation support at teacher conferences and serve as a liaison between parents and schools.

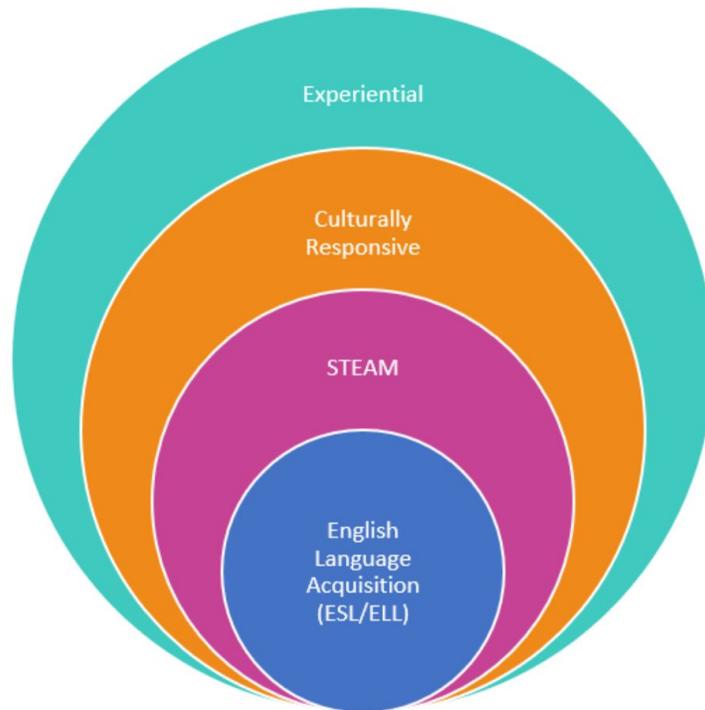


Figure 1. ourBRIDGE Curriculum Philosophy

E. Overview of Methodology

In year 2, the research team was able to document the ways in which the program supports the academic and socio-emotional growth of newly arrived immigrants and refugee children in Charlotte through purposeful data collection from student participants, the ourBRIDGE staff, and ourBRIDGE families. In order to comprehensively capture the experiences of program participants, the evaluation team used quantitative and qualitative data collection methods from September 2018-July 2019. Specifically, the team conducted participant observations and collected data from student pre- and post- surveys, and semi-structured individual interviews. Thematic analysis using grounded theory was used to analyze the responses to open-ended questions. The final evaluation report highlighted the strengths of the program and provided recommendations based on data that were collected from year 2 (2018-2019).

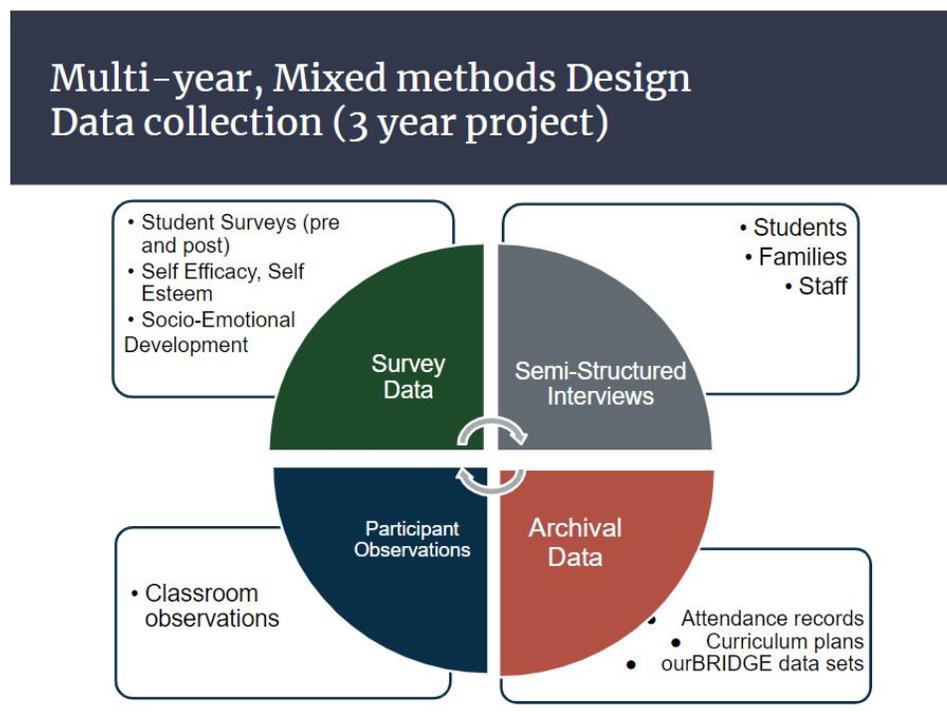


Figure 2: Multi-year, Mixed-Methods Data Collection Design

On site field observations: Field work (in the form of participant observations) took place during the ourBRIDGE after school program for 3-5 hours per week. The research team observed the program staff interactions with the ourBRIDGE participants in each classroom between 2-3 days per week between September 2018-May 2019. Three graduate students and six undergraduate students spent over 1015 total combined hours conducting participant observations in the ourBRIDGE program.

Student Surveys: Surveys were administered to all ourBRIDGE for KIDS participants at two points in 2018-2019. Students were asked questions relating to their self-efficacy, self-esteem, engagement at school, and engagement at ourBRIDGE. We analyzed the

data to determine whether there was any change in these dimensions before and after student participation in ourBRIDGE. In addition to these pre- and post- surveys, research team collected pre- and post- Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) surveys from the students at the beginning and end of the year. The Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) is a norm-referenced assessment tool that focuses on social behavior in elementary and secondary students. The SSRS focuses on the following measurement areas:

1. Social Skills, 2. Problem Behaviours and 3. Academic Competence

Semi-Structured Interviews: Purposeful sampling of staff (n=11), students (n= 23), and families (n=10) was used to identify participants for the semi-structured interviews. These interviews allowed all stakeholders (staff, families, students) to have an opportunity to share their experiences with ourBRIDGE and report any successes and/or areas of improvement.

F. Highlights from Year 2 at ourBRIDGE for KIDS

This research project explores perceptions and outcomes of students, families, and staff at ourBRIDGE for KIDS, a Charlotte-based non-profit dedicated to serving newly-arrived immigrant children. In their eight years of operation, ourBRIDGE has provided a safe afterschool space for hundreds of students; offering homework help; one-on-one tutoring services; English language instruction; discovery-based activities; and a chance to play, create, and share meals with other children their age. ourBRIDGE also helps families access services-- legal aid, transportation to medical appointments, home improvements, and such tangible needs as blankets and winter coats. Researchers have observed students, staff, and parents at ourBRIDGE for two years, conducting interviews, field notes, and multiple participant surveys.

As ourBRIDGE has grown rapidly over the last several years, the organization has adapted, hiring more staff and structuring a new curriculum to meet the diverse needs of the students they serve daily. Many of these students come from challenging backgrounds and deal with continual trauma now that they are in the United States. Some families have fled war and violence in their home countries. Others face constant fear of neighborhood ICE raids; some are dealing with the devastating effects of deportation and family separation. The majority of ourBRIDGE students come from backgrounds that place them at risk of being marginalized in their public schools, many of which are overwhelmed with other at-risk students. In addition to the challenges of poverty and family upheaval, ourBRIDGE kids are attempting to learn a new language while navigating academic expectations. For these students, ourBRIDGE provides a loving community that celebrates the strengths of their home cultures as they work to assimilate to life in the U.S. Children are encouraged to share their emotions and taught healthy alternatives to negative, stress-driven behaviors.

During the study period, researchers observed profoundly positive effects from students' attendance at ourBRIDGE. Their English language acquisition and fluency improved drastically; grades, test scores, and other markers of academic proficiency increased; and problem behaviors and "acting out" gave way to cheerful hugs for their tutors, taking on leadership responsibilities, and expressing excitement at finishing new projects. Parents were interviewed about the program's impact on their children; they were resoundingly grateful for ourBRIDGE and the positive changes they have seen in their children since attending the program. They

expressed joy at knowing their kids were being supported academically and emotionally, thankfulness for the ways staff help families outside of afterschool hours, and even feeling closer to their children. In their interviews and survey responses, students also identified many benefits from participating in ourBRIDGE. Many said they liked “everything” about the program and lit up with excitement while speaking about their favorite tutors and activities. Though interpersonal relationships among students always present challenges like arguing or bullying, students also forged friendships at the center, and the majority reported being more engaged at ourBRIDGE than at their schools.

ourBRIDGE staff members, some of whom came to the U.S. as children themselves, also report significant effects from their work with the organization, including a greater understanding of immigration issues, motivation to participate in social justice activism, and increased patience and compassion in their personal and professional lives. Staff identified potential growing edges for the program, including facility upgrades, curriculum adjustments, increased structure in classrooms, and hiring more staff members. Though field notes indicate that many of these staff members could benefit from additional training focused on teaching strategies, mental and emotional health, and the unique needs of refugee populations, researchers found overall that staff work hard to connect with each of their students, tailoring curriculum and discussions to benefit them and displaying a willingness to serve even after their workday at ourBRIDGE is over.

The ourBRIDGE curriculum, newly implemented this year, centers on weekly themes and allows for age-appropriate adjustment. It was especially effective with elementary students, who creatively pursued scientific and cultural investigation through group projects. Staff and volunteer recommendations indicate weakness in the middle school curriculum, which could be changed to incorporate more of the topics that interest these older students and more of the issues they deal with daily. ourBRIDGE offers weekly clubs that allow students to explore chosen areas of interest like cooking and technology; many students identified these clubs as one of their favorite parts of the program. In addition, students like those served by ourBRIDGE often lack opportunities to just be kids, and the program is designed to offer flexibility, a relaxed atmosphere, and time outside to play.

Section II: Methodology¹

¹ The 2018-2019 research team was composed of UNC Charlotte three graduate and six undergraduate students in different programs in the Cato College of Education. The team supported this project by volunteering in ourBRIDGE classrooms 1-3 times weekly in year 2. The team spent over 1000 hours documenting observations in the form of field notes and reflections. The core team helped provide snapshots of classrooms and experiences of the staff and students at ourBRIDGE and supported the theming and analysis of different aspects of the qualitative data. Katie Wagner, Delaney Burns, Yesika Andino Sorto, and Amilia Keomuongchanh served as the primary research assistants on this project. Noah Horn, Kayla Pendleton, Ashley Witherspoon, Zhu Lin, and Anna Sanczyk helped as volunteers in the ourBRIDGE classrooms as well as with the collection of survey data.

II. Methodology

In order to capture the level of depth of experience from the participants, the evaluation team collected formal observations for one year in each classroom (K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and Middle School). The research team also conducted one-on-one in-depth interviews with a purposeful sample of parents, students, and all lead staff from March-June. The research team recorded participant observations in the form of field notes, and collected both student surveys over two points in time (fall and spring). In year 2, the research team was expanded in order to document each ourBRIDGE classroom and to provide the staff with additional support. In addition to these data collected, student work and administrative data sets were analyzed and used to support data collected from interviews or observations. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Narrative data from participants were analyzed using an inductive analysis approach (Hatch, 2002) by coding, categorizing, exploring, and interrogating data to illuminate emergent themes. To capture program impact, some quantitative measures were collected to log program participation, and collect ratings of satisfaction by students and parents.

A. Instruments/ Data Sources

Student Surveys: A survey with four dimensions was developed and used to measure children's self-efficacy, self-esteem, engagement at school, and engagement at ourBRIDGE for KIDS. Demographic information (grade, school, age) were also collected. Additional items were included to solicit information about children's behavior at home and at school. Four items (e.g., I can speak and understand English) were used to measure self-efficacy, and students were asked to respond to the items on a scale of 1 (not so good), 2 (just OK), 3 (Good), and 4 (very good/Excellent). Eleven items (e.g., I feel useful most of the time) were used to measure self-esteem. Students were asked to respond to these items on a scale of 0 (never), 1 (hardly ever), 2 (sometimes), 3 (most of the time), and 4 (almost always). Seven items (e.g., are your teachers helpful?) were used to measure the students' engagement at school and ten items (e.g., I feel like ourBRIDGE for KIDS tutors care about me) were used to measure the students' engagement at ourBRIDGE for KIDS. To measure the engagement at school and at ourBRIDGE for KIDS, students were asked to respond on a scale of 0 (never), 1 (hardly ever), 2 (sometimes), 3 (most of the time), and 4 (almost always). This survey was administered during Oct-Nov of 2018 (pre-test) and again in May of 2019 (post-test). Internal consistency of the responses were measured by Cronbach's alpha: .67 for self-efficacy, .85 for self-esteem, .77 for engagement at school, and .85 for engagement at ourBRIDGE.

Social Skills Rating System: Students' social skills were measured by the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) developed by Gresham and Elliot (1990). This standardized and norm-referenced scale assesses student social behaviors that affect teacher-student relations, peer acceptance, and academic performance (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). SSRS includes three rating systems: teacher, parent, and student. Teacher and parent forms are available for preschool, Grades K-6, and Grades 7-12. Student self-rating form is available for Grades 3-6 and Grades 7-12. The parent form was not used in this study due to difficulty to reach the

parents, and only teacher and student forms for Grades 3-6 and Grades 7-12 were used. Since the teachers of students did were not available to complete the teacher ratings, the tutors at ourBRIDGE completed the teacher forms.

SSRS Teacher Form includes three scales to assess social skills, problem behaviors, and academic competence. The scale to measure social skills includes three subscales: cooperation (10 items, alpha = .92 for elementary and secondary), assertion (10 items, alpha = .86 for elementary and secondary), and self-control (10 items, alpha = .91 for elementary, and .89 for secondary). The internal consistency for the total scale to measure social skills was .94 for elementary and .93 for secondary (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

The scale to measure problem behavior includes three subscales as well: externalizing (6 items, alpha = .88 for elementary and .89 for secondary), internalizing (6 items, alpha = .78 for elementary and .80 for secondary), and hyperactivity (6 items, alpha = .87 for elementary). Hyperactivity was not measured for middle school students. The internal consistency for the total scale to measure problem behavior was .88 for elementary and .86 for secondary (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

The scale to measure academic competence has no subscales and include nine items with a Cronbach's alpha of .95 for elementary and secondary, respectively (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). The test-retest reliability, interrater reliability, content validity, social validity, criterion-related validity were all satisfactory (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

The SSRS Student form measures social skills only and has four subscales: cooperation (10 items, alpha = .68 for elementary and .69 for secondary), assertion (10 items, alpha = .51 for elementary and .67 for secondary), empathy (10 items, alpha = .74 for elementary and .77 for secondary), and self-control (10 items, alpha = .83 for elementary and secondary). The internal consistency for the total scale to measure social skills for the student form was .83 for elementary and secondary, respectively (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

SSRS emphasizes positive behaviors or preschool skills and includes a brief assessment of potential problem behaviors and academic competence. For each item of social skills and problem behaviors, students receive a score of 1 for "never" 2 for "sometimes," and 3 for "very often." For academic competence, teachers rated each ourBRIDGE student based on the comparison with other children in the classroom on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = "lowest 10%," 2 = "Next Lowest 20%," 3 = "Middle 40%," 4 = "Next Highest 20%," and 5 = "Highest 10%." In addition, national norms have been established on a diverse sample of more than 4000 students. It takes approximately 20 minutes to administer the rating system. SSRS produces both standardized scores with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 as well as percentile ranks relative to the national norm.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with an open framework which allowed for focused, conversational, two-way communication between the researcher and the ourBRIDGE participants. The interviewer followed a guideline using prompted questions. However, sometimes, the conversations with families, students, and staff followed different topical trajectories. Not all questions that were asked of all of the participants

were developed prior to the interviews. Some of the questions were asked during the interview allowing for authentic conversations to emerge between the researcher and the ourBRIDGE participants. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Field Notes

Each member of the research team engaged in participant observations of ourBRIDGE classrooms, using field notes to document important observations and interactions.

These participant observations are used to gain insight into cultural practices and different phenomena at ourBRIDGE for KIDS. Each team member wrote their field notes immediately after their participant observation. When they did not have time, they recorded voice memos on their drives home or in the parking lot that they later transcribed for analysis. Different information was documented in the field notes, most of the time after the session ended. All of the team members were encouraged to participate in all aspects of the programming and to “help out in the classrooms as volunteers” while they were there rather than take notes the whole time. Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein (1997) have developed a list of useful hints² that should be included in all field notes that the team was encouraged to use. The team was encouraged to include notes that included descriptions of everything that could be remembered, initial reactions to observations, details about specific incidences or interactions, and notable behaviors.

B. Data Analytical Procedure

Interpreting Qualitative Data

During the analysis phase, the team identified the major trends and patterns that occur across the various groups or within individuals (Krueger, 1994). We began the analysis process with the organization of field notes and interview transcripts. This allowed us to get an overview of the data. We assembled bits of raw data and highlighted any extreme and interpretative comments during this process. We attempted to first bring order to the data by individually organizing what we saw into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units. We employed what Krueger (1994) suggests in analysis process through a data reduction strategy, considering “words, tone, context, non-verbals, internal consistency, frequency, extensiveness, intensity, specificity of responses and big ideas.” We then interpreted the data together- attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looked for significant relationships across the data. After this process, we began the process of writing different interpretations and conclusions yielded from the data sources.

For the surveys, descriptive statistics as well as mixed Analysis of Variance were used to examine the change of students’ self-efficacy, self-esteem, engagement at school, and engagement at ourBRIDGE for KIDS from the beginning of the year to the end of the year and the differences between three participating schools. Effect size was reported using Cohens’

² This included the following: Date, time, and place of observation, Specific facts, numbers, details of what happens at the site, Sensory impressions: sights, sounds, textures, smells, taste, Personal responses to the fact of recording fieldnotes, Specific words, phrases, summaries of conversations, and insider language, Questions about people or behaviors at the site for future investigation, Page numbers to help keep observations in order.

(1988) criteria for partial η^2 : .01 (small); .06 (medium), and .14 (large). Thematic analysis using grounded theory was used to analyze the responses to open-ended questions. Student responses were coded by categories and then similar categories were merged into themes. Examples of quotes from students' responses were used to support the themes.

C. Participants

Student Participants

One hundred and twenty one students completed the year 2 surveys. Ninety students responded to the survey in the fall of 2018, and 121 students responded to the same survey in the spring of 2019. Discrepancies in the number of participants is due to the fluctuating enrollment of families who enrolled at the beginning of the year and had to leave the program and those who registered late. Twenty-three students were interviewed in year 2. In addition to student surveys, twenty-three students were interviewed, and nine students were profiled as student case studies in year two.

Table : Table of Students Interviewed per grade level

Grade	# of students Interviewed
Kindergarten	0
First	2
Second	3
Third	4
Fourth	7
Fifth	2
Sixth	0
Seventh	2
Eighth	3
Total	23

Parent Participants

Ten parents were interviewed during round one of the interviews, each representing a different country that included Mexico, Iraq, Honduras, and Spain. Eight mothers and two fathers were interviewed in year 2. All of the parents who were interviewed were bilingual and spoke varying levels of English language proficiency. Five of the interviews were conducted in English and five were conducted in Spanish. Parents who requested translators were provided for all of those who requested them.

Staff Participants

In 2018-2019, we conducted individual semi-structured interviews with eleven ourBRIDGE staff members. These included the Program Directors, drivers, On-Site Coordinator, Community/Family Liaison, Curriculum Director, all lead tutors, and select assistant tutors. All of the staff members interviewed were female with the exception of one male lead tutor. Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes and was transcribed for analysis. The interviews from parents, students, and parents yielded over 300 pages of transcription that were later analyzed for themes.

Table : Total number of ourBRIDGE for KIDS Participants

Participants	Total Number
# of case studies	9
# of staff interviewed	11
# of parents interviewed	10
# of students interviewed	23
# of students surveyed	121

Section III: Qualitative Findings

III. Qualitative Findings

A. Student Case Studies

Nine ourBRIDGE students were chosen as case studies for year 2 of the evaluation. Each student was observed by a member of the research team over one year. At least one student from each of the K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and middle grades classrooms is profiled below to showcase the experiences of an ourBRIDGE participant. The selection of students was based on a variety of factors that included the tutors' or different staff recommendations and initial observations/interactions with the students in the classroom spaces. Students who "stood out" in either positive and/or negative ways became the focus of the observations.

Kristopher, Grade 1 (Mexico)

Kristopher was a student in the K-1 classroom at ourBRIDGE. This was a bustling classroom with students who have different personalities, likes, dislikes, backgrounds, etc., and Kristopher stands out here. Kristopher was a first grader at Merry Oaks Elementary School, and he previously attended Winterfield Elementary School. He is short in stature, with long, black hair. Kristopher was quiet and timid at times in the ourBRIDGE classroom, but when he was outside playing, he was loud and full of energy. His family is from Mexico. He lives with his mom, dad, sister, and cousins. His sister, Gwen, is also a student at ourBRIDGE and she was in fifth grade.

One of the first things that made Kristopher stand out was his excitement to learn and his ability and desire to share the knowledge he has gained in his classroom. Initially, Kristopher said that his family was from Brazil and created an entire story of how his family immigrated from Brazil to the United States. After a couple of weeks, though, he mentioned that his family was actually from Mexico. When asked about this later, he told us that he wanted to craft a creative story that was also believable. His excitement about story telling was also evident in the classroom each day.

In the K-1 classroom, there was a substantial amount of activity from both tutors and students. There was never a quiet moment without a student running somewhere, a tutor trying to get the attention of the students, or the students being excited to play outside. Particularly, the boys held a distinct role and place in this classroom. Most of the boys were very loud and tried to gain attention from the tutors or other students every chance they got. Also, most of these boys did not want to interact with the girls, so there was a divide between boys and girls. Kristopher interacted with the boys on some days, while on other days, he chose different individual activities.

Kristopher's personality was different from most of the boys in the classroom, which was the main reason he was chosen as one of the case studies. He showed a great desire to learn, and was most often engaged with the activities the tutors created. He liked to ask and answer questions in small and large group settings. With his gentle spirit, he even served at times as a mediator between different children. One of Kristopher's strengths was his ability to be inclusive.

He was also able to explain concepts or ideas to others, especially when he was interested in the topic. We observed him on many occasions serving as a cultural and language broker³ to the newly arrived students in the classroom. For example, he was extremely helpful to Juan. Juan was a new student who started the program mid-year and was only able to speak in Spanish. Kristopher immediately responded to this need by helping this student and others throughout the year. On another day, during large book group, Kristopher translated the book for a classmate and translated what the student was saying so everyone could understand. Kristopher was able to negotiate his home language use into the ourBRIDGE classroom to support the learning of his peers. He also used his language to facilitate communication between the tutors and the rest of the class.

Although Kristopher could be quiet when the entire classroom was bustling with noise, he was always vocal and unafraid to participate. Whenever the tutor asked a question, Kristopher's hand was usually raised. Kristopher answers questions with very thoughtful, grounded responses. This type of engagement had a positive impact on the classroom environment by encouraging discussion in the larger group settings.

On one particular day, the tutors were introducing Cesar Chavez and his hopes and dreams for our society. One of the tutors asked about the similarities between Chavez and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Kristopher was one of the first students to respond, saying that they both wanted people to love and care for one another. Other students followed suit in their responses and were able to state that both activists wanted to promote peace and to dismantle the hate that exists between different groups of people. Kristopher and other ourBRIDGE students, were able to incorporate their own values into their responses.

