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Adelante: Preparing Latino Students for Success

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Adelante: Preparing Latino Students for Success

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Report

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to the Latino community, my family, and my friends. I am hopeful for the future of Latinos in the United States and from all of my research, it is clear that many have dedicated their lives to offer Latino students equal opportunities of success while respecting culture and individuality. And a big thank you to *mi familia*, especially my father and mother who have always expressed their love to me and shown me how to love others.

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Thank you to all of the staff at the University of Texas and in particular, Dr. Delida Sanchez and Dr. David Drum. And a big thank you to *mi familia*, especially my father and mother who have always expressed their love to me and shown me how to love others.

Abstract

Adelante: Preparing Latino Students for Success

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As one of the largest minority populations in the United States, Latinos need support to overcome many of the systemic barriers that are limiting their potential for success. Education is a tool Latinos can use for their advancement. Therefore it is important that educational institutions work at all levels to provide culturally competent education to as many Latino students as possible and provide opportunities for success. In this report I analyze Latino cultural values and present various methods to create an open and accepting learning environment.

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Chapter 1: Latino Students in the United States

Latinos are the fastest growing minority in the U.S. (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012) This growth is so prevalent that it has made the United States the country with the second largest Latino population, second to the Latino population of Mexico (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). They are also the youngest minority group with 23.2% of Latinos being under the age of 18 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). As a result Latinos will be a key player in the workforce for the United States (Phinney, et al, 2011). Decisions Latinos make about their education and career are crucial to the economic development and advancement of the United States because higher educational attainment yields to higher income and innovation for the future of this nation (Kurtzsleben, 2014). Unfortunately many lawmakers and school administrators in schools that serve Latino populations are not familiar with cultural considerations to enhance their educational progress and success (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Furthermore, there are many misconceptions about Latinos and the expectations for secondary and higher education. Latino families view higher education as a crucial next step to a successful career, but there are currently cultural barriers Latino students need to overcome each day (Kiyama, 2010). I propose that educators, administrators, lawmakers, and community members need to support this population of students and learn how to use Latino culture to support Latino students in high school and to prepare them for success in higher education.

Special Note: When discussing the Latino population, it is important to recognize that Latinos in the United States are comprised of several different ethnic and racial groups. The largest Latino ethnic group in the United States are those Latinos of Mexican descent (63%). The next largest groups are as follows: Puerto Rican with 9.2 percent, Cuban with 3.5 percent, Salvadoran with 3.3 percent, and Dominican with 2.8 percent. (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). While there is an effort to find the most representative information for Latinos there is also a great deal of heterogeneity that exists within every single group of Latinos living within the United States. Most of the research available focuses on the experiences of Mexican-American students, but

there are certain themes that are relatable to many Latinos despite their country or origin. These are the themes that will be highlighted as shared experiences of many Latinos in the United States.

Higher education is considered an important stepping-stone in the United States and has been linked to positive long-term income outcomes (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). The pay differences between college graduates and high school graduates are the highest it has ever been with those between the ages of 25 to 32 (U.S. News and World Report, 2014). The median annual earnings for full-time workers with a college-degree is $17,500 greater than for those with high school diplomas only (U.S. News and World Report, 2014). In addition to improving income outcomes, individuals with a bachelor degree or higher are more likely healthier than others since they are more likely to be enrolled in employer-provided health insurance and retirement benefits (College Board, 2007). Higher educated individuals are also more self-sufficient and tend to contribute more to national tax revenues and are less likely to depend on the government for monetary support (College Board, 2007) However, there are salient inequalities and a number of systemic barriers facing Latinos in the United States that impede their opportunity for educational success, including: poverty, language barriers in schools, a lack of quality college prep curriculum, and systemically a lack of cultural awareness and support from school staff. All of these barriers demonstrate a lack of knowledge of Latino student's cultural needs from lawmakers, administrators, counselors and teachers in the education system. This lack of awareness is evident as Latino students are performing at lower rates in education compared to their white peers. I outline these systemic barriers below.