One of the factors that did inhibit Kristopher's performance at ourBRIDGE at times was in his interactions with some students depending on their differing personalities. Students at ourBRIDGE have different ways of coping with stressors, and Kristopher often played the role of "mediator" in the classroom. He rarely became publicly angry or frustrated with others. However there were some days he seemed to be more quiet and introspective even during activities he was interested in. Over time, the tutors and volunteers learned that when Kristopher was internally frustrated with other students, he became very quiet.

Kristopher identified several of his own strengths, stating that he was a good student because he listens to teachers, both at school and at ourBRIDGE. Throughout this past year, Kristopher was observed to be a helpful and natural leader. When tutors asked students to pick up trash or to follow directions for an activity, Kristopher followed directions as soon as they were given. In one instance, a tutor asked everyone to help clean up the mess from lunch. While no one else was listening or following directions, Kristopher stopped what he was doing and quietly cleaned up the room..

Kristopher did not seem to have a group of friends he consistently he spent time with at ourBRIDGE. He often played with anyone who was interested in the same things he was interested in, such as soccer, legos, or puzzles. When asked who his friends were at ourBRIDGE, he responded that he did not feel as if he had close friends in the program. At his elementary school, though, he said that he had three to five close friends that he liked to spend

³ Language brokering signifies the ability for bilinguals to translate and interpret material without having any formal training (Tse, 1995, p. 181).

time with. At the end of the year, Kristopher was asked again if he had any friends at ourBRIDGE. He changed his answer and said that his friend was Devon. Kristopher mentioned that he often feels “annoyed with the other students in the classroom because they are very loud.” Whenever he felt annoyed, he asked the tutor to go to the restroom or be excused so he could have some quiet time. This was a mature way of handling a form of stress and frustration, which he attributed to learning from the staff at ourBRIDGE. Other students tend to handle their frustration publicly, but Kristopher coped with it internally and independently.

Kristopher is very intelligent, and when he cares about something he is willing to explain it to its fullest extent. Whether responding to questions about a drawing of how he perceives change or what superpower he would want, or describing the things he did with his family at home, Kristopher always articulated a detailed response.. Kristopher was able to read to some of his peers, and they responded very positively. Kristopher also translated words and phrases, which allowed him to develop his skills as a bilingual student and promoted positive interactions with students who may not have interacted with him in another setting. This also provided Kristopher with a sense of pride and helped develop his self-confidence. Interview and field notes showed very specific ways that Kristopher evolved socially and emotionally due to the relationships he built at ourBRIDGE.

Eurico, Kindergarten (Honduras)

Eurico, a six-year-old kindergarten student at Winterfield Elementary, has been at ourBRIDGE for one year. Eurico was born in Honduras but his family has lived in North Carolina for as long as he can remember. Eurico was quiet in the ourBRIDGE classroom, except during circle time; he raised his hand every day in circle time to share a good thing that had happened to him that day. He says he is a good student and likes to go to school. His favorite part of school was playing outside with his peers, especially hide and seek. Eurico has been at ourBRIDGE for his whole kindergarten career and attends five days a week. The tutors say he has not reported any health issues. Eurico lives with his mother, auntie, two sisters, and a brother. Eurico has never discussed any traumatic events with any of the tutors.

Eurico is a good student at ourBRIDGE and always follows instructions. He likes to talk one-on-one with the tutors and seems happy during group activities. However, Eurico is shy about playing and during less structured activities with his peers. He did not interact with his peers as much as other students did. However, during circle time, he was always excited to share his stories from home with the group of students and the teacher. Eurico’s strengths are his ability to care for his peers and his tenacity. Eurico had difficulty outside and was sometimes made fun of by his peers, but he did not openly show signs of anger or sadness. Despite the teasing, Eurico stopped to help when one of his peers fell on the playground. Each day, you would find Eurico being the first to finish his food, eating it very quickly and asking for seconds from the tutors. The tutors consistently give him more servings, but did express their concern about this behavior.

Eurico rarely speaks with peers or tutors without prompting, and does best with individualized adult attention, without pressure from peers. He was reserved while answering questions about himself, especially those focused on his strengths and weaknesses. When Eurico did share about his life in and outside of ourBRIDGE, he said his strength was writing and his weakness

was math. He was not very talkative when we sat down for the interview and did not want to discuss much else about his life, which was consistent with his behavior in the classroom.

Laura, Kindergarten (Iraq)

Laura is a seven-year-old first grader who attends Merry Oaks Elementary. Her family is from Iraq. She has been attending ourBRIDGE for two years and she has an older sister in the second/third grade class. Laura is a good student at ourBRIDGE and at school, and her tutors have not noticed or been notified of any health issues. She lives with her mother, father, uncle, aunt, older sister, and younger brother. Her parents both speak Arabic, but Laura speaks English at ourBRIDGE, at school, and at home. At ourBRIDGE, Laura was outgoing and talkative, playing with a group of girls and speaking often with her tutors. Laura's strength is her ability to advocate for herself and her needs. If she needed assistance with homework or something else in the classroom, she went to a tutor with her concerns. Sometimes the tutors found it hard to get Laura's attention and to retain it during the lesson. She seemed to enjoy talking with the volunteers and was always looking to show others something new.

During class, Laura was quiet and usually listened when tutors gave instruction. She has not spoken out of turn, but sometimes, she rolled her eyes at tutors during circle time. She interacts primarily with a group of three girls in the classroom, during outside and free time. Laura did her homework quickly each day and seemed to apply more effort if a tutor or adult was working with her. However, she had trouble focusing when a peer from her grade at school was working with her, and often copied their answers.. When Laura was not being addressed by a tutor directly, she was often easily distracted. She always played with her hair or other objects when she became disengaged.

Laura was outgoing in the classroom and willing to work with adults during the different activities offered at ourBRIDGE. Laura seemed to work best one-on-one because she was less distracted; when working alone, she often got off task. She interacted with the tutors often, asking for help with homework, for more food, or for help when there was a problem with a peer. In addition, Laura asked the tutors/volunteers to play with her outside. Laura was rarely disciplined by the tutors in the classroom. Laura was good at expressing her needs and getting help from the tutors, who were responsive to her questions and needs.

As Laura shared about her life in and outside of ourBRIDGE, she stated that her strengths were in reading and writing. She said she is good at both subjects, but finds them very boring. Her favorite book is *Skippyjon Jones*. Laura also said there was nothing in class that challenges her. She enjoys playing hide and seek and tag with her friends at recess, and she likes to do arts and crafts. Her favorite thing to do at home is playing on the phone with her sister, and her favorite foods are pizza and noodles. Laura is a strong student, but finds class boring, which explains some of her behaviors in the ourBRIDGE classroom. Laura was very open during the conversation and shared a lot about her home life rather than her school/ourBRIDGE time.

Nathan, Grade 3 (Nepal)

Nathan was born in Nepal and moved to North Carolina when he was around 2 or 3 years old. He doesn't remember life in Nepal, but he did share that he has visited New York and

Pennsylvania. He has five siblings who do not live with him, and a 3-year-old brother who lives in his home with his mother and father. At home, he speaks some Nepali and some English with his family. Nathan doesn't seem to know why he moved from Nepal and his parents don't speak about it much either. On an average day, Nathan is cheerful, helping Ms. Serena by passing out paper plates or cleaning up paint brushes after the class finishes painting. Occasionally, Nathan got into fights with other boys while they're playing soccer or when they openly defy the tutor's instructions.

Nathan lives in his own world at ourBRIDGE, and he was always doing something that made him stand out from the rest of his peers. Nathan's biggest weakness lies in controlling his anger. He has many strengths, including a deep understanding of empathy, forgiveness, and healing from his emotional experiences. Nathan has grown tremendously during his time at ourBRIDGE. As a result, he has built strong friendships and has positively affected the lives of others. He acted out, but after spending time with him, it was clear to volunteers that he has a huge heart and exemplifies the essence of "LERD" at ourBRIDGE.

During his interview at the ourBRIDGE facility, Nathan claimed that he wasn't a "good student." Despite this, tutors and staff spoke very highly of him. He talked regularly about what he learned at school, citing examples like perimeter and equivalent fractions. He enjoys reading more than math. He also showed a great appreciation for ourBRIDGE. In the interview, he described how he behaved better at the program than at school. Nathan stood out, styling his hair in a way that accentuated his natural forming faux hawk. He sported his usual earrings and school uniform as he walked up and down the hallways. He moved constantly. You would find him often snacking on Cheez-Its instead of sitting down in the many chairs around the room.

After nearly 10 months of observation, it was clear that Nathan was drawn to the other boys in the class. He did not interact or play with the girls very often. Halfway into the school year, a set of twin brothers Harry and Jerry joined the classroom, and they became close. However, this comfortability resulted in multiple instances of these boys causing "trouble" in the classrooms. No matter the day, Nathan can always be found hanging out with a large group of the boys in the 2-3 classroom. Nathan loved to be outside. He thoroughly enjoyed playing soccer and was very competitive. However, Nathan was observed getting into fights during soccer because sometimes he purposely kicked other students when trying to get the ball. Nathan's peers got upset and blamed him for fouling them. This usually made Nathan angry, and the tutors were always on standby, ready to intervene.

During Fun Friday, the tutors often planned different activities for the kids to do such as making paper spinners or slime. Nathan always participated and was excited to show off his work. He usually made a bigger mess than he was supposed to, but he had fun. You would find him off task at times goofing off instead of actually doing the activity. To counteract this, the tutors would intentionally assign Nathan to complete or lead in tasks to help him stay focused. This was highly effective as the attention made him feel important. On his good days, he really enjoyed helping out and took each task seriously. When not given attention, Nathan struggled with anger management. Instead of communicating to others what bothered him, Nathan often turned to anger. It takes Nathan a long time to trust others, but did learn to make good friends. When he would make mistake or get into a fight, he displayed remorse. By the end of the year, it was clear that Nathan realized that respect is needed for classrooms to function. Nathan has clearly grown tremendously since he began at ourBRIDGE. He has learned about empathy and

built friendships with nearly everyone in the class. On the post-surveys conducted in May, many of the boys listed Nathan as their closest friend at ourBRIDGE.

Roberto, Grade 3 (Mexico)

Roberto is a 9 year old third grader. He was in the 2nd/3rd grade class at ourBRIDGE and participated in the soccer club on Thursdays. Roberto was selected for this case study because he was open to sharing his life and struggles, and because he exhibited unique behaviors. He was a very good student at ourBRIDGE and only occasionally got in trouble for acting out. He has attended ourBRIDGE for approximately two years. When asked about school, Roberto displayed a positive attitude and openly shared that enjoys school. Roberto was born in Mexico and has lived in America for a few years. He does not remember exactly how old he was when he moved here. Roberto speaks Spanish at home with his family and English at ourBRIDGE and at school. He lives with his mother and older brother. Roberto often spoke about his father, who was living in Mexico. He has shared that his father was deported to Mexico a few years ago, shortly after the family came to America. This seems to be a traumatic event for Roberto, who says that he misses his father and thinks of him very often. He speaks very fondly of his father and it is clear that his absence has negatively affected him. During his free time, Roberto enjoys playing a game with cups, which he later shared that his father taught him. He is very open with his struggles and talks freely about them; it is clear that he wants someone to listen and be there for him.

His father's absence could be a contributing reason to Roberto's negative behaviors, which often appear to be attempts to gain attention from the tutors and volunteers. He was caught lying about life events in an effort to seek their attention and validation. For example, he told everyone that he was moving and created an elaborate story about it. When asked why he was not honest, he responded by saying that he wanted to see if anyone at ourBRIDGE cared if he moved away. Roberto was an emotional student and openly discussed his father as a reason for being so sad. One day, Roberto became very upset during soccer, and the tutors and students assumed it was over not scoring a goal. However, he later became very emotional, and revealed that he was upset because he and his father used to play soccer together every day. Despite his struggles, Roberto possesses many strengths. He is very kind, especially with other students. He was never observed treating anyone unkindly or speaking disrespectfully. He often went out of his way to make other students happy and feel included.

Roberto is extremely skilled at expressing his emotions for his age. Unlike other students his age, he could very easily articulate to someone how their actions made him feel in a mature and respectful manner. In turn, he learned through ourBRIDGE how to resolve conflicts that he encountered. In soccer club, there were always arguments because of the competitive nature of the sport, but Roberto learned to diffuse conflicts when others couldn't. His peers respected him and listened. He was also a very intelligent student, performing well in school and at ourBRIDGE. He shared in his interview that it was important to him to always be kind, a lesson he learned at ourBRIDGE.

Roberto got along with the different tutors, but most closely interacted with Mr.E., a tutor, driver, and leader of the soccer club. They had very positive interactions and it was clear that he benefited from having a male influence. Mr.E. was very good at helping students like Roberto express how they were feeling. Over the course of the year, Roberto established a very close

relationship with Mr. E which has made a lasting impact on his life. When asked directly about this, he was able to describe lessons he has learned from ourBRIDGE. Even though Roberto struggled at times, he learned many important lessons from the relationships he built at ourBRIDGE.

Sebastian, Grade 3 (Mexico)

Sebastian was a 9-year-old boy and was in third grade in 2018-2019. He was about average height and weight, with black hair that he wore the same way consistently. Sebastian was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States before he began formal education. He lives with his mother and his younger brother, a 2nd grader who attends the same school as Sebastian. His mother began working at ourBRIDGE during the last month or two of the observation period. Both Sebastian and his younger brother speak fluent conversational English. Though they both have a slight accent and their expressive vocabulary is not as expansive as many native English speakers, Sebastian has demonstrated an ability to decode and use academic language. Sebastian is very mature for his age/grade. For example, when he became frustrated during soccer games, he stepped out of the game and sat under a tree by himself. After a few minutes, he was ready to go back and reentered the game without incident. He was liked and respected most students in the 2nd/3rd-grade class at ourBRIDGE. Sebastian is comfortable socially, and can manage emotions easily. He often made his peers laugh and he read to those who needed help. Sebastian is also a good athlete, and easily kept up with the 4th and 5th graders he played soccer with. Above all, Sebastian's biggest strength is his resilience. While some students seemed to complete assignments by guessing or speeding through it, Sebastian took his time, thinking about each question critically. Sebastian sought out volunteers to get the support he needed on test corrections and other assignments. Over the year, Sebastian grew tremendously in maturity and resilience.

Renato, Grade 3 (Honduras)

Renato was 9 years old and in the 3rd grade. He is tall, compared with his peers, with darker skin and very curly hair. His family includes his younger brother, who was in 2nd grade. Both brothers were born in Honduras and immigrated to the United States when Renato was 6 years old. Renato has an intermediate level of English proficiency. He speaks with a distinct accent and doesn't yet have the Tier II and Tier III vocabulary of a native English speaker.

Renato uses his athleticism as a strength. Most of the students play soccer together in the afternoons. Regardless of grade level; Renato was as good or better than almost every one of his 4th or 5th grade peers. He was very fast and strong compared to his peers. Renato has many academic strengths in academics as well. He is a great mathematician, though he did not always do well on tests because the language surrounding the math was often challenging. However, when given numbers, he can almost always solve the problems, and on some occasions, he was even found doing his peers' homework so the class could go outside sooner. Additionally, Renato has a lot of leadership skills. When he wants to, he can lead a group of people and help them seamlessly work towards a goal. This was observed during soccer, class competitions, and welcome meetings. Renato has matured during the observation period, but he still has several areas where he could use more support. He disengages easily; if something failed to go his way, or if he was frustrated or sad, he often stopped participating. What is

important to note however is that Renato, like other some of the other boys improved over time. They were able to learn some coping skills and tap into their strengths. While his behavior was not perfect, he did learn important lessons from ourBRIDGE over the course of the year.

Remi, Grade 6 (Nepal)

Remi was a 6th grade student who has attended ourBRIDGE for 3 years. Observations of Remi with others in the classroom made her stand out. She has a tendency to be confrontational and disruptive in the majority of her interactions with both peers and adults. However, over the course of the year, changes in Remi became evident. Remi is a natural leader and incredibly charismatic. Even though her interactions with others tend to be negative, fueled by anger or frustration, she has a natural ability to lead her peers at ourBRIDGE if refocused. Remi is a very strong negotiator, manipulating tasks in ways that best benefit her. Remi's weaknesses include her academics and her temper. She struggles greatly in math, especially with problems that challenge her conceptual understandings. Lack of academic confidence may be a root cause of some of her anger issues and frustrations.

Remi came to Charlotte from Nepal with her mom, dad, and two brothers three years ago. When asked where she was born, she said Nepal, then very quickly changed her answer to India. She told interviewers that she lives with her auntie, uncle, cousin, baby sister, and two brothers; she did not mention her parents. Although she never said this directly, interviewers suspect that something has happened to her family in the years since she moved to Charlotte. Remi shared that they speak Nepali at home, while she speaks English at school and at ourBRIDGE.

Remi tends to stay quiet in the ourBRIDGE classroom and often wanders around, ignoring any instructions from adults to sit down, get into groups, go outside, or put her phone away. When an adult tries to get Remi to follow directions, she becomes easily angry, aggravated, and at times, explosive. On at least three occasions, Remi engaged in "yelling matches" with the assistant tutor in the room. When asked to sit down, put her homework away, and listen, she would often ignore these requests or disengage completely. Remi was often adamant about continuing to work on her homework because she had so much to do, but the assistant would ask her to stop and engage in the ourBRIDGE activities. This power struggle always ended in Remi jumping up, slamming her chair, and storming out of the room. After these confrontations, Remi stopped bringing her homework in altogether. Remi's academic struggles may be a source of her temper and frustration, along with other things. Remi often expressed that she didn't like math and didn't understand what other students were working on, although she had the same homework. She usually refused help, or gave up doing her homework all together. She shared she was a "kinda good, kinda bad" student at school and at ourBRIDGE.

Friendships were hard to maintain for Rai. Observations reveal that she often came to ourBRIDGE upset or angry. There were two boys in particular that she often argued with, and she rarely interacted with the girls in the room. The students were not allowed to use their phones during for the first hour, but Remi often ignored this rule, and she was on her phone most of the time.

On one particularly tense day, Remi got into an argument with the assistant tutor. She sat at the table where volunteers were helping other students with homework and began scratching her arms hard enough to leave visible red marks. She then started to work on her math homework,

got frustrated, and started scratching herself again. She told the group that she did this because it “both hurts and feels good, and that she did it often.” ourBRIDGE has brought speakers into the middle school room to discuss issues of self-harm; however, during these sessions, Remi would ignore the speakers, yell at the boys sitting next to her, or jump up and storm out of the room. After a few minutes, she would tearfully seek out a volunteer, then come back to join the group. All of staff and volunteers got to know her over time and regardless of how bad her reaction was, they would welcome her with open arms.

The outbursts declined and her behavior improved after Lisa, a new Lead Tutor with a middle school background was hired to lead that class. Lisa’s experience allowed her to connect with students and handle the issues they faced, and her hire had a profound impact on Remi’s interactions with adults in the room. The middle school group also moved into the center’s largest classroom in January, which had a positive impact on everyone. The students now have room to spread out, do homework, eat dinner, and play, and they can easily access the basketball court from the room.

The tutors and volunteers struggled with different issues in the middle school classroom but made efforts when possible, particularly with Remi’s. They tried to show how they cared by talking with her about school, discussing her strengths and challenges, or helping her understand curriculum content. Remi had a hard time connecting with those around her, including peers and adults. However, ourBRIDGE helped create a space for her to learn about herself and think about how to build positive relationships with others. This, of course, often takes some adolescents, especially those experiencing trauma, more time than others.

Celio, Grade 6 (Honduras)

Celio was a 6th grade student and has attended ourBRIDGE for the past two years. He is short, with tan skin, black hair, and brown eyes. He is quiet, hardworking, funny, intelligent, and incredibly sweet. Through different conversations over time, we learned more about Celio. He explained that he was actually born in Charlotte, NC, but his mom immigrated from Honduras. When asked about his father, he became shy and had a loss for words. Later he disclosed that for the majority of his life his dad has been in and out of prison. He has a very close family, consisting of his mom, older brother, and baby sister. His brother and cousin also attend ourBRIDGE. He did not have any medical concerns. Celio is bilingual, speaking intermediate English and fluent Spanish. He speaks English at school and occasionally at ourBRIDGE and he speaks Spanish in all other areas of his life.

Celio would always drop what he was doing and welcome volunteers when they came. Often, he played games and worked enthusiastically on homework with the volunteers. Celio was very interested in origami, and spent many hours folding up paper to make swans, airplanes, and fortune tellers. After months of observations and interactions with Celio it was clear that he has many strengths. Celio is an incredibly smart student. He always completed his homework and was able to help his peers. His English proficiency was high and he leveraged this to serve as a language and cultural broker at ourBRIDGE. When there wereOn the few occasions he needed help with his homework, he sought help. It was clear that he understood the content he was learning at school and always put 100% effort into his work. Celio is helpful, quick to help out the ourBRIDGE staff with a positive attitude. Celio is also extremely creative. Throughout the year, ourBRIDGE provided multiple opportunities for students to create projects and express

themselves; for every activity, Celio created amazing products. He was always passionate and proud of his work. If Celio was not working on a project, he played cards, board games, or math BINGO. No matter what he was doing, he stayed close to the middle school tutors, his brother, or his cousin..

Celio is respectful and others look to him as an example at ourBRIDGE. In his interactions with peers, teachers, and volunteers, he was intentional, thoughtful, genuine, and respectful. These character traits set him apart from his peers at ourBRIDGE and enable him to be an exceptional student outside of ourBRIDGE. However, Celio did struggle a little with coming out of his shell around other people, and his shyness sometimes hindered his ability to connect with other kids at ourBRIDGE. Celio felt the most comfortable connecting with teachers and his family members. During the interview with Celio he described how he struggles with his relationship with his father, since he never sees him. He often feels he gives off a sense of resentment, frustration, and sadness. During conversations about his dad especially, Celio was resentful, frustrated, and very sad. It is clear that this relationship has greatly impacted his life and shapes how he carries himself. That is why ourBRIDGE continues to be a beacon of hope for immigrant students like Celio. It is a place that offers them security, safety, and can distract themselves from the challenges of home life by engaging them in creative ways.

B. Cross-Case Analysis

Each of these case studies highlights a strength in the child that ourBRIDGE helped to develop over time. Kristopher was creative, served as a language and cultural broker, and learned how to self regulate his anger at ourBRIDGE. Eurico was a kindergartener who was sometimes teased by his peers but was loved and supported unconditionally by the staff. He easily shared stories about his family and life in Honduras. Laura, also a kindergartener learned how to self advocate- asking for help when she needed it while openly sharing about her life and opinions. Nathan, a third grader from Nepal who exhibited a lot of anger in the beginning eventually learned how to deepen his understanding of empathy and develop friendships at ourBRIDGE. Roberto, also a third grader, learned to become introspective and show kindness to his peers, even if he missed his father after being deported Sebastian learned how to use his language skills to help others communicate in class and reading to peers who needed help. His laughter was infectious and it spread throughout the classroom. Renato, also in third grade and from Honduras, learned to use his love of math and natural ability to lead in positive ways, even though he struggled with his anger and emotions all year. Remi, a Nepali student who experienced trauma learned that she was loved even when she behaved irrationally. Over time, she began to engage more and share her emotions with those she trusted. Lastly, Celio was an example to others at ourBRIDGE-always willing to help and pitch in when needed. Even though he had a difficult home life, he was able to tap into his creativity at ourBRIDGE and be free.

ourBRIDGE has provided a safe place for Celio, Remi and other students like them. It has become a comfortable place they describe as a “second home.” The staff at ourBRIDGE puts a tremendous amount of effort into creating weekly themes/topics for students to connect with and learn about, including violence, sign language, respect, self-confidence, and making a change. At ourBRIDGE, the middle school staff takes the time to pay attention to each of their students. Celio could easily describe how his behavior at school was totally different than his behavior at ourBRIDGE. He feels like he works extremely hard at school, but he said that at school he was

shy and did not talk at all. At ourBRIDGE, Celio said he feels like another person- someone who is talkative, creative, and comfortable with others.