POVERTY

Latino students have unequal access to education as a result of chronic exposure to poverty conditions. Latino college graduation rates are lower than those of their white counterparts. The Gates Foundation recently reported that in the United States, "51 percent of (Latino) students who start college complete a bachelor's degree in six years or less, compared to

59 percent of white students". Consequently, they also run the risk of experiencing a higher rate of poverty in the future. According to the 2010 U.S. census, about 35% of children living in poverty under 18 are Latino. Many jobs require at least a high school education and a higher number of jobs are seeking more than the minimum high school graduation requirement and seek out employees with other forms of certification as well. Limited educational achievement leads to a lower paying job which eventually leads to problems in the future for another generation of Latinos. Children living in poverty have a higher number of absenteeism or drop out eventually because they are more likely to seek out employment earlier to make ends meet (Broadhurst, et al, 2005). Additionally, dropout rates of 16 to 24-year-old students who come from low income families are seven times more likely to drop out than those from families with higher incomes (Kewal-Ramani, et al, 2010). This glaring disadvantage for Latinos creates a cycle of poverty that can be broken with proper interventions at the school level, especially in high school.

A negative consequence to not having a school environment that adapts to the socioeconomic and cultural needs of Latino students and their families is that parents are limited in becoming "actively" involved in the academic lives of their children. Many Latino parents have intense work schedules and very specific needs for transportation and childcare. Due to higher financial need in the Latino community (Latinos had a poverty rate of 23.3 percent, about 9 percentage points higher than the overall U.S. poverty rate), many parents find themselves obligated to add more hours of work into their work schedule (census.gov, 2013). This means when there are phone calls to parents from teachers or requests to meet, it may be very difficult for parents to accommodate the needs of teachers in how to best help children succeed in school. Many teachers or administrators in a school may view this lack of responsiveness as Latino parents not being invested in the future academic success of their children.

However, if we look at current statistics on Latino perceptions of education, it is apparent this is far from the truth within families today. According to a 2009 Pew Hispanic Center survey, "88% of Latinos ages 16 and older agreed that a college degree is necessary to get ahead in life today" (2013). In addition to this, "49% of young (Latino) high school graduates were enrolled

in college. By comparison, 47% of white non-Latino high school graduates were enrolled in college" (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). College enrolment was higher than their white counterparts in the United States. Thus; it is evident Latino students see education as an important factor after high school and even attempt to pursue higher education at greater rates, yet there seem to be other forces obstructing the success of Latino students.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Lawmakers play a key role in the creation of curriculums in schools and therefore would benefit the most of understanding the cultural needs of Latino students living here in the United States. Unknowingly, some lawmakers are creating structural limitations for Latino students with the designation of laws that place a strong emphasis on high stakes test tied to high school graduation. These exams, many of which were instituted because of No Child Left Behind, are more likely found in states with higher percentages of African-Americans and Latinos (Barbara, 2006). These exams have proven detrimental to Latino students who consistently underperform relative to other white students because many Latino students are also categorized as English-language learners (ELLs), who often take the test without appropriate accommodations (Barbara, 2006). Other assessments that are disadvantageous for Latino students are curriculum placement exams. School curriculums are divided into sequential tiers with Tier 1 being the simplest. Unfortunately if Tier 1 is miss-aligned for English language learners, and their score results reflect poor academic achievement, many English language learners eventually are placed into special education because of presumed reading deficits (Orosco, 2010).

This language barrier can potentially affect a significant number of Latino students living in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), over 76% of Latinos over the age of 5 speak Spanish at home. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, but it is notable that the amount of English language immersion for many of these students is limited since Spanish is spoken at home. Due to a higher number of Latino children speaking Spanish at home, Latino students makeup the largest group of English language learners in U.S. schools (Koelsch, 2006).

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Consequently, legislation like No Child Left Behind punishes schools for low testing scores, creating even greater stigma tied to students that are English-language learners. Educators and administrators' reaction to this is to increase academic support through remedial courses, yet other interventions are usually not explored (Orosco, 2010). Additionally, the high stakes exams punish underperforming schools while not providing adequate funding to help alleviate the cost it would take to hire more in demand staff that has proven successful to work a specific population like English language learners (Barbara, 2006).

LIMITATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM AND COUNSELING OFFICE

Counseling programs within schools are not structured in a way that is most supportive of the cultural values Latinos of many Latinos. Many counseling approaches reflect an individualistic and self-reliant cultural ideal (e.g., students are expected to go to the counselor's office on their own volition; Patterson, et al, 2008). This often is in stark contrast to a culture is that values collective work and familial values where people around you are easily accommodating with resources. This is also an issue because most states do not follow the recommended counselor to student ratio from the American School Counselor's Association (ASCA). The recommendation is that schools have 250 students per counselor. Only four states in the United States follow this recommendation. It is even worse for states that have high Latino populations. In California, the state with the highest Latino population (Pew Hispanic Center), the counselor ratio is the highest from all the other states with a whopping 1,016 students per counselor (ASCA, 2011). Texas, the state with the second highest Latino population has a high ratio of over 440 students per counselor, almost double ASCA's recommendation of 250 students per counselor (ASCA, 2011). Latino students are already at a disadvantage when counselors are limited in resources and forced to keep up with enormous case-loads that clearly go against the national model for counselors.

Latino students are also overly represented when it comes to disciplinary referrals. Discrimination has been found with the implementation of rapid suppression practices, yet

administrators see this as the most effective way to discipline students in schools (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Rapid suppression disciplinary practice is represented through zero-tolerance policies which suggests that in order to keep a certain behavior from becoming habit, you must have no tolerance for it (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Therefore this disciplinary practice does not give students the opportunity to learn from mistakes, but rather immediately punish students for their actions. This disciplinary action in the classroom is a response to the rise in school violence at various schools and were meant to create a safe school environment for all students (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). It is also touted as a disciplinary action that reinforces equity in consequences but it has been found to be problematic and discriminatory, particularly against Latino students (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013)

LIMITED SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Counselors, Principals and other school administrators manage programs of learning that encourage social learning through curriculum and on-campus activities, but these programs cannot benefit students or their families if they are not given the opportunity to expand their social capital and social networks within the school community. Social capital (Bourdieu) is the combination of resources collected as one develops membership in a particular social group. Social capital increases when the proper social networks are developed (Kiyama, 2010). Schools are not providing a welcoming environment for Latino parents to develop these social networks. Auerbach (2004) while studying behaviors of schools staff when reaching out to Latino parents noted that "schools, colleges, and programs rarely reach out to Latino parents in meaningful, culturally appropriate ways to help narrow the information gap and level the playing field" (Auerbach, 2004, p. 126). Regrettably at schools, most times educators discuss the needs of students is when they are already failing and not when they are thriving academically (Auerbach, 2004). Additionally, when parents do come to a school campus, many Latino parents report not feeling welcomed at schools (Mena, 2011) and this contributes to a weak sense of involvement with educational issues related to their children.

Latino students also have limited social capital because the community they are a part of has a very different set of resources than the one that exists in an Americanized academic setting. This means that Latino students must rely on the "Americanized" social capital gathered through various experiences in school. This capital is accumulated based on interactions but also on information received through these interactions. The environment and culture of the school is very important for the development of social capital for the Latino student because school is where they are gathering these skills and resources to set them up for success. Unfortunately, as demonstrated by the state of many institutions, some Latino students do not have the most positive experiences. When social network dynamics do not provide an opportunity for success but rather negative interactions, students internalize the social networks and capital provided in school as something negative and harmful. Stanton-Salazar elaborates that "negative embeddedness, manifests itself in network dynamics (and) produces a significant degree of conflict, distrust and/or social distance, in the lack of help seeking, and in the generally experienced scarcity of genuine institutional support" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001 p. 52) This belief may be what drives many Latino students to early dropout rates. In 2007 "Latino students had a higher drop-out rate with 21.4% than non-Latino youth with 13.7%, (Leon et al 2001. p.74).