Socio-Emotional Support

Students' socio-emotional health plays a huge role in their ability to be successful in school and at ourBRIDGE this is thoughtfully considered. Tutors like Ms. Serena often had conversations with the students about their emotions and how to handle feelings. This combination of strong tutors, in-class and professional support made huge differences in the lives of students such as Renato and Sebastian. Both students have noticeably grown in their ability to cope with their emotions. Sebastian, who would get angry, yell, and often isolate him from others during the beginning of the year, changed significantly. By the end of the year, Sebastian recognized his level of frustrations and used coping skills he learned at ourBRIDGE to remove himself from different situations that upset him and calm down. He also started to use other strategies to handle his emotions and tried to remain engaged in his work and during morning meeting for the majority of his time. Sebastian and Renato are the kinds of students often described as "at risk" of being marginalized, overlooked and cast aside by the school system. Despite their many strengths and gifts, these students have academic and socio-emotional needs that often lead to disengagement and inappropriate behavior. Without the daily support system of a program like ourBRIDGE, Renato and Sebastian will likely struggle throughout their educational career. While the class has several smaller social spheres, Renato and Sebastian had a great influence on affecting the attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors of all the students around them. With constant support, love, and patience from the ourBRIDGE tutors, the students who were more challenging in the beginning of the school year showed more controlled behaviors and emerged as leaders in the classrooms by the end of the year.

All of the students were able to vividly describe different experiences at ourBRIDGE that shaped them over this year. Many students talked about getting numerous referrals from different teachers, but by the end of the year, referrals had decreased significantly. Because they were able to spend more time in the classroom, students' reading and language skills also improved greatly. The multi-layered supports that these students received at ourBRIDGE qualitatively changed their behavior in and outside of school. When asked if they felt that ourBRIDGE had helped them grow as people, these students all responded with a resounding yes and could provide detailed examples of how they matured. The socio-emotional support provided by Ms. Serena and ourBRIDGE as a whole has been quite beneficial to all of these students.

Strengths-Based Perspective

It is critical to take a strengths perspective with immigrant students like the way tutors like Ms. Serena did throughout the year. She had students explain the meaning of global holidays, traditions, and dances. She also was able to see her children's individual strengths. Ms. Serena could discuss the strengths of even her most difficult students and she relied on different students to exercise leadership in different ways. It is critical that students have opportunities to bring their knowledge and skills into their learning. This process of learning should be collaborative and a from strengths-based perspective, especially with immigrant students can unlock learning and build classroom community. In all of the classrooms, it became clear how important the role of tutors was during the observation period. The children responded to tutors in profound ways, both positive or negative. Tutors who were not prepared or did could not

honor the ourBRIDGE way were replaced by ones who were. Changes in the middle school room resulted in positive changes in Remi's, for example. The K-1 classroom added a new tutor at the end of the year who only speaks Spanish. This benefitted the students greatly and allowed her to form social interactions and connections between students with varying levels of English comprehension. This allowed students, like Kristopher, who served as language brokers, to gain a mentor who could demonstrate the importance of translating information for other students and teach them how this can foster friendships between students.

Multimodal Communication

The variety of student experiences at ourBRIDGE experience also touches on the importance of multimodal communication in an afterschool setting. Multimodal communication is the expression of various ideas through non-verbal means as well as verbal (Mcvee, 2017). Multimodal communication appears in different domains. Kristopher, for example, was able to answer questions verbally and often did. However, field notes showed how he used non-verbal cues to provide information on how he felt about the classroom environment. When given different opportunities for expression, answering questions or completing activities in a creative, artistic way, students thrived. Working creatively on through activities gave students an opportunity to explore real-life concepts and gain coping skills they can use when they struggle at ourBRIDGE, school, and in life. Celio was particularly invested in these projects and learned great skills that he can use outside of ourBRIDGE. Through his passionate creations, he was challenged to think about life critically and consider topics that many students do not have the opportunity to think about. Celio and all of the students profiled as case studies were open about expressing gratitude and love for ourBRIDGE. Celio raved about Fun Friday and loved to talk about all of the people who have influenced him at the afterschool program. He talked about how ourBRIDGE gives him the opportunity to have free time, participate in fun activities, and get help on homework. Without ourBRIDGE, Celio and other students like him would not be given an environment where his strengths are valued. ourBRIDGE should continue to utilize this form of communication through the acceptance and appreciation of “touch, gesture, talk, body position” to distribute knowledge (Mcvee, 2017).

The Role of Trauma

Research on the socio-emotional health of immigrants, especially new Bhutanese and Nepali refugees gives insight into the hard transitions adolescents like Remi and other ourBRIDGE kids face. It was clear that Remi's move to the United States and her unstable home life has greatly impacted her as a student, influencing her relationships with peers and adults. War, violence, and resettlement have impacted refugees in a number of ways, including higher incidences of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression than the greater population (Betancourt et al., 2015). Additionally, the resettlement process has been shown to cause great feelings of uncertainty and insecurity for children at a formative age (Reed et al., 2012). Taking this information into account, it seems as if Remi (and students like her) may be struggling with issues caused by her resettlement to the United States three years ago. The trauma and stress caused by conflict in her country, along with the process of the move, may be greatly impacting her ability to make connections to her peers and the adults in her life. Her struggles academically may also be a cause for her frustration and temper. ourBRIDGE has impacted her positively by providing her a space to come after school. Without ourBRIDGE as a resource, it was clear that her struggles would be more intensified. However, she would benefit greatly from more time or space to explore her creativity. Cases like Remi reinforce the need for ourBRIDGE

to consider enhancing mental health services that focus on the process of resettlement, trauma, and belongingness for adolescence.

C. Student Interview Analyses

Twenty-three students in grades K-7 were interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview protocol. These interviews took place during the ourBRIDGE regular programming and was conducted with students who were invited to participate and expressed an interest to describe their experiences at ourBRIDGE. These interviews ranged in duration based on the age of the student. The interviews conducted with the younger ourBRIDGE participants lasted 5-15 minutes while the interviews with the middle schoolers lasted up to 25-30 minutes. All of the interviews were transcribed for analysis. However, only thirteen students' interviews were included for in depth analyses. Ten of the interviews were either too short or contained information that was otherwise already reported in the surveys. The following section highlights the responses of the thirteen in depth interviews with students. The following themes emerged after a careful analysis of each response.

Why did they come to the U.S?

Students were asked if they knew why their parents came to the US, and if they remembered their journey. Most were too young to be able to articulate the reasons, but those who did talked about war and to seek a better life. For example, five students in grades 3-8 explained that their parents left because of a bad situation in their home country.

OurBRIDGE, according to students

When students were asked to describe OurBridge to someone who does not know about it, they responded by sharing descriptors such as “fun” and “helpful”. Students in grades 1- 4 described OurBridge as a fun place. They say that they can play outside and do different games. They also describe the activities done at OurBridge as fun. Students in grades 3-8 described OurBridge as a place where they could receive help. The students described getting help with homework and reading. In addition, they described ourBridge as a place that helped their parents. For example: Raina (5th grade) said “If someone doesn't know ourBRIDGE and they need help with their homework, I might say, "This is ourBRIDGE. It's for people who needs help. You can go to ourBRIDGE because this is for kids." And I can say, "If you need help with homework, then you can just tell me, and I can ask them if you can come." Aadan (grade 7) also says “It's an educational program to help students learn English and to have other educational activities.”

Typical Day at ourBRIDGE

Each student was also asked to describe a typical day at OurBridge. They were all able to describe their daily routines that included dinner, homework, outside time, and activities. Specifically, they talked about the following aspects of their day that were most significant.

Meals: 11 out of 13 students (grades 1-8) who answered this question discussed eating. For example, Erica (grade 4) said, "I eat. And then I play outside with my friends, and then we like to talk. And then we make activities. And sometimes we do clubs on Thursdays. And last Thursday we did piñatas, and it was really fun. Yeah. And we finished them this Thursday because we didn't get to finish them." "After that, when there's [still?] Thursdays, we eat and then we go outside. And then we do our homework and do we practice doing tests and pretending-- we try to teach new stuff. And then we clean. If we clean a lot, you get snacks, like treats."

Homework: 8 out of 13 students (grades 4- 8) who answered this question discussed doing homework. For example, Annie (grade 2) said, "So first we eat, and then after eating we go outside. When we're done eating, we go inside and do welcome meeting and then do homework or reading. And when we're done with that, we get to use our phones or go outside again."

Going outside: 9 out of 13 students (grades 1-8) mentioned going outside. For example, Rainasaid, "So a normal day, Monday through Wednesday, we just normally comes in, the van picks us up from our school, and then we just eat dinner, or sometimes we have to wait because sometimes the dinner is late. And then after that, we had welcome meeting, and then we will go outside, and then we will do homework time, which is, we call it, brainpower time. And then after that, we-- during homework, we will pass out snacks. And then after that, the vans start to call, so we just-- and after van one, two, three is called, then we will clean up and clean up our rooms."

Play: 7/13 students mentioned playing. For example, Bipesha (grade 4) said, "We play and we eat and Thursdays we do clubs. And we eat and we go back inside. And then later we might go outside again. I do my homework. And we play and we sometimes do activities."

Favorite Part about OurBRIDGE

The students were asked to describe their favorite part about ourBRIDGE and they responded by providing specific examples about the activities, field trips, club days, and having the opportunity to play outside without much restriction.

Activities: Four students responded to this question with a variation of the different activities ourBridge has. For example, Marie (fifth grade) said her favorite thing was the activities like when they celebrated the Holi Color Festival.

Field Trips: Four students responded by saying field trips were their favorite parts of OurBridge. For example, Yusra (second grade) said "My favorite part of ourBRIDGE is that on Fridays we get to go to the park sometimes."

Clubs: Three students in fourth grade said their favorite part was clubs at OurBridge. For example, Gwen (grade 4) said "club day."

Outside: Three students from grades 4-8, said playing outside was their favorite part of OurBridge was going outside. For example, Julie (grade 4) said her favorite part is going outside."

Impact on School

Students were also asked to describe the ways that ourBRIDGE helped them at school. All of the interviewees discussed the value of homework time or brain power. They specifically talked

about how their reading improved and their English language proficiency increased in just one year.

Homework/Academically: Eleven students from grades 2-8 said that OurBridge has helped them with their homework or with some other form of academics like EOG. Eight students from grades 2-8, said that OurBridge was trying to help them in school in some way. For example, Lisa (grade 2) said "I think I learn in my classroom to study more and pass college." Five students from grades 2-8 said that OurBridge has helped them with their homework in some ways. For example, Katrina (grade 4) said "Sometimes when we don't have homework they always call ourBRIDGE. When we don't have homework they always call our school to make sure that we do not have homework." Three students (grades 3-4) mentioned getting help with their homework when asked what they were most grateful for. For example, Tasnim (grade 3) said "because they help you with homework, they do fun activities, they have science kits, they do reading, we get candy for good."

Learning English: Six students from grades 4-8, have said that OurBridge has either helped them with English. They also have talked about working on reading English. For example, Aadan (grade 7) said "ourBRIDGE has helped me a lot learning English, but it also has helped me a lot just being a better person. And my family really likes it when I come here." Three students from grades 7-8, said OurBridge was a place to learn/get help with English. For example, Sal (grade 8) said, "Do homework, and learn English, and listen to teachers, how to speak, what they say, what they do, that things Four students said that OurBridge has helped them with their English. For example, Alex (grade 7) said "They have helped me a lot with English and just how to do your homework and things, but they've also taught me a lot about drugs and how to present yourself."

Reading/ Math: Three students from grades 2-4 said OurBridge has helped them in math. For example, Gwen (grade 4) said, "By improving my skills in math and reading." "I used to be, in math, a B plus student. Now I'm a A student"

Impact on Family

When asked about how ourBRIDGE has helped them or their families, each student was able to do this enthusiastically and with detail. Most described how helpful ourBRIDGE tutors and volunteers helped them with homework, reading, and with their English. More importantly, the students identified specific ways that ourBRIDGE has helped with economically, providing outside resources, and showing that they care about their welfare.

Helped parents economically: Four students from grades 3-4 have said that OurBridge has helped their parents in some way financially. For example, Peter (grade 4) said "ourBRIDGE has helped my family because now my mom does not have to take off a lot of days from work to watch me at home. And ourBRIDGE has helped me because it has enhanced my learning to do better."

Taking care of me: Three students from grades 2-4, said that OurBridge has helped them by taking care of them. Five students from grades 2-4 mentioned food when they were asked what they were most grateful for. For example, Julie (grade 4) told us how ourBRIDGE provided them with meals and even sent meals home to her family when

she told them her siblings didn't get to eat some days .Two students mentioned that OurBridge taking care of students has helped the community by allowing their parents to work. For example, Katrina (grade 4) said, "By taking care of us." "When our parents go somewhere and they're not home they tell us to stay until our parents pick us up"

Gave Hope about Future: Three students from grades 4-7 said that OurBridge has made them think about their academics. For example, Alex (grade 7) "It has helped me a lot in terms of my future learning English and also just being more motivated in my classes."

Respect: Three students from grades 2-8 mentioned that OurBridge has taught them about respect when asked about the important lesson they have learned from OurBridge. For example, Sophie (grade 8) said "I learned about you have to respect each other and you have to do what you want to do it and must do you have to focus on your study."

Affirming Diversity

Students were also able to easily describe the ways that ourBRIDGE taught them about how to celebrate others, while acknowledging the richness of their own diversity. Four students from grades 2-8 mentioned learning about the food of different people. For example, Yusra (grade 2) said "Oh. What other country eats and-- because yesterday we tried some food from Africa. I forgot the name of the country." Two students from grades 3 and 7 taught them that people are different. For example, Alex (grade 7) said, "they haven't necessarily taught me-- I don't know a lot about Honduras, but they've taught me a lot about Honduran people and that Honduran people are coming here to learn English and to have more opportunities. It has taught me that we are all kind of different, but at the same time, we're all equal and almost the same as well.

Differences between ourBRIDGE & school

All of the students were asked to describe their experiences at school and compare them to what they did at ourBRIDGE. Students first describe the tutors as different than some of their teachers. They described ourBRIDGE staff as "nice," and "helpful." Seven students from grades 3-8 described the tutors at OurBridge as nice. For example, Sophie (grade 8), said "Miss Elyse is so nice teacher. I know all the teacher is nice but like Miss Elyse is so nice and Miss Alma, Miss. Laura, Miss Layla. All teachers are nice. I like the teachers the most helping other student and they understand their feelings." Seven students from grades 3-8 described the tutors at OurBridge as helpful. For example, Raina (grade 5) said, "My favorite thing about my tutor is they help me with homework, and they cares about us, and take care of us while we're here with them. Because their job is to take care of us, especially me because since when I start ourBRIDGE this year, when the first day of ourBRIDGE, I was so nervous because they told us that we're getting a new tutor next year. And then I was like, "They're not going to like me. They're not going to take care of me. But when I really came to ourBRIDGE, I just asked them questions and they could help. They help us. But sometimes they help us more with homework because that's what I need help with more"

D. Parent Profiles

Ten parents were interviewed in 2018-2019. Their ages ranged from 29-41 and all had at least one child in the ourBRIDGE for KIDS program this past academic year. The parents included

included in the study came from Mexico, Honduras, Iraq, and Spain. All of the ourBRIDGE parents were invited to participate in interviews. Letters were sent home to families and those who expressed interest were called. Fifteen parents volunteered, but only ten were able to make the interviews. Parents who were not interviewed were unable to get off of work during the interview sessions. The interviews took place at ourBRIDGE during the program hours, on a Saturday event, or at a local coffee shop. Sometimes younger siblings were present while their parents were interviewed. Parents who requested translators were provided one. Six of the interviews were conducted in Spanish with a translator present. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and later translated into English when necessary. The interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes, yielding over 120 pages of data for analyses.

Table 1: Parent Profiles

Name	Age	Country of Origin
Alicia	29	Mexico
Audra	41	Honduras
Elaina	41	Mexico
Leticia	37	Mexico
Luna	33	Mexico
Melissa	40	Mexico
Osmundo	40	Spain
Regina	41	Mexico
Zina	34	Iraq
Zufar	38	Iraq

Alicia (Age 29, Mexico)

Alicia is a 29-year-old parent who sends has two of her three children at ourBRIDGE. She was born in Vera Cruz, Mexico and came to the United States at age 10. Alicia’s mother came to the United States for a year, then came back for her and her sister. They attempted to cross the border twice. The first time they attempted to come to the U.S., they crossed under a bridge. They were unsuccessful because they could not find a ride to the interior of the United States. Her mother hired a coyote for their second attempt across the border. They crossed a river and only walked for about 15 minutes before her stepfather picked them up and drove them to North Carolina. Later, she moved to Tennessee and then to Charlotte.

Alicia says she doesn’t remember a lot of her life in Mexico. She remembers playing outside a lot with her cousins and neighbors in the street. She also remembers that her house in Mexico was not made well, and everything was very expensive in Mexico. Alicia was open in her interview and shared many details about her experiences. She described the time that Alicia’s mother sent her sister back to Mexico, because her sister was uncontrollable. Her sister’s

second trip into the United States was more difficult because she was put in a detention center. Alicia says she realized how important it was that she was good. She did not want to go back to Mexico and lived her life with positivity. While Alicia was in school, she was bullied for not being able to speak English. She was very lonely in the United States because her only interactions were at school and with her babysitter. All of her children were born in the United States. She says she and her family live in fear of deportation. Her husband works in construction and he is wary of who he hires because if they get in trouble, he could also get in trouble. They are both afraid of driving because they do not want to be deported.

Alicia and her husband found ourBRIDGE because they live close to the center. She assumed it was for “only white kids.” When she found out it was a free program for immigrant children, she was very excited. Her daughter began by going to the reading camp over the summer. She says her kids like school, though her third-grade daughter doesn’t like how long the days are at ourBRIDGE. Alicia says that the biggest thing ourBRIDGE has helped them with is homework, because she had a lot of difficulty helping them with math. In addition, since coming to ourBRIDGE, her daughter Marie has been meeting her IEP goals. The program is helping her kids in reading, and has helped her daughter Eve become more social and outgoing. Alicia says the thing she would change about ourBRIDGE would be transportation because she is currently dropping them off and picking them up. She enjoys the people who work at ourBRIDGE. She describes them as “all good people who are very helpful and call her often.” She also enjoyed the community days because there she is able to connect with other ourBRIDGE parents and make new friends.

Melissa (Age 40, Mexico)

Melissa is 40 years old, from Oaxaca, Mexico. She speaks English and Spanish and left Mexico in 2005. She didn’t have a big reason for coming she at first; she just wanted to see the United States, but then she decided to stay. A typical day for her in Mexico started with work at a radio station from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., then she went to lunch and back to work until 7:00 P.M, and listened to music and ate dinner in the evenings. She says the biggest difference between the U.S. and Mexico is the economy. In Mexico, she was only paid around \$150 every two weeks, but in the U.S. she is able to buy things for her children and take them out, and she doesn’t have to think about every step she is taking with money.

Her typical day here is more hectic because she has children now. She starts the day by making sure her daughters get up and eat breakfast before going to school. She takes them to the bus stop and has time to do chores around the house, and does activities with her younger son, who isn’t in school yet. She sometimes goes on walks, to buy groceries, or to the library with her son. She then picks up her daughters and brings them to ourBRIDGE, makes dinner, and picks up the girls. When Melissa first came to the United States, she didn’t want to stay because it was so far from her parents and she couldn’t go back to visit them. Paying her bills was also very difficult in the beginning. She says she has been treated very well in the United States; no one has disrespected her or robbed her. She says the hardest thing has been being away from her parents. She misses hugging them; she can’t take care of them when they are sick or see them get older. When she first moved to the U.S. her brother helped her. He bought her clothes, gave her advice, and calmed her nerves. Melissa’s family recently moved, and her kids now attend Windsor Park. She likes the new school a lot; she says the teachers are very helpful and she tries to be involved. Melissa’s daughter Josie is reserved, quiet, and loves art. Her daughter Isabelle is more extroverted and friendly. Josie is more focused on her studies whereas Isabelle

needs a little bit more oversight to make sure she gets her schoolwork done. She says both girls are good students. Josie was able to go from a three to a four on the EOG with help from a boot camp. Isabelle is also a good student and is in therapy for pronunciation. Both girls love school.

Melissa found out about ourBRIDGE from Isabelle' speech therapist at school. ourBRIDGE came to the school and signed them up. The girls have been attending ourBRIDGE since April. Melissa says ourBRIDGE has helped her kids in reading and helped Isabelle with her English. In addition, Isabelle has been doing better on her homework. She says the two people who have most helped her and her kids are Ms. Serena and Ms. M. also, the tutor sat down with Isabelle last week and read with her. Melissa says ourBRIDGE has let both kids meet more friends. She thinks ourBRIDGE could be improved by having more reading. She also thinks it is important for them to do reading in both English and Spanish because she wants the two girls to maintain their Spanish. She says she is most afraid of being taken away, and that her husband might be taken away. She is afraid, but she is hopeful for immigration reform in this country.

Elaina (Age 41, Mexico)

Elaina is 41 years old and moved to the United States in 2003 around the age of 30. She grew up in Michoacán, Mexico. Her typical day there began by taking her son to school and going to work in a tortilla shop with her husband. Her husband was paid around 500 pesos a week, while she was paid 180 pesos a week, the equivalent of about \$20 to \$25.. She says she was very poor when she lived in Mexico; there was a lot of poverty there, and that it was very difficult to eat well. She says life in the United States is better because things are cheaper.. A typical day for Elaina in the United States begins around 5:00 A.M. She makes lunch for her husband and takes her kids to school, then comes back and does the chores.

When Elaina moved to the United States, her first opinion was that the country was very beautiful. The streets are clean and the trees are beautiful, which is different than Mexico. Mexico, she says, has gotten worse since she has left, with more violence and crime. Elaina says life is easier in the United States because you can eat well, dress well, and have a car. When she first arrived, people treated her poorly because she couldn't speak English. They would ask her to say things in English, but she didn't know how and couldn't tell them she had just arrived in the U.S. She says people treat her better now, and try to help her in Spanish even if they don't speak Spanish. Elaina says the hardest thing about immigrating was leaving her mom and dad. Her mother passed away while she was in the United States, which was difficult. Elaina's sister in law helped her when she initially moved to the United States. She let Elaina stay in her home for two months while she looked for her own apartment.

Elaina says she knows her children "aren't amazing students, but I wish they were better, but only God knows." However, she loves that they come to ourBRIDGE because she cannot help them with homework and ourBRIDGE helps them learn more. Her kids have attended the program for two years. She says that ourBRIDGE has helped her family by teaching Keith to read more quickly. The program has helped Gwen with homework and reading, and her grades have improved. When their air conditioner broke, ourBRIDGE helped her family find air conditioning. Elaina also says her children have become closer to her because of their time at ourBRIDGE. Ms. Yasmine and Ms. S. have helped her a lot by translating things and giving advice. She tells people that ourBRIDGE is good and has helped her children and supported her family. She says she has seen changes in her children. She is most afraid of either her or

her husband being deported, and has nightmares about it. She doesn't want her children to go to Mexico because it is difficult and her family suffered a lot in Mexico. They had to work hard to buy shoes and clothes, whereas here it is easier. She hopes "that God touches the president's heart." She is very thankful to ourBRIDGE and that she hopes the program never ends.