Chapter 2: Latino Cultural Considerations

Although many structural limitations prevent Latino students from being academically successful, there are salient cultural factors that can be incorporated in high schools to help set up students for success in higher education settings. In the following chapter I will unpack the educational myths about Latino families and discuss many of the cultural strengths within Latino communities that can be incorporated into counseling curriculums and intervention programs.

LATINO PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATION

The lack of parent interaction with the schools has been interpreted as parents not valuing education however, this is far from the truth. Several studies (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012) (Auerbach, 2004) that examine Latino parental attitudes at home have uncovered that parents, despite pressures in their employment or even while balancing a busy schedule with several jobs, tend to make it a priority when they do see their children to check-in on how they are performing at school. They also make it a point to reinforce ideals that education should be a priority for their children. Statistically the numbers prove this frame of mind since about "64% of Latino students had parents who expected them to finish college, compared to 66 percent of European American Students" (Zalquett & Baez, 2012, p.63). If parents hold education in such a high regard, then why are they not visibly active in school and their children's education? There are other cultural factors that contribute to less involvement from parents, or at least the type of involvement that is expected from schools here in the United States. It is essential for these educational organizations to be aware that Latino parents have culturally specific perceptions of education that seem like a barrier for parents to become more involved in their children's education. For example, Latino parents have a unique respect for school personnel as authority figures. Teachers often feel frustrated over what they see as a lack of student motivation combined with a lack of parent involvement yet fail to recognize that the reason many parents are not involved is because due to their cultural background parents feel like this is not their place. Teachers, principals, and most of school staff is seen as an authority figure in Latino

culture and many parents, especially from Latin American rural areas consider it a privilege for children to go to school and consequently rely on the judgement and the decision of teachers to do what's best for their children (Leon et al, 2011). They do not believe they need to get involved with such a figure of authority. Therefore "these differing perceptions of a parent's role, place in school, and in his or her children's educational lives can vary across both cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds" (Leon, et al, 2011, p.75) High schools need to recognize the needs of parents and any sort of uneasiness that rises from expecting a parent to be responsible for their children's education.

Some Latino parents in the U.S., especially immigrant parents, do not have formal schooling and also lack the language skills that normally allow an average parent to feel comfortable enough to become involved in their children's school matters. This may seem like a very unique problem to immigrant parents, but this is actually a bigger cultural consideration for Latino families because a high percentage of Latino families have an immigrant as the head of the household (Gaitan, 2013). Especially if we examine the zones where Latinos have the most potential to grow in numbers. These are areas are mainly located in the western and southern states of the United States. It was found that "of those in the highest Latino growth areas of the United States…sixty percent of families have an immigrant as head of household and approximately 35% speak limited English" (Gaitan, 2013, p.16).

Thus, many parents report not necessarily feeling like an expert and therefore rely or trust that the school will make the best decision for their son/daughter, especially if they feel like they do not know how to navigate the educational system (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). Even if parents do have formal schooling, many of them, because of systemic poverty or lack of cultural considerations when they were students, found it very difficult to succeed in an academic setting and barely graduated high school. These parents also feel there are limitations to how much advice they should offer their children because they themselves had a lot of difficulty maneuvering the academic setting. When some parents do try and make an effort to impart knowledge of some colleges and universities, they often rely on knowledge of NCAA sports' top

schools and on what they've heard about Ivy League schools, limiting the amount of advice they give their children on what is the best course of action in high school to achieve admittance in the college of their choice (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). High schools need to do their best to make parents feel comfortable about imparting knowledge to their children or create a way to disseminate this knowledge and use parents as allies.