Leticia (Age 37, Mexico)

Leticia is 37 years old. She was born in Mexico and grew up there. She speaks Spanish and a little bit of English. She moved to the United States when she was 29, because she got married and separated in Mexico. She did not want to live there after the separation, so she moved to the United States, where her family lives. On a typical day in Mexico, Leticia worked as a cashier in a pawn shop. Her salary was very low and she worked all day to pay for transportation and food; once she paid for those things, she had nothing left. Leticia's typical day in the U.S. involves taking her kids to school; on the weekends, she takes them to the park. She is not currently working because she has a one year old at home.

When Leticia first arrived in the United States, she thought that you could live well here if you work. She says that as an immigrant, she always had to be on alert because of checkpoints and raids, but life in the United States is still good because she can give things to her kids. When she first arrived, she saw there was racism and there is still racism now. She says that people discriminate against you if you do not speak perfect English. She shared that she even felt discriminated against by other Spanish-speaking people- especially if they have lived here longer and are now legal. She had to work really hard when she first arrived in the United States, and she especially struggled with transportation. She told us that one helped her with transportation when she first arrived, but she figured it out after about 2 months. Life is easier now because she has a car. When she first arrived here her cousin helped her, allowing her to live with him for two years. She says they had a rough relationship later, she started to talk to the father of her daughters.

Leticia's daughters have attended ourBRIDGE for 3 years. She found out about the program from her sister in law and her sister in law's friend. She says ourBRIDGE has helped her daughters because she doesn't know how to help them with their homework as it has gotten harder. ourBRIDGE has provided her with translators and because of the program, she doesn't have to have a babysitter. Leticia says the staff is extremely helpful in many ways. She tells people that ourBRIDGE is a good program that helps her children with homework, especially when they don't understand.

Leticia's older daughter has always been studious, but her grades are improving and she is receiving recognitions and making the honor roll now. Her middle daughter likes to come because she gets to play and they give her food. She also likes going to the park. Leticia says ourBRIDGE could be improved by expanding the program, allowing more kids to come, and providing more support and transportation. She suggested a meeting point for all the children in each neighborhood. She is most afraid of immigration raids, and she says her children are very scared as well. She says it is very traumatizing for her children because they are afraid of the police. She is hopeful that one day she will become a citizen.

Audra (Age 41, Honduras)

Audra, 41, was born and grew up in Honduras. She has three children, ages 21, 8, and 1. She speaks Spanish and a little bit of English. She left Honduras in 2007 when she was 24 because

her husband lived in the United States. She had lived alone with her son in Honduras for 6 years, then left by herself and later went back to get her son. During a typical day in Honduras, Audra worked in the house doing chores. She says the difference between the U.S. and Honduras is that there was a lot of poverty in Honduras and they only had enough money for food there. Her typical routine in the U.S. is to wake up, get her children up and ready for school, put them on the bus, and get ready for work. She leave work to pick up her kids after school and bring them to ourBRIDGE. When Audra first arrived, she thought about how different it was here because she could give her kids a better life and work in the United States. In her country, there was a lot of violence and crime, and though she is scared here, she feels safer than she did in Honduras. When she first arrived she was treated fairly well, though there were some people who were mean, especially to people who didn't speak English. Audra has had two different jobs in the United States. When she first moved to the U.S., her husband helped her. She initially had a bad experience because of a woman who lived with her. She also struggled with getting sick, and was in a coma for three weeks. She is well now, but it was difficult then because she had to leave her job. She also found transportation difficult. She had to be up at 5:00 A.M. waiting for a ride and didn't get home until 8:00 or 9:00 pm.

Audra says her 8-year-old has a lot of problems in school. He has ADHD and he goes to therapy. His grades are improving, though, and he loves coming to ourBRIDGE. She says the program is a huge help for her. She got involved with ourBRIDGE because one of her friends told her about it. Her son has been attending for a year, and the program has helped him with his homework. Audra describes ourBRIDGE as a place that helps with homework and gives her son something to do after school. She says her child has changed a lot because of his involvement.

She thinks ourBRIDGE could be improved by expanding transportation, because she knows people who need the program but cannot provide their kids with transportation to ourBRIDGE. She likes that her son can play, but she also thinks students should have more time to do homework. She is hopeful to be able to get her driver's license one day and to be at peace. She says she is afraid to go out because of immigration.

Luna (Age 39 Mexico)

Luna was born and grew up in Acapulco, Mexico. She speaks Spanish. She left Mexico in 2007, when she was 27, because of the insecurity in her city. She says she was always very independent and left the country with a friend. Her typical day in Mexico was working from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. as a waitress, with no days off. She would leave her house at 6:30 A.M., get back at 9 P.M. and spend time with her child after work. The differences she noticed between Mexico and the United States were the climate, the food, and how people treat others. She says it is not as warm in Mexico as it is in the U.S. When Luna first moved to the U.S., there was some discrimination, and she had trouble with communication. She had intended bring her child with her, but decided not to because of instability. A neighbor from Luna's city in Mexico helped her when she arrived in the United States, by allowing Luna to live with her for three months and buying her clothes. She lived in California, Oregon, and Atlanta before arriving in Charlotte. The people in Atlanta were not very receptive of her, but now, she feels more settled. She met her husband and started a family here. Luna says things have been better in Charlotte because she feels more connected to other people and there are more people from Mexico. She still gets "weird looks, but she doesn't care anymore." She has struggled with living without her family

the most.

Luna has four children, and three of them live in the United States. She says that her kids are good students; they aren't "super stars," but they have the drive to do well. Two of Luna's daughters attend ourBRIDGE. She heard about ourBRIDGE from two women in her apartment complex who were giving applications. At first, her kids did not want to come to ourBRIDGE, but now, they always want to come. Luna says that ourBRIDGE has helped her family a lot. She talked to Ms. Yasmine to get help for Nikki in reading, and she says Ms. Yasmine and Ms. Serena are the most helpful staff members. She describes ourBRIDGE as a good organization that helps kids with homework and makes sure they have time to play. She says it's "a good stress reliever for the moms because the kids come home and already have their homework done." Her daughters have become more interested in school and playing with other kids because of their time in the program. She says ourBRIDGE has been educating them as well.

Regina (Age 41, Mexico)

Regina moved to the United States in 1999, when she was 21. She speaks Spanish. Regina currently works in the K-1 classroom at ourBRIDGE. She got the job by speaking with Serena at the health fair. She has two sons who currently attend ourBRIDGE. She left Mexico, she says, because it is very poor. Life was difficult in Mexico because of poverty, hunger, and violence. Regina's typical day in Mexico consisted of working in a clothing store and a kindergarten classroom. She says there are a lot of differences between Mexico and the United States. The economy is bad in Mexico and there was a lot of discrimination between the poor and the wealthy, especially in the school system. She says the only thing she liked in Mexico was the food. Regina says people in the United States have always treated her well, and her opinions on the U.S. have stayed the same since she arrived. She says the most difficult part of moving to the United States has been learning English. Regina didn't know anybody when she moved from Mexico, but she met people from El Salvador who helped her, giving her a room to live in and buying clothing for her family.

Regina says her children like ourBRIDGE a lot. They get their homework done and meet new friends. They also like their teachers. She first heard about ourBRIDGE when the organization held sign ups at the open house at her kids' school. Her children have attended ourBRIDGE for one year. Regina says that ourBRIDGE has allowed her kids to learn more Spanish and English. The tutors are very caring and the kids are happy. She has been able to share ourBRIDGE with other people in the Latino community. She says there are a lot of people that want to come but don't know there is a program like this. Regina says Ms. Serena has been the most helpful person at ourBRIDGE. She describes ourBRIDGE as an afterschool program that helps students with their homework, where the kids have fun and eat well. She says her children have been happier since joining ourBRIDGE, and they have learned how to play soccer. She says that ourBRIDGE should share information about the program with other people so more kids can be involved.

Zufar & Zina (Ages 38, 34, Iraq)

Mr. and Mrs. "Halabi" have been married for 11 years. They have three children: Hanna (grade 1), Anna (grade 3), and a younger son. Hannah and Anna attend ourBRIDGE and Merry Oaks Elementary School. Both parents were born and grew up in Iraq and speak English, Kurdish, and Arabic. Zufar, the father, worked as a translator for the army in Iraq. Their typical day in

Iraq started with him the husband going to work and his wife staying at home, taking care of the girls and the house. Hannah and Anna were both born in Iraq; the family left in May of 2014 because the country was unsafe..They say the difference between the U.S. and Iraq is that there is more freedom in the United States. Zufar says in the United States he has a better job, better life, and better schools for his daughters. During a typical day for the family in the U.S., he goes to work while his wife and daughters attend school, then Hannah and Anna go to ourBRIDGE.

When the family first arrived in the U.S., their impression was that it was a “free country” and that “anything you wanted, you just had to go get ” Lives are better and more doors are open here. Zufar says that the family has changed since coming to the United States, learning English and other new things and doing a lot of traveling around the United States. When they first came to the U.S., they were sad because of the people they left behind, and their biggest struggle was learning English. Zina went to CPCC to learn English. She says learning to drive was difficult for her, and at first she was scared to go to the bank, school, and other places in the community. Now, she feels more comfortable. The couple also noted America was different because women are allowed to drive. Zufar’s captain in the army helped them do the paperwork and apply to move to the United States. Once they arrived in the U.S., a woman named Amy from CPCC helped them and referred them to ourBRIDGE. Jeff, a community outreach member, helped them find a house.

The Halabis say Hannah is a great student who likes school, but their older daughter, Anna, is not as good a student. She doesn’t like school because she doesn’t like homework, reading, and writing. However, both daughters like ourBRIDGE because they can have fun, play and have friends. The Halabis began taking the kids to ourBRIDGE in the summer of 2017 for camp. ourBRIDGE teaches the girls new, different things that they don’t learn at school, like gardening, crafts, and painting. They also get to go on field trips, and Anna loves playing dress up at ourBRIDGE. In addition, ourBRIDGE helps both the kids with their homework. The Halabiss say the most helpful person at the organization is the person who calls them with updates. They say ourBRIDGE is very helpful for them because it takes care of their kids and provides them with support. They think the program could be improved by having more time for homework and teaching writing and reading, with less play time.. The Halabiss currently are focusing on getting their citizenship.

Osmundo (Age 40, Spain)

Osmundo is a 40 year old parent with one child that attends ourBRIDGE. He was born and grew up in Barcelona, Spain and speaks Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, and English. He came to the United States to study at the University of Pittsburgh at the age of 25. He earned a master’s degree in history at the University of Pittsburgh and moved to Charlotte in 2012 for a job at UNC Charlotte. During a typical day in Spain, Osmundo studied, attended classes, and worked at his parents’ bar or at other jobs. He says there are many differences between the U.S. and Spain. There is a larger academic community in the U.S., with more colleges and more opportunities. Colleges are more rigorous, with more resources and money for research. When he moved here he was surrounded by grad students and professors who were committed to their work, which was very intellectually stimulating.

In the United States, Osmundo’s typical routine starts by making lunch for his son, Julian, taking him to school, and going to UNC-Charlotte to work. He then takes Julian to ourBRIDGE and

later picks him up. When Osmundo first got to the United States he loved the intellectual life. He was impressed with the culture around reading books, especially the public library system. He was also interested by the amount of money people put into cars here. His opinion about the U.S. has changed a little since he has moved to the south. He saw the “legacies of slavery and inequality” in the south when he moved. He also noticed that there were no labor unions and worse health insurance than in Pennsylvania. He says the majority of people treated him well when he came to the United States, but the thing he struggled with most was learning the language. He says that his friends and colleagues at the university helped him a lot when he first moved to the United States, particularly his immigration specialist at UNCC. He says his son is a good student but he struggles with the discipline implemented at Julian’s school, and talks about how he thinks the school is like a “prison camp.”

Osmundo found out about ourBRIDGE from his ex-wife’s coworker, and Julian has been coming to ourBRIDGE since January/February 2019. He says ourBRIDGE has helped Julian by giving him more activities and opportunities to meet and play with kids his age. It has helped Osmundo by allowing him to work more hours, which makes an impact on his family’s life. Osmundo has not met many staff members, but he does remember that the people who helped him with registration were very helpful. He would describe ourBRIDGE as “a program for refugees and first-generation immigrants to have chances to meet and know more about American culture, reinforce their schoolwork, and also have some time together every day.” Osmundo says Julian has changed by gaining more confidence. He thinks ourBRIDGE could be better if the kids could visit more places and have more activities. He is most afraid of the discourse around immigration. He says the immigrant population in the U.S. is suffering, and he is worried there will be more difficulties and obstacles in the future. He is hopeful that things will change from “this absurd anti-immigrant crusade.”

E. Parent Interview Analyses

Reasons for coming to the United States

When the parents were asked why they left their home country to come to the United States there were two major themes: family and the current state of their home country. Parents left to join family members in the United States or to get a better life for their family. Other parents left because of conditions in which they were living in their home countries. These conditions ranged from poor economies to war or dangerous conditions.

Family

- “I first got married there and I separated from my husband and I did not want to live there anymore. I had to leave and the option I had was to come here where my family lived.” Leticia G.

Economic reasons

- “Because life was really hard...It is really poor. I took my son to school, went to work in a tortilla shop where my husband worked. My husband was paid 500 pesos a week and I was paid 180 a week.” Elaina F.
- “Well, my mom was a single mom and things were hard for her so she had to come here and work for the three-- because there's three of us.” Alicia R.

Poor Conditions

- “I decided to leave because I was always very independent. One of the reasons was the insecurity in the city. I decided to take an adventure and come here with one of my friends. Thanks to God I was able to pass and got here safely, and well, I am here now.” Luna

Typical day/Life in home country

When the parents were asked what their typical day was like in their home country or what life was like many replied with work, school, chores, and being around family. Parents often said they worked long days in various jobs. Other parents mentioned going to school and being with their families during a typical day.

Work

- “Yes, I worked in a pawn shop as a cashier...Salary was really low and a lot of work. You had to work all day and pay for transportation and food. Nothing was left.” Leticia G.
- “What was a day like? Work. I worked as a waitress. I worked from 7 am to 8 pm every day. I did not have a day off. If I needed a day off, they gave it to me. It was a routine. Everyday I would leave my home at 6:30 and get home at 9 at night with my child. I had a child who was five years old in that time.? Luna
- “It is really poor. I took my son to school, went to work in a tortilla shop where my husband worked. My husband was paid 500 pesos a week and I was paid 180 a week.” Elaina F.

Student

- “Well, so I was a student there always, so I would normally study my classes at the university and then work at my parents' bar or somewhere, wherever I could work. And yeah, most of my days were like that I guess.” Osmundo D.

Family

- “Well, when I was there, I worked in a house doing chores. Other than that, we celebrated Christmas and there was some good vibes. It was always within the family though, the celebrations.” Leticia
- “In Mexico I was surrounded by my cousins and neighbors. It was all the time playing outside in the street.” Alma
- “In Mexico I was surrounded by my cousins and neighbors. It was all the time playing outside in the street.” Alicia R.

Comparison of home country to the United States

When the parents were asked to compare their home country with the United States the most common point of comparison was the economy. Five out of the ten parents said the economy was better in the United States, which generally made them more capable of buying things for themselves and their families. Another parent said that they didn't have as many family or friends in the United States compared to their home country.

Economy:

- “To eat well in Mexico, you have to work extremely hard for a month... You see a lot of poverty there...Oh, a lot. Things are cheaper here.” Elaina F.
 - “The difference is that here you can work a little and give your children a better life. There, nothing lasts. You either ate or bought a new pair of shoes” Leticia G.
 - “But the biggest thing is the economy. Here, you can give yourself some nice things. So you can take your kids out, you can buy yourself a nice clothes, but when you're in Mexico, you kind of have to think about every step you're taking, with money, because you would only make about US \$150 every two weeks.” Melissa
 - “There are a lot of differences. First, the economy is terrible in Mexico. But, there is no discrimination here. All of the kids go to the same school who live in the same area. In Mexico, there are poor and rich people, there are differences. You cannot go to a school or not all people have the right to go to a certain school. There are rights here for you to go to a certain school, and everyone has a right to go to school, yes. In Mexico, I only like the food.” Regina O.
- No Family:
 - “In Mexico I remember being playing outside all the time. Here it's more like inside the house and because parent has a lot of work, I was always with the babysitter. No family, no siblings, no cousins to play with, just the lady that was taking care of me and myself, so.” Alicia R.

Typical day in the United States

When the parents were asked about their typical day in the United States there were two common responses: taking care of their home/kids and going to work. Many parents - four out of

the ten - had young children they watched in the home or did chores in their homes. Two parents went to work during a typical day in the United States.

Taking care of kids/home:

- “Well, I get up early, get my children ready. I wake up at 5 to make lunch for my husband, take my kids to school, come back, do the chores and all.” Elaina F.
- “Same. I am not working right now because I have a one year old. I take my kid to school. In the weekends, I take them to the park.” Leticia G.

Work:

- “Yes, so I'll normally take Julian to school. Well, prepare lunch for him and everything, and take him to school. Then go to the university to work. And then pick him up, or come here now that he's here, and work a little more, and then pick him up from BRIDGE and then go home. That would be a normal day. Then I take turns with my ex-wife to do that, right? But yeah, normally that's essentially my usual workday here.” Osmundo D.
- “Oh a routine. Here, when I wake up, I get them ready-- Monday to Friday--for school or put them on the bus. I then get ready for work, leave work, I pick them up.” Ana

First impression of the United States and how it has changed

The parents were asked what they first thought of the United States and if it has changed. The responses were diverse and reflected the parent's experiences when they arrived. A majority of the parents suggested they thought they would have a better life. Others' first impression was that it was beautiful. Some parents replied saying that they felt they were far from their family or that they were scared.

Better life

- “I thought-- well, people told me a lot of different things and the curiosity killed me. When I arrived, I saw that things were different. You live well here, but if you do not work, you do not have anything here. Same for rent, electricity, water, you always have to work.” Leticia G.
- “It is easier here. You can eat well, dress well, have a car, it is better.” Elaina

Beautiful

- “It was all very beautiful.” “The streets are clean. The trees are beautiful, something that in Mexico you do not see. The streets are dirty. The trees are not the same, it is beautiful here.” Elaina F.

Scared

- “Well yeah, we definitely in fear all the time. My husband, he works in construction, he wakes up in the morning, we are afraid of who he hires, who he worked with because if someone is in trouble they come and get everybody. We are, we are in fear all the time. We don't like it living like that because we have to struggle with driving now and all that on top of that, be careful because you can be-- I mean your life will be over. Like my mom, she's visiting Mexico right now and she just went back. She's a U.S. resident right now and it was 20 years that she has not gone over

there and she's right over there now. And she says it's bad. I mean from what she remembers” Alicia R.

- “It is a good country, but at the same time, as an immigrant, you are always on alert because you are not here legally, especially when they do checkpoints or raids, we run great risks. But, on the other hand, we are good here because you work, live day by day, you can give things to your kids, and you have work here.” Leticia G.

Treatment in the U.S when you first arrived versus now

When the parents were interviewed, they were asked how they were treated initially when they came to the United States and how they are treated now. Some of the parents said they were discriminated against based on their race or the language they spoke. Other parents said they were generally treated well by the people around them.

- Discriminated against/treated poorly
 - “I believe that racism existed then and still exists now. They discriminate you because you don’t speak perfect English. That has always been the problem. Thanks to God, since I have been here, I have only had two jobs. I spent 5 years in one and left because I had my daughter. I have been at my second job for 6 years now. They treat me well...Yes. When I first started working here, your same group of people (Latinos) discriminate against you. I first worked in a Hispanic shop. They paid you a little bit and worked super hard. I am working in an American restaurant and I feel as if your same people discriminate against you. They have more years here or they are legal now and there is a difference there...I now have six years with a lady and she treats us well. I am about to have 7 years working there...I think they discriminate against you because they are residents and they see you as less than them. You are just another illegal. They pay you the minimum, you have to kill yourself working, and you have to handle it because you have just recently arrived. Even your own family does the same when you are here. It happened to me. My cousin got angry with me and he was the only one I had here. I lived with him for 2 years and then left.” Leticia G.
 - “Well I was a kid so I was just-- I thought that it was like another city. I was not realize about what it really was. It was bad because back then at school there was not a lot of Hispanic people. It was only a few of us and there were-- now they call it bullied, but back then we didn't know about bully...so the same Spanish kids were kind of bullying me. So I was times when I was not wanting to go to school and it was like a really bad.” Alicia R.
 - “They treated me poorly because I could not speak English. When I asked for something and said it in Spanish, they said to speak English. I would tell them that I did not know English. I could not tell them I had just arrived...If I cannot ask for something in English, they help me. They make the effort to help in Spanish. Even though they do not speak

Spanish, but they try to, it was not like that before, but it has changed.”
Elaina F.

Treated well

- If I cannot ask for something in English, they help me. They make the effort to help in Spanish. Even though they do not speak Spanish, but they try to, it was not like that before, but it has changed.” Elaina F.
- “Good. They have always treated me well. Only, there were very few people who spoke Spanish in 1999. But, people always treated me well, yes. Good, I feel very good here, yes.” Rubi

Greatest struggle

The parents were asked what they struggled with most when they first arrived in the United States. The most common response was learning English. The other two common responses were being away from family and navigating transportation in the United States.

English

- “Wow, good question. Well, at the beginning, language. Not so much at the university because I could talk in a class, in the classroom. But in daily life, interacting with people in the streets, yeah, I wouldn't understand [laughter] a word of what they were saying. And I'd say that was the first major obstacle. Well, and then navigating immigration law and immigration restrictions. That's something new and something that you can be kind of lost in the beginning, those two things I guess.” Osmundo D.

Leaving family

- “I left my mom, dad, my mom passed away, and I was here. It was difficult. I have my children, though.” Elaina F.
- “Live without her family.” Luna

Transportation

- “One of the things was transportation. You did not know the streets at all, even your own family would say: It is your problem. You have just arrived, you do not know the buses, you don't know anything. But you have to figure it out. That was really difficult because when I had just arrived, it took me about 2 months to adapt. They found me a job and I did not know how to navigate. I later adapted and figured out what time the buses came. Now it is easier because I have a car.” Leticia G.

ourBRIDGE and their family

During the interviews the parents were asked how ourBRIDGE has helped them and their children. The parents explained that it has helped their children with homework when they could not. In addition, they have said the program has helped their children with their literacy skills and allowed their children to do activities.

Reading

- “Yeah, well I say there's a program that is helping my kid especially reading and they get help doing their homework because all the mothers sign up, most of them doesn't speak English at all, so I mean it's like they can get help and things like that. So, I'm more about the homework.” Alicia R.

Homework

- “Keith learned to read quickly...Yes and Gwen-- I had a lot of problems because she was not learning well and she doesn't say anymore ‘It's because I can't’ She does it now. I think they help her a lot here, with her homework, to read, everything. She has gotten better grades than past years.” Elizabeth F.

Activities

- Osmundo said, “Yes, it has. For him, it has given him more activities to do and opportunities to know more kids in the afternoon. It's also helped us with work because these extra hours are really important for us. And so, yeah, for us it's been really helpful and something that we've really liked so far.”

What do you tell people about the organization

The parents were asked what they think ourBRIDGE is and what they tell others about the organization. A lot of parents said that ourBRIDGE is a place that helps their children with homework. The parents stressed that parents who do not know English need assistance with homework and that ourBRIDGE provides that opportunity. Other parents described it as a place where they could get after school care, relieving some of the stress of finding care for their kids while they work.

Homework

- “I say there's a program that is helping my kid especially reading and they get help doing their homework because all the mothers sign up, most of them doesn't speak English at all, so I mean it's like they can get help and things like that. So, I'm more about the homework. And I say they do a lot of fun things.” Alicia R.

After school care

- “I have actually told a few of my neighbors: The program is very good because it helps you with homework. Apart from that-- because there are people who always work, you have to struggle to find someone to take care of your children. You have to struggle to figure out who will pick them up. I tell them: You now do not have to worry. They help a lot with homework. I cannot help with the homework, but they can help here.”Leticia G.

Supported us

- “I tell people it is good. I don’t really know how to explain it, I just tell people that it has helped my children and supported us.” Elaina F.
- “Yes, a lot. Actually, my air conditioner broke and they helped me find air conditioning. Now, my children are closer to me. Actually, I just arrived and Gwen acted like she did not see me and the tutor said: ‘You have to welcome your mom and ask her how she is.’” Elaina F.
- “They have helped them get translators and helped with homework as it has gotten more difficult.” Leticia G.

Changes ourBRIDGE has caused

During the interview the parents were asked if ourBRIDGE has changed their child. Most of the parents said their children’s academics have changed because of ourBRIDGE. They have said their children’s grades have improved and their attitudes towards school have become more positive. In addition, some parents have seen social changes in their children.

Academics

- “My older daughter has always been studious. But, thanks to God, they have been here for two years and it’s been going well. She even gets surprised now and gets A’s on everything...They always give them their recognitions. They have 5-6 recognitions. This past year she got honor roll and a recognition of being the best student in the group. They say: Yes, they help me do my homework, explain, when I don’t understand they help me how to help, and i think they help a lot. So I tell her that she has to put in the effort. They used to give her little recognition, but now it’s more...They’ve helped a lot. The middle one as well. But she is more of a rebel. She does not like school a lot...She likes to go here because they don’t do homework, all they do is play in the park...She is sincere and direct. She says she also likes to come because they give her food...Yes candy. Everyone is nice, they give you candy, they take you to the park.” Leticia G.
- “Marie , she is improving, she is making her goal. She has, what's it called? IEP.” Alicia R.
- “I believe it has helped us because of the language English and Spanish. There are more people here with Spanish. The tutors are caring. They have helped, and they feel really happy.” Regina O.

Social Changes

- “Well, before coming here Eve complained a lot about a girl bullying her or kind of having an issue with friends, oh she talk about me. After she’s been here she has not said anything about fighting at school. So maybe she's right now she sees she has something now in her life than being just having conflicts in her mind and things like that. So yeah, Eve her social life is getting better. Marie ? I see her talking more, having more trust in her like to go with someone and just to start a conversation with and I see that she do that a lot. Alicia R.
- “Yeah. Yes, I like it because, for Julian, this is another opportunity to meet more kids outside of school because sometimes, well, he's never

played a lot with kids around the neighborhood. So for me, it's good that he has some more room to know other kids and play with them and make more friends. So yeah, I think this has always helped him gain more confidence and yeah, so it's been a good thing." Osmundo D.

Fears

During the interview the parents were asked what they are most afraid of and what their hopes were for the future. Most of the parents said their greatest fear was deportation and immigration. Most said they were hopeful for a change in the government to be more accepting of immigrants.

Deportation/ICE

- "I am afraid that they will deport my husband or I. I have had nightmares. I do not want my children to go to Mexico because it is difficult. I had two children there. When I came, I had a 6 year old and a 5 year old and I suffered a lot with them. There is a lot of poverty. You have to work hard to buy shoes, clothes, and here you work hard one day and are able buy clothes for everyone." Elaina F.
- "Well yeah, we definitely in fear all the time. My husband, he works in construction, he wakes up in the morning, we are afraid of who he hires, who he worked with because if someone is in trouble they come and get everybody. We are, we are in fear all the time. We don't like it living like that because we have to struggle with driving now and all that on top of that, be careful because you can be-- I mean your life will be over. Like my mom, she's visiting Mexico right now and she just went back. She's a US resident right now and it was 20 years that she has not gone over there and she's right over there now. And she says it's bad... yeah, and she's very tense-ful that she can need to come back. So can I imagine me being over there and I don't have a possible way to come here again. So that will be a-- I cannot even think about it...Yes. And that takes my peace now thinking one traffic stop, just going outside, and not see what is around you can get you. Maybe there's a car and the people in the car is immigration. So yeah, it's bad." Alicia R.
- "Fear in the personal or throughout the country? One of the things we were afraid of was immigration. There was a time when immigration was doing raids and our children were really scared. The things we are most hopeful for is that we become citizens. Or at least have a temporary status in the future. The thing that is scary is being out and about like this because there are checkpoints and raids..."Leticia G.
- "So in our case we are by now permanent residents, but still, it's scary because when someone has that hardline discourse on immigrant people, it affects everyone. Even though they are going to say, 'We're only going after people who are undocumented.' That's not real. In practice, every immigrant person suffers. So yeah, it's still scary that they're going to put more difficulties even after all these years. More difficulties ahead of us and more obstacles. So that is something that scares me a little. And then hopeful for, in the future, I hope and I have hope that things will change in a few years and we'll get back to normal.

Not to this absurd anti-immigrant crusade that of course is so negative for everyone. For the country and for immigrant people and for everyone. So, yeah.” Osmundo D.

Hope for future

- “That God touches the president’s heart... To help us improve.” Elaina F.
- “We are aware we do not have licenses. If in the future, we can at least can some form of protection, let us live in peace. We only work and work here.” Leticia G.
- “And then hopeful for, in the future, I hope and I have hope that things will change in a few years and we’ll get back to normal. Not to this absurd anti-immigrant crusade that of course is so negative for everyone. For the country and for immigrant people and for everyone. So, yeah.” Osmundo D.

Conclusion

The parents of ourBRIDGE expressed in the interviews several shared ideas about OurBRIDGE, the United States, and their experiences immigrating to the United States. Many moved from their home countries seeking a better life. Some of the parents experienced prejudice when they first arrived in the United States while others expressed that people were generally nice. Many of the parents struggled to learn English and navigate the United States. In general, the parents had positive attitudes and ideas towards ourBRIDGE. Most said it was a program that provided their children with assistance to do homework, learn English, and play with their peers. The parents also shared a sentiment of fear towards immigration and a hope for change in the future. Many were afraid of ICE and/or deportation.

F.. Staff Profiles

In 2018-2019, we conducted individual semi-structured interviews with eleven ourBRIDGE staff members. These included the Program Directors, drivers, On-Site coordinator, Community/Family Liaison, Curriculum Director, all lead tutors, and select assistant tutors. All of the staff members interviewed were female with the exception of one male lead tutor. Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes and was transcribed for analysis. The interviews included over 150 pages of transcription.

“Serena”

Serena is the lead tutor in the 2-3 class at ourBRIDGE. She has worked with the program since March of 2018. She also works as the Community Outreach Coordinator for the program, and is often the liaison between parents and tutors. Serena doesn't have a background in education, but came to be involved with ourBRIDGE through her previous work in activism in the Charlotte community. ourBRIDGE has offered multiple opportunities for training and professional development. Serena describes ourBRIDGE as “a unique, welcoming, safe environment for children that are immigrants or refugees where they can grow academically and social-emotionally in a space that is fostering of their unique abilities and who they are in their cultures and backgrounds.”

Serena spoke about the impact that the most recent ICE raids has had on her and on the students in her classroom. The raids have impacted the students immensely, causing fear, trauma, and emotional distress. Serena notes that ourBRIDGE offers students and families resources for dealing with this stress and trauma, while also providing them a safe space to belong. She shares her personal experiences with her students, shows them love, and makes efforts to reach out to families who she knows have been impacted directly by raids or food instability.

Serena notes that she takes pride in the growth of her students over the course of the year - both academically and social-emotionally. She has a student who used to have violent outbursts, but now he takes deep breaths when he's upset. Another student takes pride in completing his homework, and telling people that he's smart. When talking about differences from last year to this year, Serena notes that last year there was more time for the students to be creative, while this year, there is more of a focus for completing homework in her classroom. Because of this, they don't spend as much time on the curriculum. Additionally, Serena notes that there needs to be more and better communication with the schools.

“Yasmine”

Yasmine is the Operations Manager at ourBRIDGE. She has worked at ourBRIDGE for a year and a half, since they moved into the new center. In her role as operations manager, she takes care of a lot of daily tasks, registrations, transportation, payroll, and parent communication. Yasmine often helps families dealing with situations outside of ourBRIDGE and school. They also reach out to her to share news and touch base about their children and how they are doing at ourBRIDGE.

Yasmine describes ourBRIDGE as “a safe, loving place where kids can come and be themselves and share their experiences and their culture. To me, it’s just a fun, loving place.” Yasmine notes that the most positive change from last year to this year is the staff. ourBRIDGE now has staff members who are devoted to the students, who are team players, are more invested, and have better communication. She also notes that planning for the day and the week has helped the tutors, which in turn helps the students and impacts behavior. Unlike last year, tutors are dealing with behavior issues themselves, rather than sending students to Yasmine’s office, and she notes that as a positive change. She also says that parents are more involved this year, volunteering and attending events. Additionally, the parents have told Yasmine that their children are doing better in school.

Yasmine also spoke about the fear, trauma, and emotional distress caused by the most recent ICE raids.. ourBRIDGE, she says, helps students and families cope with this stress and trauma and provides a safe space. Yasmine reassures families that ourBRIDGE will not share any information. Yasmine shared that she feels like she is making a difference in the lives of the families and the kids.

“Sheila”

Sheila was the lead tutor in the K-1 class at ourBRIDGE. She has worked at ourBRIDGE for two school years; however, she left her position as lead tutor in April and comes back as a reading volunteer weekly. Her background is in public education. She received some professional development as a teacher aimed at working with English learners, but a lot of her experience with this population has been on-the-job training.

Sheila describes ourBRIDGE as “a center that supports immigrant and refugee families in Charlotte with a-- the biggest purpose is providing after-school care for the children”. She also believes ourBRIDGE is a place where families believe their children are safe and receiving support that they may not get elsewhere. ourBRIDGE also supports students’ home languages and cultures. Sheila notes that her students are innocent and talk about school and their teachers in a very positive way. She also notes that she thinks some of her students have been trained to say that they are from the US, but when she brought in a map, they were excited to share about their countries.

Compared to last year, Sheila notes that tutors are more focused this year with the themes and units, and the adaptable curriculum. Tutors also have more unity across grade levels. As for improvements, she notes that last minute planning and changes are still an issue in the center.

Finally, Sheila talks about one of her male kindergarteners who has changed the most over the year. He spoke very little English at the beginning of the year and was also very aggressive. Now, he is able to communicate better and his aggression has lessened.

“Laura”

Laura is the lead tutor in the middle school class at ourBRIDGE. At the time of the interview, she had worked at ourBRIDGE for 6 weeks. Her background is in law, but she now works as a public school teacher at a local middle school. She received some on-the-job training while working as a teacher, as well as some professional development from the school district. She describes ourBRIDGE as “a program that supports families with different diverse cultural

backgrounds with literacy, education, social programs, and creates an inclusive environment for students to learn and be able to feel safe and secure. So it's almost an extension of school plus an addition of family."

Laura says she loves the kids at ourBRIDGE and one thing she has learned is that ourBRIDGE kids are in crisis a lot more than other students she teaches. Because of this, she says ourBRIDGE is incredibly supportive, offering resources, a place to feel safe, transportation, and food. The staff also creates a safe space for the students by being aware of the issues impacting the families and community.

Laura has been building relationships with the middle school students by sitting with them and getting to know them, talking with them, and listening to them tell her about situations of crisis--not trying to drag it out of them, but letting them come to her on their own. She also doesn't raise her voice at the students, which is different than other tutors.

Laura find that the units and lessons are an effective part of ourBRIDGE, and she feels that the students are able to have discussions. She notes that an area of improvement is that ourBRIDGE has limited experience with middle school, which shows up in the curriculum, schedule, lack of structure, and limited resources to address the issues that the students are facing. She suggests a professional be brought in to help with this.

Laura spoke about a student who she has seen change in her short time there. One of her male students used to come to ourBRIDGE mean and aggressive; in her time there he has calmed down and knows his limits. She also spoke a female student who has come out of her shell and is speaking more with her and others. Laura has had limited contact with parents, but has reached out to a couple of parents.

"Elyse"

Elyse is a member of the leadership staff at ourBRIDGE and has worked there for 4 years, with a 1-year gap. She started as a tutor and a leadership staff member, but transitioned out of her role as a tutor halfway through this year. Elyse describes ourBRIDGE as "a community center for students to come after school to receive social-emotional development to interact with their peers to learn English through experiential curriculum that allows them to be creative with curriculum that is culturally responsive and exciting for the students. ourBRIDGE is also a connection between the students, families, and the schools that they attend."

When talking about the impact that ourBRIDGE has on the community, Elyse notes that the impact reaches students, families, and the community. It allows students a place to see their strengths and an opportunity to celebrate their cultures. For the families, she believes that ourBRIDGE is a place where they feel their kids are safe, loved and cared for, and get resources that they don't receive at school. Further, they support the families through transportation, helping with legal aid, and sending food home. She believes ourBRIDGE serves as an additional support for the EL teachers, offering them social-emotional support.

Elyse spoke about the impact that ICE raids have had on ourBRIDGE kids and families. One family in particular was targeted, and the mother called Serena. Elyse, Sofia, and Serena went

to the house to help and reassure the family. Elyse noted that the feeling in the center has changed because the children are scared of the ICE raids happening in the neighborhoods. These experiences are incredibly traumatic, and students are now exhibiting behaviors--like self-harm--that the staff hasn't seen before. for the first time, and the.

What Elyse likes most about ourBRIDGE is being with the kids, and the opportunity she and other staff members have to make a daily, positive impact on them. For her, positive changes at ourBRIDGE include tangible and intangible resources, such as having a mental health counselor and a staff with diverse backgrounds. A challenge she notes is transportation.

Finally, Elyse talks about a student that has changed. He has been with her since she first started as a tutor, and she has seen his personality and confidence grow over the last 4 years. His English has also improved.

“Layla”

Layla is a tutor in the Middle School class at ourBRIDGE. She has worked with ourBRIDGE for 2 years in the middle school classroom. Her background has always included some sort of childcare, and she is currently pursuing a degree in high school history education.

ourBRIDGE has made Layla aware of the issues impacting the families of the students she works with, and the organization has focused more on outreach this year than last. She also notes that this has been a more difficult year for her compared to last because of the issues and crises that the students are dealing with. She also notes that self-harm has been a new issue to arise at the center this year. She said that the students just need love and care. She does say that she thinks the response to the students' issues could be better or quicker.

Layla likes the people that she works with because they all have the same goal and work at ourBRIDGE for the same reason. She notes that this is a strength of ourBRIDGE. She has also learned that there is more to the Charlotte community than may be noticed from an outsider perspective. She's learned to be a better, more empathetic person since working at ourBRIDGE. As for improvements, she thinks there needs to be more development with the curriculum because the needs of middle schoolers are different than those of the K-5 students.

“Leslie”

Leslie is the Literacy Specialist at ourBRIDGE. She has worked with ourBRIDGE for 8 years, from the start of the program, as a reading specialist. She also serves as the School Liaison for ourBRIDGE. For the last 2 years, Leslie has been going to the schools that ourBRIDGE serves to read with students. She does this through an outreach program, and in this role she works with all English learners, not just ourBRIDGE kids. Additionally, in her role as School Liaison, she attends awards ceremonies and cultural evenings, and performs test proctoring. She tries to connect ourBRIDGE tutors with school teachers, but admits that she could do more of that. Leslie has never received formal training or education for working with this population or English learners, but she has worked abroad and with diverse populations for many years.

Leslie describes ourBRIDGE as “a real support system mostly for the children. My perspective is academic and literature, but really, it's for everything, and because we support the children, we

support the parents, and we support schools.” She takes pride in students that didn’t want to read with her at the beginning of the year, but now choose to come to her. She names one middle school male who has made great progress in his reading and English acquisition, and grown in confidence.

Leslie explains that consistency, love, and stability are what makes programs like ourBRIDGE work, and that the program struggles with stability and consistency in staffing. She says communication and transparency are areas of improvement. Another area of improvement is the lack of time spent on homework, which it needs to be a priority. Having a new, structured curriculum for the part-time tutors has been a positive change this year, and Leslie says she plans her lessons to align with the curriculum.

A challenge that Leslie identifies is the impact that issues at home have on the students learning. She says that having mental health counselors has made a great difference, as students are getting more individual attention from the adults at the center.

Since Leslie has been with the program the longest, she can speak to what has changed the most over the years. She says that the amount of money, resources, and space they have now is the most significant change. She also notes that now ourBRIDGE can host more events for the community, go into the neighborhoods, and invite the community into their space.

“Kelly”

Kelly is the lead tutor in the 4-5 class at ourBRIDGE. This is her first year at ourBRIDGE. She works full time with Communities in Schools at a local middle school. She describes ourBRIDGE as “an opportunity for students and their families who are first arriving to our country to learn and grow and be creative and have a safe space to be themselves because, unfortunately, society sometimes makes it difficult. So this is their safe haven to be kids and to just let loose for a while, while also learning English and culture and learning and having fun.”

Kelly says she loves being able to watch her students change, grow, and evolve, while learning from them, nurturing them, and teaching them. She has learned the most about immigration and different cultures from her time with ourBRIDGE. Kelly’s students were very afraid of the ICE raids happening in neighborhoods, and Kelly was reassuring to students and letting them call home.

When speaking about ourBRIDGE’s impact on the community, Kelly notes that the program brings awareness to a population that is often overlooked, offering events and volunteers from the community. She thinks that the autonomy of each classroom works well for the program, as well as the flexibility within the programming and curriculum. She also believes the staff, and the atmosphere of teamwork and working together are major strengths of ourBRIDGE. For areas of improvement, Kelly thinks that discipline, consistency, and follow through could be improved. She also doesn’t have a lot of contact with parents outside of help from Yasmine, and zero contact with teachers. She would like to know what is going on with her students at school.

Kelly talks about a male student in whom she has seen a positive change this year. He was mean and tough at the beginning of the year, but she made an effort to get to know him and his family, to get some context on his behaviors. Now he helps around the classroom and hugs her. Finally, Kelly talks about the impact that ourBRIDGE has had on her understanding of

immigration issues and on her relationships. She says that she had a limited understanding of the immigration issues in this country because she wasn't surrounded by it growing up, but now she speaks about immigration with her friends and family, and she's teaching others about the issues her students face.

“Rosie”

Rosie has served for 2 years as a tutor in the K-1 class at ourBRIDGE. She has a background in finance and as a paralegal. She became aware of and connected with ourBRIDGE while working as a translator for the International House. The only training she has received for working with this population of students has been through ourBRIDGE, at staff trainings and professional development. Rosie describes ourBRIDGE as “a school program - a very unique school program, I think. We provide a loving and safe environment for immigrant and refugee children from kindergarten up to middle school [inaudible] [laughter]. And we offer a loving environment especially with the little kids they need-- we have new ones this week who are in tears because they've left their mom and stuff and we have to be loving and caring towards them. We have a curriculum which is fantastic and very unique again, I think. And it relates-- at each different level-- we obviously don't deal with the big children. But we relate it to our children.”

In the K-1 classroom, Rosie works with her students on English acquisition, homework, reading books, and the STEAM curriculum. Rosie takes pride in making the children smile and helping their parents by offering them a safe space to eat, do homework, play, read and do art every day. She also notes that ourBRIDGE impacts the community by offering services and support. For example, she helped organize a coat drive around Christmas, and bought blankets to all of the K-1 children.

Rosie identifies several areas of effectiveness in ourBRIDGE's curriculum, including opportunities to read with the students and help them complete their homework, which helps them grow and mature. = While last year's curriculum was more discovery-based, this year's is more structured, while still offering opportunities for creativity. Rosie believes it is effective because every class is working toward the same unit goal. She also notes that there is less turnover this year, and the staff is stronger than last year. The only potential improvement Rosie mentions is the need for a fence around the play area outside, which has been multiple times.

Rosie says two of her first grade students (one male and one female) who have made improvements from last year to this year. Both are more confident in their reading and often offer to read to groups of children in their class. She also speaks about a Kindergarten male who has made great strides in his English acquisition and confidence.

“Eric”

Eric is a tutor in the 4-5 class at ourBRIDGE. He has worked for ourBRIDGE for one year, and has a background in psychology, law, and history. He also has experience teaching in higher education, and working as a soccer referee. The only training he mentions for working with this population is what ourBRIDGE provides for the staff.

Eric helps the students with math, homework, and transportation, and plays outside with his 4-5 students. Eric says he gets to see a different side of the kids when he's driving them home' they talk about their backgrounds, and build friendships and relationships. He likes that ourBRIDGE

gives the kids freedom and a difference from school, allowing them to be outside and do creative activities with their hands. He says this is a break from the norm.

Eric believes the work with math, science, English, reading, and cultural assimilation are the most effective parts of the program. Additionally, he identifies the volunteers and partnerships, along with a strong staff, as positive parts of ourBRIDGE. A difficulty that he notes is the high staff turnover, and the pay. Additionally, the overlap of staff who are tutors and have other responsibilities that take them away from the classroom is ineffective; Eric suggests hiring full-time cleaners and drivers to resolve this issue. He also says that communication with the schools and students' teacher could be improved on both sides.

Eric says that the 4-5 classroom uses the curriculum a lot, and he finds it helpful for increasing student awareness in their community, reading comprehension, and as a guide for supporting what the kids are learning in school. Eric talks about the importance of education in his life, explaining that helpful skills he learned are similar to what they do at ourBRIDGE. ourBRIDGE kids work, communicate, and learn; Eric attributes that to the organization's focus on supporting education. He believes ourBRIDGE brings awareness to the diversity and needs in the Charlotte community. Finally, he sees ourBRIDGE as a safe place for immigrant families.

When talking about students who have experienced change, Eric mentions one male who struggled with manifesting his frustrations and competitiveness, but is now engaged in learning. He also speaks about another male who was very shy at the beginning, but is making great academic gains. At first, he says, boys and girls didn't play sports together, but they do now. Finally, he connected with a female student in his class who was being negatively influenced by her community, and is now making better choices.

G. Staff Interview Analysis

The ourBRIDGE Program

When asked to describe ourBRIDGE in their own words, the staff agreed that it was a unique, safe, creative space designed for immigrant children and their families. It continues to provide the community with support for children as they transition to new learning environments. In addition, ourBRIDGE provides its students with a place where they can be proud of their culture and express their values. Students are offered opportunities, and given a support system, a safe place to grow, and a way to connect with their community. During the interviews, staff members were able to easily provide examples. Overall, the ourBRIDGE program is known by the staff, students, and the community as a safe space that provides rich opportunities for student language and academic development. It provides access to different resources to the children and their families to support their socio-emotional, language, as well as their academic development.