LATINO PARENTS AND THE *CONSEJO*

Communication about education is not delivered in a conventional manner from Latino parents to their children. Latino parents do not impart specific facts of educational information to their children, yet they still understand that a good education is the best way to guarantee new opportunities for their children (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012), therefore communication about education can be given in another form through the power of the *consejo*. A *consejo* (advice) is based on the idea that parents are fountains of wisdom and more than likely parents will let their children know several pieces of "advice" at any given moment. Usually it's bestowed upon by the matriarch or patriarch in the family who is seen as loving and pure. Parents give *consejos* but other *consejos* like those of grandparents are also seen as special and usually are taken seriously (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). This sort of parental and extended family involvement is also perceived as whole family support for the student (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). This sort of behavior is not present in every Latino family of course, but it is important to note that there is a lot of advice given as demonstrations of involvement in the lives of Latino students that many administrators may not be aware of because the advice is given when educators and administrators are not present.

As much as these *consejos* are intended to impart knowledge it is important to note that many parents are already limited in how much knowledge they have gathered related to academic knowledge. Middle to upper-class families have accessibility within the school framework and can use this accessibility to become involved in groups like that of Parent-Teacher associations. Here is where a lot of knowledge of what is happening currently for

students is transmitted. Other knowledge transmitted in these meetings are parent to parent resources and counselor to parent resources for academic success (Gonzalez et al, 2013). Because Latino parents are not openly assessing a specific knowledge on academics as many other parents, researchers have stressed that it is important to take advantage of the "funds of knowledge" available to students from parents. "Funds of Knowledge" refer to "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for function and well-being" (Kiyama, 2010, p. 332). Latino parents have the capability of building upon these funds of knowledge and transferring these funds to their children so that together they can form new educational ideologies. Because Latino parents are open to using funds of knowledge and even transferring these funds to other parents, this theoretical framework proves that if enough effort is placed in improving the funds of knowledge, these in conjunction with the *consejo* can lead to a dissemination of information within parents that institutions can take advantage of.

SYMBOLS OF *ORGULLO*

Some Latino parents and other family members do not necessarily give students specific tangible resources for college like money, extra tutoring, test-prep courses, summer camp opportunities, or make them pick careers early on, but they still provide guidance and support using symbols that may shape an educational ideology. A study conducted with a parent outreach program found that parents relied heavily on "academic cultural symbols" (Kiyama, 2010, p.344). These symbols are known as "academic cultural symbols" because they elicited *orgullo* or pride for Latino parents because they hold education in such high regard. Some of these symbols of pride include displaying awards, or sharing successful work completed by their child to others. If some family members have a connection with a college or a university they will encourage other family members to become familiar with these symbols and even put them on display hoping that these symbols become a demonstration of pride for the family (Kiyama, 2010). Something as simple as a cap and gown from Kindergarten ceremony can be very important because of the high regard Latinos have for symbols in their culture. This is evident

from Kiyama's qualitative interviews where a mother explains how important it was for her to save her child's kindergarten cap and gown so that he is aware that there are "just three more to go" (Kiyama, 2013, p. 344). Symbols can be very powerful reminders for Latino students even when parents are not physically there to remind their children how important their educational attainment is for the whole family. Schools can use symbols in the classroom and share these with parents to help send a message to Latino students about the importance of excelling in education.

PERSONALISMO

Many young Latino children grew up with a collectivistic sense of learning where one on one communication and attention with a caretaker or others in the family is the norm and serves as learning experiences. *Personalismo* is a cultural value that is highly regarded in Latino culture. *Personalismo* is the need to value and build interpersonal relationships with others in several arenas to negotiate everyday tasks (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). Consequently, if we see it from a student's perspective, some of them may view their teacher's use of lecture and notetaking as "uninviting, boring, and uncaring" (León, et al. 2011, p.75). The same can be said when students are not given the opportunity to interact in the classroom. Face to face contact, especially one on one face to face contact is a norm that provides comfort for Latino students, yet a conventional school environment, forced by a limitation of resources, has teachers lecturing to a high volume of students. There is a greater push for efficiency in schools caused by high-stakes testing (Barbara, 2006) therefore, some teachers are forced to push students to make the most of independent practice rather than group-based learning. Group based learning or personalized goal setting practices with students can help Latino students even more because of their need for personalized one on one learning.