Opportunities for Students

So ourBRIDGE, to me, is an opportunity for students and their families who are first arriving to our country to learn and grow and be creative and have a safe space to be themselves because, unfortunately, society sometimes makes it difficult. So this is their safe haven to be kids and to just let loose for a while, while also learning English and culture and learning and having fun...

Kelly, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

On the individual level, I believe that ourBRIDGE gives students the opportunity to see their strengths and to find the things that they enjoy and that they are interested in and gives them an opportunity to really celebrate their culture in a way that they might not have the opportunity to in schools or in other programs. I think for the families, it's a huge relief to have a place where you feel like you can send your children when you're at work and feel that it's not just a daycare.

Elyse, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Support Systems for Students and Parents

Well, ourBRIDGE, to me, it's a real support system mostly for the children. My perspective is academic and literature, but really, it's for everything, and because we support the children, we support the parents, and we support schools.

Leslie, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

ourBRIDGE is a program that supports families with different diverse cultural backgrounds with literacy, education, social programs, and creates an inclusive environment for students to learn and be able to feel safe and secure. So it's almost an extension of school plus an addition of family.

Elyse, Individual Interview 3/20/19

They're incredibly supportive. I mean they have some staff here that really know what they're dealing with. And they make the kids feel safe. And that nothing's going to happen to them while they're here. And that they don't mind driving them to their houses, or going to find a parent, or going to those daily appointments with them. So it's incredibly supportive. And when I talk to people about this place I'm like, "Wow, it's like a whole different atmosphere in here."

Laura, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Safe Space

We provide a loving and safe environment for immigrant and refugee children from kindergarten up to middle school [inaudible] [laughter]. And we offer a loving environment especially with the little kids they need-- we have new ones this week who are in tears because they've left their mom and stuff and we have to be loving and caring towards them.

Rosie, Individual Interview 3/20/19

All right. I think, in my interview for this position, I said, "Man, I wish I had ourBRIDGE when I came from Africa." Right? So being able to see that that is being provided, is really awesome. I think the big thing for most of our students and for me, when I came from Africa, was it's a lot of enclosure. Right? Our schools in Africa, I mean you go-- at least for Ghana. I can speak for Ghana, Accra [laughter], there's a lot of freedom. You walk to school. You ride a bike to school. You can run around the play area. We're not in a classroom for eight, nine hours. You know what I mean? So ourBRIDGE tries to break away from that. And we let them have outside time. We let them do cool activities with their hands. So that's what I like about ourBRIDGE, the ability to break the norm.

Eric, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Student Growth

ourBRIDGE serves students from grades K-8 with varying levels of academic and social-emotional skills. The curriculum and tutors help the students grow in academics and socially/emotionally. The tutors shared many specific examples of students' academic and socio-emotional growth over time. Students at ourBRIDGE also became more engaged in the program (and in their schools) by the end of the year.

Social-Emotional Development

ourBRIDGE is a community center for students to come after school to receive social-emotional development to interact with their peers to learn English through experiential curriculum that allows them to be creative with curriculum that is culturally responsive and exciting for the students. ourBRIDGE is also a connection between the students, families, and the schools that they attend.

Elyse, Individual Interview 3/20/19

And by the end of the year last year we saw maturity. They became more mature, more personable, more polite because we teach them manners as well. Please and thank yous and hopefully that will carry them forward in the future.

Rosie, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Justin's been taking home his homework and been really proud, [inaudible] of his math, and has been telling people that he's smart and stuff like that. Just the way they talk about themselves too has really changed. Anna's confidence has really gone up, and Natalie is speaking more and being more assertive. And I think just little things-- it's hard. I can't catch every little thing, right. At one point, you turn around and you're like, "Oh, wow. Nathan hasn't kicked somebody in two months. Nathan used to kick somebody every five minutes, literally, "Miss Serena. Nathan kicked me." Yeah [laughter]. Nathan hasn't kicked somebody in two months, and he has just transformed into the biggest helper in my classroom and constantly coming in with, "Miss Serena, look I got 100 on this test. Or Miss Serena, look," and just really taking pride in his work. And I tell him all the time, "I'm so proud of your effort," and I never want to stop because I want that to keep-- right.

Serena, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

A very similar child to my upbringing, with parents similar to my background. Definitely had a tougher time manifesting his frustrations. So he used to be very competitive and now he's much more-- I wouldn't say calm. He's much more engaged in learning and is less combative, frustrated. Right? He's doing well in his classes. He's improving. Another group is a very shy young man that needs a lot of help with reading, writing. But he's not one to ask. So he's definitely maybe ask a peer to ask us, me or Miss [Camai?]. And we've seen his grading improve. And we're seeing it through the EOG as well, the testing. We've seen things, some of our students started at 20 and now they're at 50, 60.

Eric, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Okay [laughter]. So I'll just say it. There's a student, specifically, who is in our middle school classroom now. He was one of my very first students at ourBRIDGE, at the old center. So obviously, I created a really close bond with him because back then our classrooms were limited at eight students per class. And so he-- Yeah. And he had some really challenging behavioral patterns, and he had lived in a refugee camp in Nepal, and he had some violent tendencies and just some really challenging behaviors. And throughout the years, we've learned the ways to deal with these things. And first, it's just with love and understanding and separating the behavior from the person. We love the child. We don't love the behavior. And I think it's been really powerful for our staff to be trained in that, separating the behavior from the child from because it is challenging, especially when it feels like things are out of control. It's really difficult. But this student, now, is in middle school, and he just has so much more confidence in himself. And I think he was really lacking confidence and comfortability in himself. And I think he felt really lost and kind of alone when he first started with ourBRIDGE. And just yesterday, he was walking through the center and going to the snack closet to get snacks for the rest of his classmates and-- So there's been a massive change in his behavioral patterns. He is calm, and he is funny and warm. He interacts with all the other students in his classroom. All the other students know his name. Whereas, before, he was kind of more of a recluse. He kind of kept to himself. He didn't open up about many things. He wouldn't speak to the tutor unless he was spoken to, and now he's just a light in the classroom. And obviously, his English language abilities have grown massively. And it's been years, but I do believe that part of that is attributed to ourBRIDGE. And there's hundreds of stories like that. There's hundreds of BRIDGE kids. Especially, we can talk

about the OGs, as we call them, who have been a part of this program for so long, and it's incredible to think about where we started. But maybe, even more incredible are the stories of the students who have only been here for six months. Who came here brand new, had been in the United States for less than two weeks before they started coming to our center, didn't speak any English, didn't speak to any of the other students, felt scared and alone as any child would in a completely new environment. And a month later, they're helping serve dinner to the other students, and they're helping vacuum the classroom, and hugging the staff goodbye. And it's just incredible to see how a little bit of confidence and love, they just blossom.

Elyse, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Academic Growth

So I think that the most important thing at the end of the year that we see is the reading. How much more they can read. How much more they can write. Much less time they need help with their homework because they can do it themselves. And yesterday one kid asked one question and got on with the rest of the homework. Then you have to do it. I was with other kids I couldn't see what it was, I couldn't read the word. But they got on. So that is a success story because if those children can learn to read and write and speak-- obviously, learning languages myself, you know that when you first learn a language you learn-- you can understand but you can't express yourself. And we've already seen with a couple of the kids that they really couldn't express themselves in the beginning but they can now. And we still speak a little bit of Spanish here and a little bit-- but the change in a year is huge.

Rosie, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Kristopher - he was here with us in K and now first grade. His reading is amazing. We got new books about frogs and he was one of the children that said, "I'll read to a group of children." So the confidence but also the reading level. It's huge. Not a huge amount kids came back or-- no, I'll say that again. A lot kids of moved on to second grade. But not all the kindergarten kids became first graders. [inaudible] is one of them who was also at kindergarten and she's now first grade. She's equally confident as Kristopher and her reading is superb. And she was a very quiet little girl. Also so smart, always diligent, always wanted to do her homework. Loved math, loved doing-- and her brother was the same - Charlie. He is in second grade now. And she was one of the other girls that said, "I'll read in a group." To a group of kids in our class. So that they stand out. So this is it's more to do the kids I'm seeing from K to first grade. There's as a kid now in kindergarten, Danny, and he didn't speak much at all. I could understand but [inaudible]. But now he is super confident and even just half way through the year, it's been a massive, massive increase in his vocabulary. And speaking out all the time [laughter]. He couldn't even speak English so there are kids that stand out.

Rosie, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Growth in Engagement

That's real tangible improvement. A big one I also saw, was the sports. Right? It was very contested when girls wanted to play with the boys, soccer, basketball. Now we've

seen naturally the boys are happy to play with the girls when it comes to sports for the most part. We've seen an engagement in the technology club, where kids are dealing with new concepts, such as the rotation of a beyblade. Really, really, really inspiring. I've seen a lot of changes in them.

Eric, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Staff Self Growth/Awareness

Observations and interviews revealed that not only did students benefit greatly from being a part of the ourBRIDGE family, but staff also experienced important growth and self-awareness. The staff has described ourBRIDGE as a place that has made significant changes in their personal and professional lives. The staff openly described how this "job" has greatly influenced their attitudes and feelings towards immigrants, contributed to their personal growth, and has taught them to be more compassionate and empathetic. Almost all of the staff described specific examples of how much more engaged they are in the community and how ourBRIDGE has motivated them to engage in social activism. Overall, getting to know the students and their families had deepened their understanding of immigrants and the challenges they face within a very hostile social and political context.

Professional Growth

...I did not feel prepared when I started, but I think I feel so much more prepared now. And I think this place is just really nurtured my growth and understanding of working with children from all different backgrounds and understanding where their behavior comes from and where they come from... I've read a lot of books, and I've met with a lot of counselors, and sat down with a lot of people, and asked for help, and told them, "I'm dealing with this. What could it be?" And things like that. And so I think one thing that ourBRIDGE has done really well, the staff just listen to me and brainstorm with me. And I think I've created a really great environment in my classroom where the students-- I've seen growth in every single one of my students almost, social-emotional growth. I mean people are saying that some of my kids that you can't even recognize them anymore.

Serena, Individual Interview 3/20/19

So it's difficult but also they all just want to be loved really, really badly. And sometimes they don't get it at home and sometimes they do. And you can kind of see where the gaps are and it's a difficult year but it's not-- I feel like I've grown better as an educator and as a person working with these kids.

Layla, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Deepened Sense of Compassion

Wow. It's like I've learned so much in a year, I think. And to be honest I think ourBRIDGE has changed who I am too. I think I'm more loving and accepting and understanding than I ever was in my whole life. And I think that this place does that to people. And all the other co-workers, I've seen that happen to them as well. And so aside from that, what

I've learned is just how to work with kids and how to be patient and understanding. I think patience.

Serena, Individual Interview 3/20/1

It sounds awful, saying it's a service industry but, you know, I think I go home humbled. Tired because it's a frantic for three, four hours. But the children have gained something and they were safe here and they were fed here and nurtured and they want to come back tomorrow.

Rosie, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Community Awareness

The interviews showed that staff members came from various backgrounds. While many of the staff had some experience working with children, working with the immigrant community was new for many. Prior to working at ourBRIDGE they were unaware of the immigration and the experiences of immigrants in the United States. Tutors described how they were impacted by what the children taught them, specifically about immigration, in their time at ourBRIDGE.

Learning about Immigration in the US

So I will say, before, even though I had interacted with people of different cultures, I think I was pretty ignorant to some things, like this immigration, ICE. I just really was unaware because I don't talk to people every day who are going through that. So to hear the stories of my kids saying, "ICE snagged at my door. We had to hide in a closet," or just being fearful of rumors they hear that they might come is just very eye-opening to me, and it teaches me to be appreciative that I do have freedom. Even though, as an African-American, you do face some injustice, but it's just like I don't have to worry about, "Am I going to be-- my parent is going to be taken." As a child, I couldn't imagine dealing with it at such a young age, so I think I've learned to being grateful and just having compassion and just being more aware. It's really made me be more aware of what's going on.

Kelly, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

The Immigrant Experience

After that, I really didn't have any idea, to be honest, because I didn't have anybody in my circle who's going through that. And I only saw what I saw on the news, so I wasn't close to the situation. But, now, it's just like I hate it because I'm just like, "Wow." People just want to come. I mean, literally, they just want to help their families. They just want a better life. This is one opportunity. And, honestly, I would step out on a limb and say, 90% of those people, they don't want any issues. They don't want any problems. They just want a better life. And so I feel like, to stop somebody from that chance, and then to use excessive force, it bothers me because when I see these kids, I'm like, "They just want to learn and play and-- be like a normal kid, but they have to worry about adult problems." I hate it. So I think, for me, it's more so, not even the adults, but the effects on the kids and how that can traumatize.

Kelly, Individual Interview, 3/20/ 19

Social Activism

Depending on their role, the level of involvement with the families of the students varied for each staff member. The lead tutors and assistant tutors had limited interactions with the families unless it was at specific events. For the staff members who worked directly with the families, their roles and interactions were significantly beneficial in supporting students. The ourBRIDGE staff learned about the daily struggles of immigrant and refugee families which ignited their sense of social activism and immigrant rights. They all participated in different movements sponsored by ourBRIDGE as well as within the Charlotte community. In addition, they have helped be activists for the communities they serve through ourBRIDGE. They stated:

And this one child asked-- he said, how do you say-- how do you spell blanket? How do you spell coat? He said, "These are the things my mom would want." So I decided I would go and buy 20 more blankets for our kids [inaudible]. So we gave each of our kids this massive warm blanket. And when I spoke to Yasmine who spoke to Sil, and I said, "Look. We need to do a coat drive." Because it's so cold. And we did do that and we collected coats and collected-- and I think, yes-- then I actually wasn't here to England for the last day and they had a party and they gave out to other kids, we'd already given our kids blankies and stuff, but they had every kid have a coat if they wanted one and their siblings. And so, yes, I think we do serve the community incredibly well.

Rosie, Individual Interview, 3/20/ 19

I've only spoken to a couple of parents. And when we were going through that when one of the students came talking about that issue, I reached out to them. Please send me whatever you need. If we need to get the son some materials or things to get through. Because, I mean having the legal background, I know some of the stuff that's going on with him. But besides that just my limited time I haven't really had a chance to so much more. And I wasn't here-- I was just hired a couple days after that last family event.

Laura, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

But I think we've also been reaching out to families, and I showed them the protests that we were at. And I showed them videos, and I talked to them about protesting, and they were really excited about it. And I can only speak to my classroom, right. But they were really excited about it.

Serena, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Yeah. So for a lot of our families, the parents work late at night, so they'll let us know certain shifts that they're working, and we can send the oldest student-- because normally, it's a set of siblings, right, and the oldest student is watching the younger kids. So we'll send them home with food for the night, and we'll send them home with dinner so that parents don't have to worry about the kids eating at night. Beyond that for the parents specifically, we have found lawyers pro bono to help with cases where deportation is possible. We've also been able to help some parents whose children have huge behavioral development needs and getting counselors for not only the student but also for the parents because a lot of times parents have asked us for advice or even just said straight out, "I don't know what to do." So I think having the resource of our therapist has been a huge help, a huge resource for some of these families. Beyond that, going to

court with the families and just being someone to say, “Hey, we’re here with you. We’re here for you,” just really being a part of their family and a part of their process. Even when we don’t have all of the resources in the world, we can be supportive of their family and let them know that we’re here for them.

Elyse, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

They’ve been very scared. I’ll have them send me pictures of the officers walking around in the neighborhood. And they were very upset. And I think it was heartbreaking because a lot of our kids-- first of all, the little ones were just confused. One of the moms called me and was like, “Oh, my son’s not coming out of the room. And he’s locking and checking on the door.” It’s like in a situation like that, like I said, help build that relationship with them that when all that was going on-- and I don’t mind, like I told you so, I don’t mind picking up the phone when they call me 8 o’clock at night. Because there must be a reason why they’re calling me 8 o’clock at night. So when I get-- that week I mean I was getting phone calls and text messages and I answer to talk to them because I mean they just need someone to talk to. And they were really scared. Like bringing food to one of the families, providing transportation, taking them to the dentist appointment for one of the kids because they were scared of driving. So it was really heartbreaking and it was hard. It’s kind of like I can’t-- because we came here legally is a different thing. Like my family. I can’t imagine being so scared to leave your house or even being scared to take your child to school because you’re scared you’re going to be taken away. It’s heartbreaking. One of our moms shared a video of-- she was taken by immigration and then arrested. That was like May. And she was gone for like two months. It was just the dad.

Yasmine, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

Relationship Building/ Bonds

Field notes painted a broad picture of the relationships between the staff and the children. Staff interviews reaffirmed how strong these bonds were. At ourBRIDGE, tutors are given a unique opportunity to create relationships with their students. The tutors have a different role than school teachers which allows them to have different relationships with their students. Tutors have mentioned that they are supportive in the student’s personal lives along with their academic lives. When asked for specific instances where students have shown growth, many of the tutors mentioned their role as a testimonial to these instances:

Rapport/Individual Attention

But what I realized with him-- every child is different, so I knew, for him, that he needed a softer approach. Even though he was probably rough, he needed a softer approach. And so one day, I just sat out in the hall and just talked to him. Just ask them simple stuff like, “Well, what do you like to do?” “Soccer.” “Well, who is your favorite player?” Just building rapport because I knew the discipline part couldn’t happen if I didn’t have the foundation. So I had to do that. And then once we get that done, his mom came up here one day, and I actually spoke with her and found out that he was on medication, and they were trying to adjust it for his ADHD. So I was like, “That makes sense,” because, on some days, he’s great. Other days, I’m like, “Who is this?” And so she was like, “We’re going to the doctors.” So they got it adjusted. I could see a little change, but then he started to act up again. So long story short, I found out they have been deported. And he was caught

trying to cope and deal with that but didn't know how to express it. So I was like, "Oh, that makes sense." So from there, I was a little softer with him because I could sympathize with his situation. Losing your father, I couldn't imagine, and never knowing when you'll see him again. So I started to just call him my little helper, and I was like, "Hey, just help me around the classroom," and give him leadership roles. And he took pride in it. And I think that made him feel like maybe he was filling in the gap, not of his dad, but just filling in the gap of feeling like he belonged. So now that student, the other day, and I didn't say anything, but he came up and hugged up and said, "Hey, best friend." I was like [laughter], "Okay. I'm not going to mess up the moment." I was just like, "Hey." But I was just like, "Wow." So to go from where we started to now has been phenomenal to witness. So taught me a lot.

Kelly, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

It's the individual attention. It really is the individual attention. And just knowing that you actually, really genuinely care for them. They can tell the difference. They can tell when you're being false or you're not. Not that I'm saying I am, but they know when you're sincere. You know it. Kids are very intuitive. So that's a part I do find a challenge, and you do get involved. How can you not?

Leslie, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

And sometimes we are able to go to the student awards for some of our students. And that's really cool. The students invite us and we go. It reminds me of Ghana. Because we had a lot of student awards. So maybe 500 students. So it means a lot. When the students ask me, "Mr. E., Miss Camai, can you come to our student awards?" I mean, that hits me right at home. Yeah. Because that was big. I think some of our U.S. students, it's not a big deal right. It's just a little paper.

Eric, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Yeah, yes, yes. So great, I think the kids, I mean most of them if not all of them, have already started developing a relationship with me where they like me, and they know that I'm going to be there for them, and I kind of told them all the expectations and how I was. What kind of person I was and that I taught in the daytime so that I'm used to like that age group and all the stuff that happens in middle school.

Laura, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Academic Attention

Cayo in the middle school. He's in seventh grade. I took him in the summer, and kind of took him under my wing because he wanted to learn, and he's speaking perfect English. He's reading is not great because he doesn't-- I don't do middle school reading... But I mean, now, he could not speak a word a English. Now, we sit and chat, and he can converse. That's another thing, and just to see them doing better in school. And most of all, most of all it's the confidence because that's everything. If they feel more confident in reading and more confident speak[ing] English, then I've done my job.

Leslie, Individual Interview, 3/20/19

When it comes to-- for me personally, I know, a big one was concern about one of our students from a similar background like mine. He was not doing really well in math and science. And it's not so much academically, it's just at home, she was telling me she doesn't have the skills. So I need to understand that from my own mom's perspective. So I definitely took a big focus on that. And that was almost three months ago. Now he's really good on his math. But it's now personal responsibility she's put on me to do that.

Eric, Individual Interview 3/20/19

Improvements for ourBRIDGE

The staff all described working at ourBRIDGE to be rewarding but challenging at times. They did all appreciate the ways that they created a team at ourBRIDGE. They also described how diverse the tutors were and showcased the ways that these differences enhanced the overall demographics at the center.

Communication with the School

When asked about what their contact with the school looked like, it emerged that there is a lack of communication between ourBRIDGE tutors and the teachers at school. Some tutors mentioned that more interaction with the schools would benefit the students as it would better inform the tutors how to better support their needs. In addition, tutors have mentioned that many of the teachers do not know what happens at ourBRIDGE and it would be to the benefit of the students if they knew. The tutors stated how more interactions with their students' teachers would help support the ourBRIDGE kids academically, linguistically, and in their building of relationships.

Ongoing Training

ourBRIDGE also invested a great deal of time and resources in training of new tutors at the beginning of the year. These intensive training days were required before the year started were highly engaging. However, tutors who were hired mid year were not prepared in the same ways. The tutors who did receive training said that it was beneficial and educational.

Family Resources

With the program growing in the current political context, the staff did suggest looking into additional resources to better support the students and the staff. There are also diverse needs across the different grade levels. The main takeaway from the interviews was that more resources are needed for tutors to do their jobs more effectively. To address the increasing socio-emotional needs of immigrant students who experience trauma and the challenges of middle schooler, the staff agreed that ourBRIDGE needs more support from different professionals including counselors and other mental health professionals.

Staff Resources

The interviews revealed that the staff sometimes felt overwhelmed and that the center would benefit from more adults being present. There were staff being utilized for different roles beyond their responsibilities as tutors. This resulted in tutors and staff taking on the jobs of others and covering in classrooms where staff were absent or sick. From the staff's perspective,

understaffing can be explained by the nature of the job being part time, the pay being once a month, and the work hours being in the middle of the day.

Curriculum

Overall, the staff enjoyed the new curriculum put in place this year. Staff described the curriculum as culturally relevant, experiential, and structured. The staff also commented on how they each modified the curriculum to better suit the needs of their kids. They appreciated the unique curriculum and the flexibility they had to implement the lessons.

Conclusion

Interviews with staff from ourBRIDGE underscore the importance of this program on the lives of immigrants and their families. It is a program that provides a safe space for immigrant students to express themselves and their cultures while also learning English and getting assistance with their homework. The curriculum focuses on values that will help the students in life in the United States and allows them to be creative and express themselves. ourBRIDGE provides a unique support system for immigrants, consistently offering social and emotional help. The tutors are compassionate, authentic, and try their best to meet these students' complex needs. The program reaches outside of the facility and helps families navigate life as immigrants in the United States. Staff members find lawyers, provide emotional support, give food and clothing, and offer other support to the families of the students that attend. The staff is actively learning about immigration in the United States and how they can support their students. Staff members provided testimonies about growth they have seen in their students socially, emotionally, and academically. In addition, staff have cited parents telling them how much their students have grown because of ourBRIDGE. Staff have also listed areas in which the program can improve, including hiring more staff, accessing counselors/psychologists, diversifying the curriculum to fit the needs of all students, and acquiring more transportation.

Section IV: Quantitative Findings

IV. Quantitative Findings

A. Pre- and Post-Survey Results

Research Questions

1. What are ourBRIDGE students' self-efficacy in their use of English and self-esteem?
2. What are students' levels of engagement at schools and ourBRIDGE?
3. Why do ourBRIDGE students choose to come to ourBRIDGE?
4. What are parents' perceptions of ourBRIDGE?
5. What are ourBRIDGE students' social skills? What are tutor ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills?

Participants (Pre- and Post-Surveys)

The participants of the 2018-2019 ourBRIDGE project at Pre-Survey include 90 students, grades K-7 from seven schools (listed by highest to lowest): Winterfield ($n = 33$, 36.7%), Merry Oaks ($n = 27$, 30.0%), Eastway Middle ($n = 20$, 22.2%), Charlotte Lab School ($n = 3$, 3.3%), Devonshire ($n = 1$, 1.1%), Elizabeth Traditional Elementary School ($n = 1$, 1.1%), Briarwood Academy ($n = 1$, 1.1%), and two schools that the students did not identify (2.2%). All of the schools included were elementary schools except for Eastway Middle.

The participants of the 2018-2019 ourBRIDGE project at Post-Survey include 121 students grades K-7 from 11 schools: Winterfield ($n = 42$, 34.7%), Eastway Middle ($n = 34$, 28.1%), Merry Oaks ($n = 27$, 22.3%), Windsor Park ($n = 9$, 7.4%), Charlotte Lab School ($n = 2$, 1.7%), IIA ($n = 2$, 1.7%), Winterpark ($n = 1$, 0.8%), Devonshire Elementary School ($n = 1$, 0.8%), Veritas Community School ($n = 1$, 0.8%), and Cochrane Collegiate Academy ($n = 1$, 0.8%). Most ($n = 112$, 92.6%) completed the survey in English whereas the other nine (7.4%) completed the survey in Spanish.

Pre Test and Post Test (2018-2019) Year 2

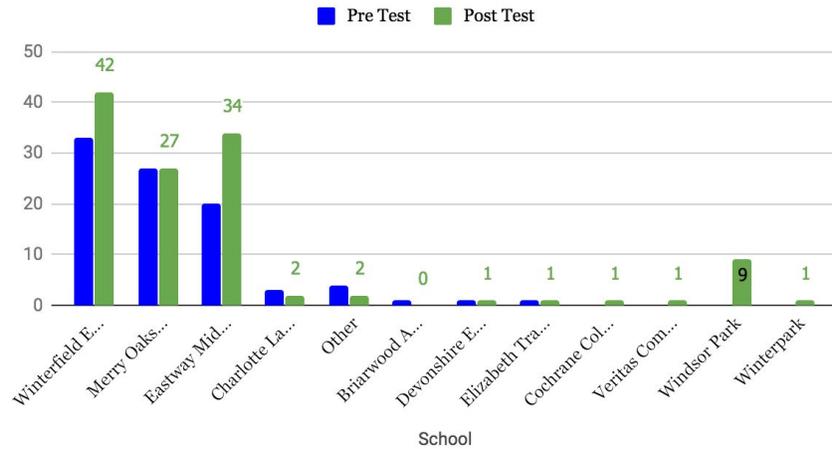


Figure 3. Pre- and Post-Survey Participants Compared by School

Pre-Survey (n=90)

Attendance at ourBRIDGE is high. This was demonstrated in both the Pre-and Post Survey Data. Most of the students ($n = 62$, 68.9%) attended ourBRIDGE every day. Thirteen (14.4%) came to ourBRIDGE four days a week, seven (7.8%) attended ourBRIDGE three days a week, four (4.4%) came to ourBRIDGE two days a week, and four (4.4%) came to ourBRIDGE once a week. Of the 90 students, 8 (8.9%) were in kindergarten, 11 (12.2%) were in first grade, 14 (15.6%) were in second grade, 11 (12.2%) were in third grade, 14 (15.6%) were in fourth grade, 11 (12.2%) were in fifth grade, 7 (7.8%) were in sixth grade, and 14 (15.6%) were in seventh grade. The students came from South America ($n = 32$; 35.6%), Asia ($n = 9$; 10.0%), Africa ($n = 7$, 7.8%), and 42 (46.7%) did not report their country of origin. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the frequency of ourBRIDGE children's attendance at ourBRIDGE.

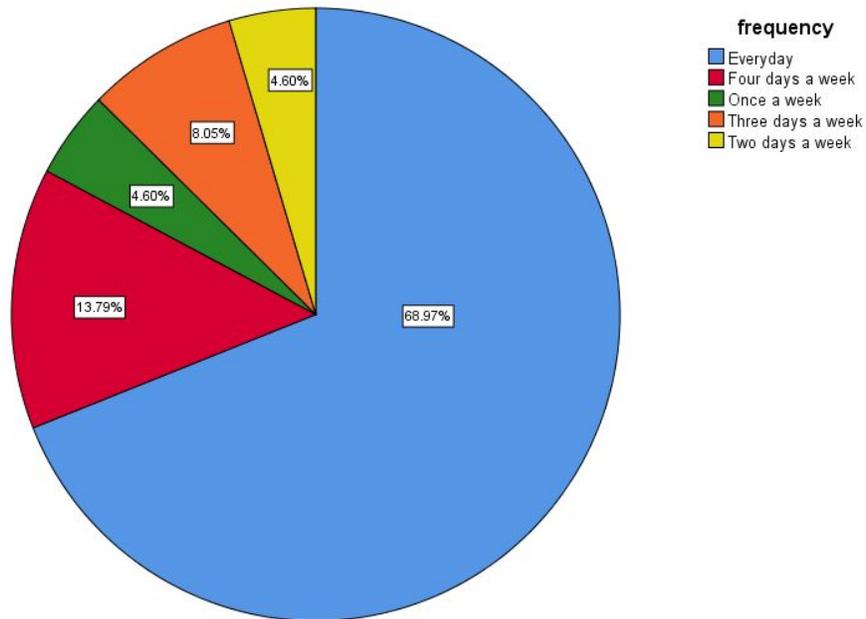


Figure 4. Attendance of ourBRIDGE Children (September, 2018)

Post-Survey (n=121)

Most of the students ($n = 78$, 64.5%) came to ourBRIDGE every day, 17 (14.0%) came to ourBRIDGE four days a week, 10 (8.3%) came to ourBRIDGE three days a week, 7 (5.8%) came to ourBRIDGE two days a week, and 9 (7.4%) came to ourBRIDGE once a week.

Of the 121 students, 10 (8.3%) were in kindergarten, 13 (10.7%) were in first grade, 13 (10.7%) were in second grade, 12 (9.9%) were in third grade, 20 (16.5%) were in fourth grade, 16 (13.2%) were in fifth grade, 15 (12.4%) were in sixth grade, 17 (14.0%) were in seventh grade, and 5 (4.1%) were in eighth grade. The students came from South America ($n = 75$; 62.0%), Asia ($n = 30$; 24.8%), Africa ($n = 6$, 5.0%), Europe ($n = 1$, 0.8%), USA ($n = 2$, 1.7%), and 7 (5.8%) did not report their country of origin. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the frequency of ourBRIDGE children's attendance at ourBRIDGE.

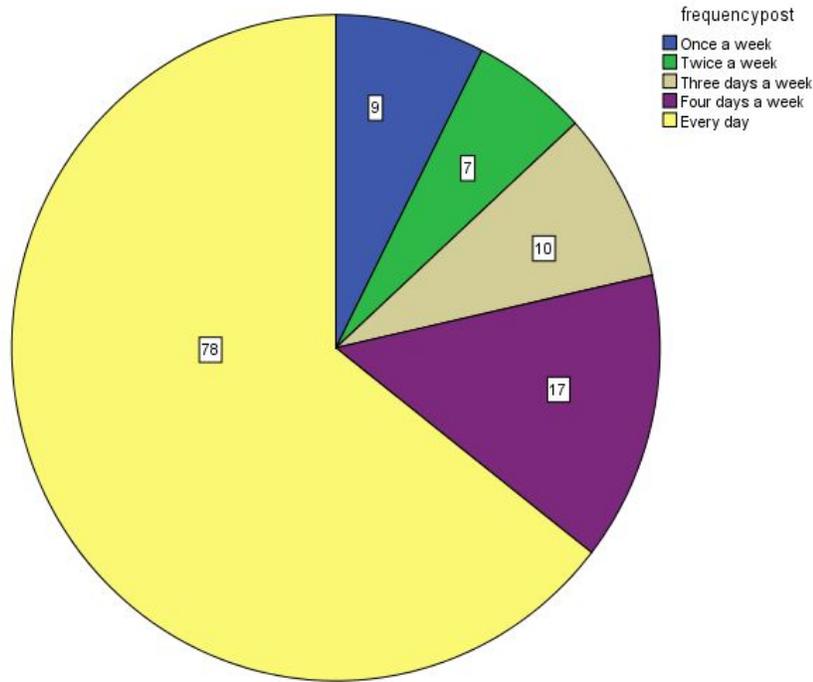


Figure 5. Attendance of ourBRIDGE Children (May, 2019)

ourBRIDGE Survey

Self-Efficacy

Table 1 presents students' self-report of their own English language self-efficacy.

Table 1

Self-Efficacy for English Language

Items	Excellent	Good	Not sure	Bad
I am a _____ student	34 (37.8%)	35 (38.9%)	16 (17.8%)	5 (5.5%)
I can speak and understand English	39 (43.3%)	34 (37.8%)	9 (10.0%)	8 (8.9%)
I can read and write English	28 (31.1%)	39 (43.3%)	8 (8.9%)	15 (16.7%)
In school, my grades are _____.	30 (33.3%)	39 (43.3%)	11 (12.2%)	10 (11.2%)

Note. Excellent =4, Good = 3, Not Sure =2, and Bad = 1.

Overall, student self-efficacy to use English on the pre-survey was good ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.56$). Results from the post-survey showed that student self-efficacy in their use of English was good ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.48$). On average, student self-efficacy improved over the academic year with a mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 0.46 based on the range of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). When asked about their language skills, ourBRIDGE kids reported having a high sense of efficacy of language proficiency.

Table 2 presents the student self-report of their value or their own perceptions of themselves.

Table 2

Self-Esteem

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am important	33 (36.7%)	40 (44.4%)	15 (16.7%)	2 (2.2%)
I am a good person	35 (38.9%)	46 (51.1%)	6 (6.7%)	2 (2.2%)
I am good at school	42 (46.7%)	34 (37.8%)	7 (7.8%)	4 (4.4%)
I am good at sports	27 (30.0%)	20 (22.2%)	26 (28.9%)	16 (17.8%)
I am good at being a friend	42 (46.7%)	41 (45.6%)	7 (7.8%)	NA
I am good at listening to adults	39 (43.3%)	32 (35.6%)	17 (18.9%)	1 (1.1%)
I am proud of myself	42 (46.7%)	38 (42.2%)	8 (8.9%)	2 (2.2%)
I like who I am	41 (45.6%)	38 (42.2%)	9 (10.0%)	1 (1.1%)
I respect myself	40 (44.4%)	44 (48.9%)	5 (5.6%)	1 (1.1%)
I am useful to others	32 (35.6%)	43 (47.8%)	8 (8.9%)	4 (4.4%)
People like me	26 (28.9%)	39 (43.3%)	20 (22.2%)	4 (4.4%)
I make friends easily	32 (35.6%)	32 (35.6%)	19 (21.1%)	6 (6.7%)

Note. Strong Agree = 4, Agree =3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree =1.

The pre-survey showed that on average, student self-esteem was mediocre with a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.49 based on the range of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). They showed relatively low self-esteem on “I am good at sports,” “I am good at listening to adults,” “I make friends easily,” and “People like me.” It seems that these children were having difficulty making friends and being accepted into the social culture at school. On the post-survey, scores for student self-esteem was lower than expected with a mean of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 0.58 based on the range of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). They showed relatively low self-esteem on “I am good at listening to adults,” “I make friends easily,” and “People like me.” It seems that these children were still having difficulty making friends and being accepted into the social culture at school.

Student Perceptions of the School and ourBRIDGE

Table 3 presents findings on the levels of student engagement at school.

Table 3

Engagement at School

Items	Always	Most time	Sometimes	Not a lot
Do you like school?	34 (37.8%)	15 (16.7%)	33 (36.7%)	8 (8.9%)
Do you study hard for tests?	32 (35.6%)	12 (3.3%)	24 (26.7%)	22 (24.4%)
Do you like your teachers?	48 (53.3%)	19 (21.1%)	17 (18.9%)	6 (6.7%)
*Do you get in trouble at school?	4 (4.4%)	5 (5.6%)	35 (38.9%)	46 (51.1%)
*Is school hard for you?	11 (12.2%)	11 (12.2%)	38 (42.2%)	30 (33.3%)
Do you raise your hand in class to answer questions?	33 (36.7%)	19 (21.1%)	27 (30.0%)	11 (12.2%)
Do you have a lot of homework?	20 (22.2%)	12 (13.3%)	37 (41.1%)	21 (23.3%)

Do your parents help you with homework?	15 (16.7%)	15 (16.7%)	22 (24.4%)	38 (42.2%)
Do you finish your homework on time?	35 (38.9%)	16 (17.8%)	28 (31.1%)	11 (12.2%)
Are your teachers helpful?	46 (51.1%)	15 (16.7%)	17 (18.9%)	12 (13.3%)
Are your teachers nice to you?	50 (55.6%)	20 (22.2%)	14 (15.6%)	6 (6.7%)
Do you feel comfortable asking your teacher at school for help?	39 (43.3%)	20 (22.2%)	19 (21.1%)	12 (13.3%)
Are the kids you go to school with nice to you?	29 (32.2%)	22 (24.4%)	30 (33.3%)	9 (10.0%)
Is it easy for you to make friends?	36 (40.0%)	16 (17.8%)	20 (22.2%)	18 (20.0%)

Note. Yes, almost always = 4, Most of the time = 3, Sometimes = 2, and No, hardly ever = 1.

* These items were reversely coded for the mean.

On average, ourBRIDGE students were not engaged in their schools ($M = 2.85$; $SD = 0.45$). However, they reported satisfaction with their teachers. All the items related to teachers (e.g., “Do you like your teachers?,” “Are your teachers helpful?,” “Are your teachers nice to you?,” “Do you feel comfortable asking your teacher at school for help?”) were rated positively. It is alarming that 21 students, which account for 23% of the participants, reported that they hardly ever had homework. Research suggested a strong positive relationship between homework and teacher’s expectations and academic achievement (Trautwein, 2007), so this lack of homework indicates low expectations from them and possibly low academic achievement. Student perceptions of ourBRIDGE are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Engagement at ourBRIDGE

	Definitely	Probably	Probably Not	Not at all
I feel happy at ourBRIDGE	48 (53.3%)	15 (16.7%)	22 (24.4%)	5 (5.6%)
I like activities at ourBRIDGE	51 (56.7%)	19 (21.1%)	12 (13.3%)	8 (8.9%)
ourBRIDGE helps me with school	51 (56.7%)	15 (16.7%)	17 (18.9%)	7 (7.8%)
I feel comfortable with the other kids at ourBRIDGE	32 (35.6%)	23 (25.6%)	25 (27.8%)	10 (11.1%)
I feel safe at ourBRIDGE	60 (66.7%)	12 (13.3%)	12 (13.3%)	6 (6.7%)
I can talk to tutors/volunteers if I need help	50 (55.5%)	19 (21.1%)	12 (13.3%)	9 (10.0%)
ourBRIDGE tutors care about me	56 (62.2%)	10 (11.1%)	18 (20.0%)	6 (6.7%)
ourBRIDGE tutors take the time to get to know me	47 (52.2%)	24 (26.7%)	14 (15.6%)	5 (5.6%)
I have enough quiet time to do my homework at ourBRIDGE	34 (37.8%)	21 (23.3%)	20 (22.2%)	15 (16.7%)
I like ourBRIDGE tutors/volunteers	61 (67.8%)	15 (16.7%)	11 (12.2%)	3 (3.3%)

On average, ourBRIDGE students were very engaged in ourBRIDGE ($M = 3.20$; $SD = 0.65$). Paired sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between ourBRIDGE students’ engagement at school and at ourBRIDGE, $t(89) = -5.50$, $p < .001$. ourBRIDGE students

reported much more engagement at ourBRIDGE than in their regular schools. Figure 6 shows the distribution of ourBRIDGE children's satisfaction with ourBRIDGE:

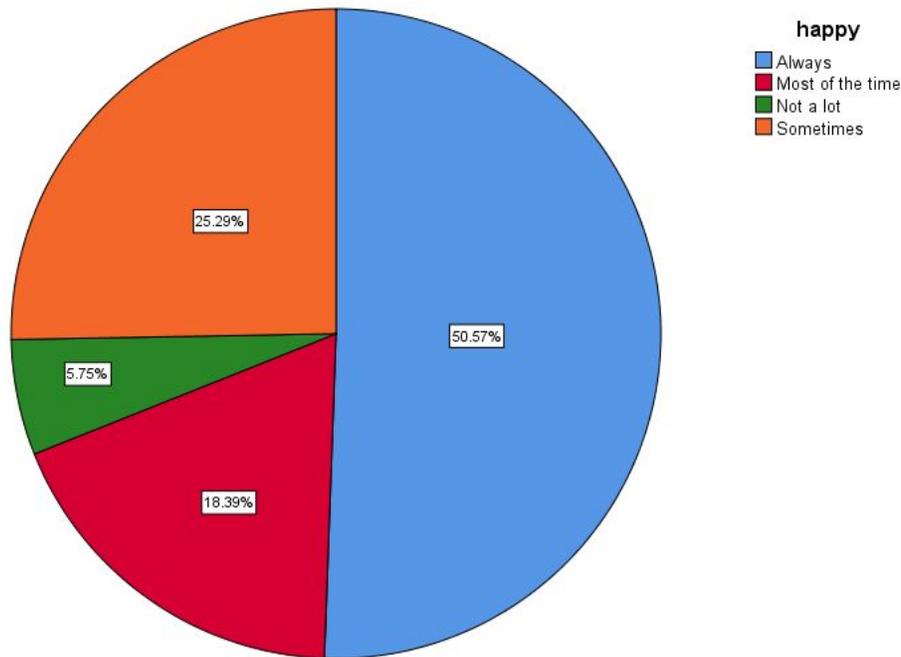


Figure 6. Satisfaction with ourBRIDGE

Social Acceptance and Social Skills (Pre- and Post-Survey)

Friendship is a reflection of if and how students are accepted in schools. Therefore, each student was asked to list their close friends at school as well at ourBRIDGE. While most students listed at least one or two friends in each location and the number of friends reported by ourBRIDGE students ranged from zero to 13 students, the average number of friends of ourBRIDGE students had at school was 3.01 with a standard deviation of 2.12 and that at ourBRIDGE was 2.28 with a standard deviation of 1.57. It is worth noting that five children reported no close friends at school, and three of these five children also reported no friends at ourBRIDGE. Four more children reported no close friends at ourBRIDGE but a few friends at school. It is possible that these children recently joined the ourBRIDGE program at the time of data collection. In the post-survey, most students listed at least one or two friends in each location. The number ranged from 3 to 12 students, the average number of friends of ourBRIDGE students had at school was 3.45 with a standard deviation of 1.06 and that at ourBRIDGE was 3.92 with a standard deviation of 1.03.

The social skills measured by the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) was low on the pre-survey, with an average of 26.14 percentile at the national level. The standardized mean score of the whole sample was 86.91 with a standard deviation of 13.32, which is lower than the national norm mean of 100. Tables 5-8 present itemized statistics for each subscale at the elementary level. On the post-survey, the social skills measured by the SSRS were low, with an average of 35.25 percentile at the national level. The standardized means score of the whole sample was 92.65 with a stand deviation of 10.21, which is lower than the national norm mean

of 100. ourBRIDGE students were able to control themselves based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 on all but one items and 2 means “sometimes.” ourBRIDGE students were empathic based on their self-report because they reported above 2 for each item and 2 means “sometimes.”

ourBRIDGE students were assertive on some but not all items based on their self-report. On average, they reported above 2, and 2 means “sometimes.” However, the average was below 2 for four items related to the interaction with opposite genders. ourBRIDGE students were able to control themselves based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 on all but two items and 2 means “sometimes.” The two items that were scored below 2 were “accept punishment from adults” and “ignore children’s teasing.” ourBRIDGE students were empathic based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 and 2 means “sometimes.”

Table 5 presents findings from student SRSS on Cooperation at the Elementary Level

Table 5

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Cooperation - Elementary Level)

Cooperation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Finish classroom work	2.38	0.67
Do homework	2.44	0.68
Follow teacher’s directions	2.73	0.49
Listen to teacher	2.71	0.54
Keep desk clean	2.40	0.64
Listen to adults	2.71	0.50
Use nice tone	2.56	0.62
Use free time	2.56	0.54
Avoid trouble	2.31	0.72
Tell others when upset	1.98	0.73
Total	2.48	0.31

Numbers in Table 5 indicates that ourBRIDGE students were cooperative based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 for each item and 2 means “sometimes.”

Table 6 presents students’ self-report of assertion skills.

Table 6

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Assertion - Elementary Level)

Assertion	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Start talks	2.27	0.76
Make friends easily	2.46	0.50
Active in school activities	2.27	0.71
Ignore classmates’ clowning	2.29	0.74
Ignore children’s teasing	2.40	0.79
Ask adults for help	2.46	0.71

Finish classroom work	2.38	0.67
Show that I like compliments	2.38	0.64
Do homework	2.44	0.68
Ask classmates to join activity	2.58	0.58
Total	2.39	0.29

Table 6 also indicates that ourBRIDGE students were assertive based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 for each item and 2 means “sometimes.”

Table 7 presents students’ self-report of self-control skills.

Table 7

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Self-Control - Elementary Level)

Self-Control	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ask adults for help	2.46	0.71
Talk with classmates when a problem occurs	2.33	0.66
Control temper	2.17	0.69
End fights with parents	2.15	0.82
Ask friends for help	2.23	0.63
Politely question unfair rules	2.13	0.67
Ignore children teasing me	2.40	0.79
Disagree without fighting	2.10	0.78
Tell new people my name	1.79	0.65
Ignore classmates’ clowning	2.46	0.71
Total	2.20	0.33

Table 7 also indicates that ourBRIDGE students were able to control themselves based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 on all but one items and 2 means “sometimes.” The only item that was below 2 was “tell new people my name.”

Table 8 presents students’ self-report of empathy skills. Table 8 also indicates that ourBRIDGE students were empathic based on their self-report because they reported above 2 for each item and 2 means “sometimes.”

Table 8

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Empathy - Elementary Level)

Empathy	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Feel sorry for others	2.60	0.54
Listen to friends’ problems	2.46	0.65
Understand how friends feel	2.52	0.55
Accept people	2.67	0.60
Ask before using others’ things	2.46	0.71
Say nice things to others	2.54	0.65
Tell friends I like them	2.19	0.73
Listen to adults	2.71	0.50
Tell adults I like what they’ve done	2.31	0.69

Smile, wave, or nod	2.19	0.67
Total	2.48	0.35

Tables 9-12 presents itemized statistics for each subscale at the secondary level. Table 9 presents their self-report of cooperation skills for secondary level students.

Table 9

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Cooperation - Secondary Level)

Cooperation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Finish classroom work	2.38	0.62
Do homework	2.25	0.58
Follow teacher's directions	2.56	0.63
Ask before using things	2.50	0.82
Use free time	2.38	0.62
Use nice voice	2.13	0.50
Keep desk clean	2.38	0.62
Listen to adults	2.63	0.50
Avoid trouble	2.19	0.66
Ask friends for favors	2.25	0.58
Total	2.36	0.27

Numbers in Table 9 indicates that ourBRIDGE students were cooperative based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 for each item and 2 means "sometimes." Table 10 presents their self-report of assertion skills.

Table 10

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Assertion - Secondary Level)

Assertion	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Get attention from opposite genders	1.94	0.85
Confident on dates	1.81	0.75
Start conversation with genders	2.19	0.83
Ask for date	1.50	0.82
Compliments others	1.69	0.70
Make friends easily	2.38	0.50
Start talks with class members	2.31	0.79
Active in school activities	2.38	0.62
Invite others to join activities	2.31	0.70
Ask adults for help	2.19	0.75
Total	2.07	0.41

Table 10 also indicates that ourBRIDGE students were assertive on some but not all items based on their self-report. On average, they reported above 2, and 2 means "sometimes." However, the average was below 2 for four items: "get attention from peers," "confident on

dates,” “ask for date,” and “compliment others.” These items were all about socializing with peers, so we believe that ourBRIDGE children were too young to correspond to these items.

Table 11 presents students’ self-report of self-control skills.

Table 11

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Self-Control - Secondary Level)

Self-Control	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Accept punishment from adults	1.88	0.62
Take criticism from parents	2.00	0.52
Control temper	2.06	0.77
End fights with parents	2.38	0.72
Compromise with parents or teachers	2.38	0.62
Disagree without fighting	2.06	0.77
Ignore classmates’ clowning	2.00	0.73
Ignore children’s teasing	1.94	0.77
Avoid trouble	2.19	0.66
Do nice things for parents	2.50	0.63
Total	2.14	0.30

Table 11 also indicates that ourBRIDGE students were able to control themselves based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 on all but two items and 2 means “sometimes.” The two items that were scored below 2 were “accept punishment from adults” and “ignore children’s teasing.”

Table 12 presents students’ self-report of empathy skills.

Table 12

Student Self-Ratings of Social Skills (Empathy - Secondary Level)

Empathy	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Understand how friends feel	2.25	0.68
Listen to friends’ problems	2.31	0.60
Ask friends for help with problem	2.19	0.54
Feel sorry for others	2.06	0.77
Tell others when they’ve done well	2.25	0.68
Tell friends I like them	1.88	0.89
Stands up for friends	2.44	0.63
Say nice things to others	2.19	0.75
Talk over classmates’ problems	1.94	0.77
Smile, wave, or nod	2.38	0.72

Total	2.19	0.40
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Table 12 also indicates that ourBRIDGE students were empathic based on their self-report because, on average, they reported above 2 and 2 means “sometimes.”

Teacher Ratings of Students’ Social Skills

Teacher ratings of elementary student’s social skills, problem behaviors, and academic competence are presented in Tables 13-17.

Table 13

Teacher Ratings of Student Social Skills (Cooperation - Elementary Level)

Cooperation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Finishes assignments	2.49	0.50
Uses time appropriately	2.32	0.55
Attends to instruction	2.64	0.48
Easily makes transition	2.42	0.50
Produces correct work	2.53	0.50
Ignores peer distractions	2.17	0.61
Follows directions	2.62	0.49
Puts work away	2.45	0.57
Uses free time acceptably	2.36	0.56
Keeps desk clean	2.43	0.54
Total	2.44	0.41

Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students’ social skills in cooperation was satisfactory because teachers rated every item above 2 and 2 means “sometimes.”

Table 14

Teacher Ratings of Student Social Skills (Assertion - Elementary Level)

Assertion	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Initiates conversations	2.09	0.40
Introduces self	1.75	0.70
Questions unfair rules	2.04	0.55
Invites others to join	2.13	0.59
Tells when treated unfairly	2.17	0.58
Makes friends easily	2.45	0.57
Gives compliments to peers	2.21	0.53
Says nice things about self	2.19	0.65
Volunteers to help peers	2.42	0.57
Joins ongoing activity	2.43	0.57
Total	2.19	0.39

Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills in assertion was satisfactory because teachers rated all but one item above 2 and 2 means "sometimes." The item rated below 2 was "introduce myself."

Table 15

Teacher Ratings of Student Social Skills (Self-Control - Elementary Level)

Self-Control	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Controls temper with peers	2.34	0.68
Compromises in conflict	2.17	0.51
Responds appropriately when hit	2.19	0.68
Controls temper with adults	2.47	0.67
Receives children well	2.09	0.69
Responds to teasing	2.09	0.66
Accepts peers' ideas	2.21	0.45
Responds to peer pressure	2.26	0.59
Gets along with people	2.49	0.50
Cooperates with peers	2.43	0.54
Total	2.28	0.48

Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills in self-control was satisfactory because teachers rated every item above 2 and 2 means "sometimes."

Table 16

Teacher Ratings of Student Problem Behaviors (Elementary Level)

Externalizing	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gets angry easily	1.79	0.77
Fights with others	1.81	0.74
Threatens or bullies	1.51	0.64
Has temper tantrums	1.62	0.74
Talks back to adults	1.72	0.77
Argues with others	1.89	0.70
Subtotal	1.72	0.65
Internalizing		
Appears lonely	1.68	0.67
Acts sad or depressed	1.66	0.73
Shows anxiety with children	1.58	0.63
Has low self-esteem	1.70	0.70
Is easily embarrassed	2.02	0.54
Likes to be alone	1.77	0.64
Subtotal	1.74	0.52
Hyperactivity		
Is easily distracted	1.79	0.66
Fidgets	1.49	0.75
Doesn't listen	1.77	0.54

Interrupts conversations	1.81	0.71
Acts impulsively	1.83	0.83
Disturbs ongoing activities	1.72	0.69
Subtotal	1.74	0.60
Total	1.73	0.49

Teacher ratings of students' problem behaviors was also satisfactory because all but one item was rated below 2, and 2 means sometimes. The only item rated above 2 was "is easily embarrassed." These items indicate problem behaviors so a value below 2 means satisfactory.

Table 17

Teacher Ratings of Student Academic Competence (Elementary Level)

Self-Control	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall academic performance	3.42	1.12
Intellectual functioning	3.58	1.08
Reading	3.26	1.13
Skills in reading	3.08	1.07
Mathematics	3.47	1.17
Skills in mathematics	3.32	1.14
Overall motivation	3.45	1.07
Parental encouragement	3.45	0.97
Overall classroom behavior	3.57	1.29
Total	3.40	0.99

Teachers' ratings of students' academic competence is about the average in class; teachers rated each ourBRIDGE student based on the comparison with other children in the classroom on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = "lowest 10%," 2 = "Next Lowest 20%," 3 = "Middle 40%," 4 = "Next Highest 20%," and 5 = "Highest 10%."

Teachers' ratings of students' social skills at the secondary level are presented in Tables 18-23.

Table 18

Teacher Ratings of Student Social Skills (Cooperation - Secondary Level)

Cooperation	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Finishes assignments	2.12	0.33
Produces correct work	2.24	0.44
Uses time appropriately	2.29	0.59
Easily makes transitions	2.65	0.49
Attends to instruction	2.71	0.47
Keeps work area clean	2.65	0.70
Puts work away	2.29	0.69
Ignores peer distractions	2.06	0.56
Complies with directions	2.41	0.51
Listens to classmates' ideas	2.47	0.72

Total	2.39	0.40
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Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills in cooperation was satisfactory because teachers rated every item above 2 and 2 means "sometimes."

Table 19

Teacher Ratings of Student Social Skills (Assertion - Secondary Level)

Assertion	M	SD
Stands up for peers	2.06	0.75
Tells you when treated unfairly	2.06	0.75
Questions unfair rules	2.24	0.66
Initiates conversations	2.06	0.66
Introduces self	1.88	0.70
Compliments opposite genders	1.65	0.49
Appears confident with opposite genders	2.00	0.79
Invites others to join	1.94	0.56
Volunteers to help peers	2.06	0.75
Expresses feelings when wronged	2.00	0.79
Total	1.99	0.45

Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills in assertion was satisfactory because teachers rated all but three items above 2 and 2 means "sometimes." The three items rated below 2 were "introduce myself," "compliments opposite sex," and "invites others to join."

Table 20

Teacher Ratings of Student Social Skills (Self-Control - Secondary Level)

Self-Control	M	SD
Controls temper with peers	2.12	0.86
Compromises in conflict	2.06	0.83
Receives criticism well	2.18	0.81
Controls temper with adults	2.12	0.78
Responds appropriately to teasing	2.06	0.83
Responds to peer aggression	2.06	0.83
Responds to peer pressure	2.24	0.66
Accepts peers' ideas	2.59	0.51
Acknowledges peers' praise	2.29	0.69
Refuses unreasonable requests	2.29	0.77
Total	2.20	0.64

Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills in self-control was satisfactory because teachers rated every item above 2 and 2 means "sometimes."

Table 21

Teacher Ratings of Student Problem Behaviors (Secondary Level)

Externalizing	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Talks back to adults	1.18	0.39
Argues with others	1.76	0.83
Gets angry easily	1.76	0.90
Has temper tantrums	1.24	0.56
Threatens or bullies others	1.41	0.71
Fights with others	1.71	0.92
Subtotal	1.51	0.63
Internalizing		
Appears lonely	1.29	0.69
Likes to be alone	1.59	0.80
Shows anxiety with children	1.35	0.61
Has low self-esteem	1.47	0.62
Acts sad or depressed	1.29	0.47
Is easily embarrassed	2.00	0.50
Subtotal	1.50	0.53
Total	1.50	0.44

Teacher ratings of students' problem behavior was also satisfactory because all but one item was rated below 2, and 2 means "sometimes." The only item rated equal to 2.00 was "Is easily embarrassed." These items indicate problem behaviors so a value below 2 means satisfactory.

Table 22

Teacher Ratings of Student Academic Competence (Secondary Level)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Self-Control		
Overall academic performance	3.00	0.94
Intellectual functioning	3.00	0.94
Skills in mathematics	3.00	0.94
Reading	2.88	0.93
Skills in reading	2.88	0.93
Mathematics	3.00	0.94
Overall motivation	2.76	0.97
Parental encouragement	2.82	0.88
Overall classroom behavior	2.94	0.90
Total	2.92	0.90

Teachers' ratings of students' academic competence is below average in class. This is because teachers rated each ourBRIDGE student based on the comparison with other children in the classroom on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = "lowest 10%," 2 = "Next Lowest 20%," 3 = "Middle 40%," 4 = "Next Highest 20%," and 5 = "Highest 10%." Teacher ratings of ourBRIDGE students' social skills were satisfactory in all aspects on both the pre- and post-survey results. These included the following areas: cooperation, assertion, self-control, problem behavior, cooperation, assertion.

B. Open-Ended Survey Responses

Reasons to Attend ourBRIDGE

The top three reasons that the kids come to ourBRIDGE are: “fun activities” ($n = 82$, 91%), “my friends come” ($n = 75$, 83%), and “my parents wanted me to” ($n = 74$, 82%). Other reasons also reported by the students were: “to get help with homework” ($n = 70$, 77%), “to get help with English” ($n = 65$, 72%), and “my teacher wanted me to” ($n = 56$, 62%). On the post-survey, the same top three reasons emerged: “fun activities,” “my friends come,” and “my parents wanted me to.” Other reasons also reported by the students were: “to get help with homework,” “to get help with English,” and “my teacher wanted me to.”

Favorite Part of ourBRIDGE

Quite a few students reported that they liked “everything” at ourBRIDGE. Students’ favorite parts of ourBRIDGE, according to their self-report, are playing games such as soccer, tag, or outside games (mentioned 65 times); Fun Friday or Club Day (mentioned 23 times); and food or snack time (mentioned 10 times). Similarly, on the post-survey, ourBRIDGE kids reported that they liked “everything” at ourBRIDGE. The favorite parts of ourBRIDGE, according to the kids’ self-report, are playing games such as soccer, tag, or outside games (mentioned 54 times); Fun Friday or Club Day (mentioned 19 times); and food or snack time (mentioned 8 times). Other activities the children enjoyed were making slime, staying in the blue room, doing homework, and being with their favorite tutors.

How ourBRIDGE Helped the Kids

On both the pre- and post-survey, the majority of the students think that ourBRIDGE helps them the most in their study (doing homework and reading). This was mentioned by nearly everyone (80%) on both the pre- and post-surveys. Some other students reported that ourBRIDGE made them a good student, paid attention to all people, and helped them understand more.

After-School Activities if not ourBRIDGE

Most of the participants reported on both the pre- and post-surveys that if they did not attend ourBRIDGE, they would most likely be doing homework ($n = 77$, 86%), doing house chores ($n = 75$, 83%), playing ($n = 74$, 82%), babysitting their siblings ($n = 74$, 82%), watching TV ($n = 73$, 81%), or doing nothing ($n = 64$, 82%).

Student-Reported Parent Perceptions of ourBRIDGE

According to the students, most parents think that ourBRIDGE is “good” (mentioned 75 times). Some parents think that ourBRIDGE is “helpful” (mentioned 38 times), enabling their children to do homework (mentioned 30 times) and to learn (mentioned 25 times). Some other parents think that ourBRIDGE is a “fun” or “good” place (mentioned 20 times). Two students did not know what their parents thought about ourBRIDGE. Post-survey, results were consistent with the pre-surveys. Students reported that most of their parents think that ourBRIDGE is “good” (mentioned 67 times). Some parents think that ourBRIDGE is “helpful” (mentioned 32 times), enabling their children to do homework (mentioned 26 times) and to learn (mentioned 20 times). Some other parents think that ourBRIDGE is a “fun” or “good” place (mentioned 18 times).

B. Overview of Survey Results

Student Responses

When asked what their parents thought about ourBRIDGE, the majority of students made positive statements. The majority of the responses stated that their parents felt ourBRIDGE is “good” or “helpful.” At least 25 out of the 121 responses said their parents feel that ourBRIDGE provides additional homework support. There were 8 responses that were neutral, with the responses stating things such as “I don’t know” or “nothing,” and only one response that was negative. This student stated that their parent doesn’t think “it helps.”

When asked what their favorite part about ourBRIDGE is, the students had varying answers. One-fifth of the responses related to opportunities that allowed them to be more active. For example, students stated that they enjoyed playing outside or playing sports. The number of mentions of Club Days and Fun Fridays follow that number. Students also made comments about how much they liked the different types of media used in projects. Some students stated that their favorite part about ourBRIDGE was socializing with peers and tutors. For example, a student stated that their favorite part is “hanging out with the tutors and playing with my friends.” Out of all of the responses, only 11 responses were somewhat negative, stating things like “nothing” or “going home.”

The survey asked students how ourBRIDGE helped them so far. Approximately half of the students stated that ourBRIDGE helped them personally by providing homework support. At least 13 students stated that ourBRIDGE helped them socio-emotionally. For example, one response stated that ourBRIDGE helped them “to love myself” and another student said they helped their “house problems.” Two students in particular said that ourBRIDGE helped with their English. Only 6 out of the 112 students had negative responses. The majority of those responses stated that ourBRIDGE doesn’t help them at all and one student said “being more mean.” Some students described the ways that the tutors helped them. For example, Antonio (grade 7) said “My favorite person is Miss Laura because she always tries to help me when I’m angry and tries to ask me how I’m feeling and why I’m feeling that way, and she always checks up on me.” Sammy (grade 8) said “I like all the teachers and they always help me a lot. And if I have any questions for her, I just ask her.”

The students were asked for suggestions to make ourBRIDGE better. The majority of students did not have any suggestions to provide. However, many students provided suggestions to make the center better. They included ways to upgrade the physical space by making it bigger, adding age specific playgrounds, or creating more areas reserved areas for sports. A few students made suggestions in regards to their peers. One response stated, “Nobody should hit people, no fighting, no punching.” There were also a couple of students that stated that “all students should have to follow the rules” or that everyone should “treat people nicely, and that there should be no bullying.” Other students said that there should be more tutors to help with homework or that tutors should help the students out more. Five students from grades 1-7 mentioned having more things to do outside. For example, Elyse (grade 4), said “More equipment for outside, because we only have soccer fields and the garden. But some people don’t like doing that, so they just talk or be in their phone-- we should have more like a playground or something like that”

End of Year Parent Questionnaires

At the end of the academic year, parents were asked to complete a quick end of year questionnaire at the final ourBRIDGE family event. The parent turnout was lower than expected due to work obligations, this making the response rate was low on these questionnaires. Only 15 parents completed this questionnaire. However, from these data, parents reported positive impact on their families.

When asked how ourBRIDGE helped their children, the parents stated that the students grew socio-emotionally, had improved behavior, and appreciated the extra counseling support. One parent specifically said:

This program has been key for my son's emotional [stability]. He had a very bad adaptation to the country when we came back from being one year in Spain. For him being with other kids from around the world has been very positive. He loves coming here after school, he loves being with his friends and doing all the different activities. The tutors are amazingly prepared and very, very nice and helpful to the kids and to the families. I'm so thankful to that program and all the people that makes it happen every day."

Most of the responses said ourBRIDGE helped their children academically, mostly from homework support. A couple of parents mentioned an improvement in reading skills.

When asked what they like best about the program, the responses varied. Three parents mentioned social aspects: their child gets to know more people, their child is happy there, and that the program provides "warmth and personal attention for each child." Three other parents stated that they like the program because they provide academic support. All of the parents agreed that they "like everything overall" and several parents described how much they liked their children's tutors. The majority of the parents expressed gratitude to the staff and volunteers. One parent was interested to learn more about the history of ourBRIDGE and another parent wanted ourBRIDGE to know that they should help more with academic support and spend less time playing. When asked for suggestions to make ourBRIDGE better, most parents were content with how things already were. Three parents made suggestions to expand the program, serve more schools, or make more space.

C. Final Thoughts- OurBRIDGE “Glows”

Year 2 at ourBRIDGE was full of memorable moments, with many highlights and challenges. ourBRIDGE is an exceptional program that students all over North Carolina could benefit from. One of the only suggestions that parents made was the need to expand the program in order to have more of a reach to immigrant families in Charlotte. ourBRIDGE is a unique space that is defined by its commitment to provide this community a safe and engaging space, where English Learners can thrive socially, linguistically, and academically.

ourBRIDGE Staff

Most notable is the staff at ourBRIDGE, who care genuinely about their students and prioritize their needs. They intentionally think about every activity they plan and find creative, interactive ways to teach critical life lessons. Some topics were tough to implement, but ourBRIDGE staff were able to implement the project based curriculum passionately and with a clear commitment to their students. Each day, staff members take time to get to know their students and show that they care about them, cooking dinner, driving them home, and even tutoring them in their own language. The ourBRIDGE staff does an exceptional job of recognizing different cultures and giving students opportunities to share about their cultures and connect with each other. ourBRIDGE staff teach students to understand their histories, strengths, and weaknesses, while valuing their home cultures. The students and tutors have a unique relationship that is somewhat different than the ones they have with their mainstream classroom teachers. For example, some students in the 2-3 classroom have said in interviews that they can ask the teachers for support when they are feeling sad or depressed. They are especially grateful to those who bring them food each day and made them feel that ourBRIDGE was theirs. Many students also have noted how important the one-on-one time they spend reading is to their literacy development and English acquisition.

Responding to Trauma

ourBRIDGE students and their families face many challenges as immigrants and refugees in Charlotte. Most notable were examples of students dealing with emotional experiences throughout the year. The ICE raids in early February affected many students, their families, and the program as a whole. Teachers of ELs need to deeply understand trauma-informed instruction and classroom management. In addition to the trauma and challenges created by living in poverty, these students have to face daily fear of losing a loved one or being deported. The staff at ourBRIDGE is able to recognize the trauma that these students experience on a daily basis and help implement instruction that is trauma-informed.

The Kids

The children who attend ourBRIDGE come from a variety of backgrounds and many different schools. The program originally opened its enrollment in 2018-2019 to students from Winterfield Elementary, Merry Oaks Elementary, and Eastway Middle School. However, they have since expanded their reach and made their classes bigger. ourBRIDGE serves students from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Spain, Nepal, Iraq,

and many other countries. The number of languages spoken make the center feel like a small microcosm of the world. Both in formal interviews and through casual conversations in the hallways, students always talk about their love for the center and how it is a place that makes them “feel safe.” In addition, the kids consistently describes how ourBRIDGE is a place that helps them how to foster relationships-- allowing them to make new friends and play with other kids.

Culture

The culture at ourBRIDGE is welcoming and embracing of all who enter its double doors. When volunteers enter the facility, they are met with smiling, helpful staff, invited into the classrooms, and encouraged to participate. The overall climate is both relaxed and free spirited. There is a “controlled chaos” within the walls that is unlike a typical school. This environment allows students to be creative and feel safe. Students can be found actively walking the hallways and playing outside each day, grateful to be there. The facility is decorated with multi-cultural artifacts and bright colors. The curriculum is based on values like acceptance and change. The center celebrates diversity and encourages its staff and students to embrace their differences. The overall culture of ourBRIDGE prioritizes community. They partner with local universities, businesses, families, and schools to create this open space for the students to be themselves.

Structure

The program provides consistency without being structured like a school. Unlike school, ourBRIDGE purposefully creates a culture of creativity and thinking, without emphasis or attention to testing or competition. They prioritize the kids’ well-being and focus on building relationships. In the field notes, researchers described ourBRIDGE as a “second home for the kids.” Tutors allowed the students to freely express their emotions as they taught them how to cope with their feelings. They also reinforced taking responsibility for their actions. ourBRIDGE kids got excited to explore new experiences including crafts such as making slime, building gingerbread houses, and discovering dry ice. The program offers learning in fun, engaging, and alternative ways.

The Program/Curriculum

The curriculum is based on cultural values grounded in love, change, and diversity. Tutors teach small, interactive lessons. The curriculum is based on broad topics that can be applied in different authentic contexts, and overall, students were receptive to the activities. Researchers were able to observe the final presentations, including a superhero project in 2-3, anti-violence presentations in middle school, and training opportunities for parents in 4-5. A theme noted across observations and field notes shows that the majority of students stayed engaged and excelled when the activities involved using creativity, problem-solving, or art. Researchers also noted that tutors more often taught lessons (i.e., introducing story elements while reading stories) in the K-1 room, while middle school lessons were more discussion-based.

Creativity

Throughout the field notes, creativity was mentioned across grade levels and throughout the year. There were many activities that allowed students to engage in a creative way. K-1 students made posters to remind students not to litter and 4-5 students and middle schoolers created slides for their presentations. Across grade levels, the students also

had the opportunity to experiment by making different kinds of slime and representing their learning with drawings. The students also seemed to enjoy painting, doing arts and crafts, and self-initiated creative activities, like making up games and making mud pies in the dirt.

No organization is perfect, and there are significant challenges implicit in serving populations with so many pressing needs. Research notes reveal issues in the following areas: student relations (including lack of student supervision and inconsistent, sometimes problematic disciplinary practices); negative behaviors from students (including incidents of racism, bullying, and disrespect toward staff); management (including high staff turnover, understaffing, low pay, and inconsistent volunteer support); and facilities/resources (including necessary safety upgrades and additional classroom resources). However, reports also indicated ourBRIDGE staff were motivated by deep concern for the students they work with, and administration works hard to make changes as needed and address these concerns. In their notes, researchers were effusive in their praise for the program and the results they personally witnessed throughout the study period. Students changed for the better because of their time at the center, showing kindness, curiosity, self-esteem, and gratitude they didn't have when they started. In the current political climate, many immigrant students and families desperately need the support of a place like ourBRIDGE, and the program could serve as a model for other such organizations.

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