FAMILISMO

As is evident in many other cultures, the family is a very important unit of socialization that manages many spheres for Latino students (Gaitan, 2013). A family is not only the primary

care-givers like a father, mother and sibling (Gaitan, 2013) Extended family also plays a role in the development of the child. The family that can be just as involved at one time in the student's education can be grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. This cultural behavior for Latino families is known as Familismo (Zalaquett & Baez, 2012). Even when a parent is not visibly there with the child, the Latino student has a fountain of resources and support from other family members. Additionally, many Latino students will make decisions in life not only based on the advice from their parents but also based on how their decision may affect their family and the experiences of others in their family in relation to education (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). This means that if an uncle or a cousin were successful in some way with an education, students are more likely to work harder in school because they see this as attainable success not only individually but as success of the family.

Many other members of the family can also highlight struggles they have undergone due to a lack of education. This may seem like basic storytelling to many, but these stories are internalized and become motivators of success for many Latino students because many consider even the experiences of their extended family as highly important (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). Therefore, many of those teachers or school administrators who may feel inclined to assume that Latino students are unmotivated because of a lack of involvement from parents need to understand the complexity of the family unit and understand that it is not only limited to that of parents or siblings, but rather a big group working as unit for many Latino families.

Chapter 3: Creating a Program that Works

High school administrators can use knowledge of cultural and systemic needs of Latino students and transform it into programs that can be effective. Latino students and parents need information to be college-ready and schools can use many of the cultural differences they have with Latino students and parents as an advantage and not as a limitation. I propose program development based on college readiness and career readiness interventions that can be done at any level, but preferably at the high school level.

INCREASING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND NETWORKS FOR LATINOS

One way that school counselors and communities can improve social capital for Latino families and communities particularly those dealing with poverty is by improving social networks. Stanton-Salazar (2001) speaks of social capital in the context of networks that allow for embeddedness in a particular culture. Networks are relationships among people and the properties within them that when activated enable them to accomplish goals or empower in a meaningful way (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) Therefore, in order for parents to have access to social networks that allow for the collection of social capital they need to have access to social networks that allow them to embed themselves in an academic environment. Consequently, giving them access to the academic success of their children.

In order to improve social networks for Latino families, it is essential to improve communication between schools and parents. Although, communication with parents is a difficult task to address in a school setting, there are alternatives that make this daunting task achievable. Administrators and counselors must allot time and research in the school year to educate staff on how to work with Latino parents and families of other cultures. Staff should be encouraged to hold events that make Latino parents feel welcomed into the school. Once parents feel more welcomed in educational settings, parents will not only rely on the school or educators for resources but Latino parents have a great capacity to negotiate networks within their own community. Once a group of Latino parent leaders that are active in the community understand

many of the basics to college access, other Latino parents can also benefit from this information. Calaff put it best as she interpreted Auberbach's (2004) qualitative research on an outreach program for Latino parents. She posited that "Latino parents need opportunities to network with other parents and develop the "college relevant forms of cultural and social capital" needed to support their children in the college-preparation process (Auberbach (2004) in article Calaff, 2008 p. 204). Parents can be resources of social capital once key players have access to this capital. Influential Latino parents and community leaders can be great allies as we will see later in this chapter.

Schools can also help Latino students accrue social capital by using their existing social networks (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Social networks are crucial for Latino students' success because students feel very comfortable learning from others in close one on one relationships. The positive social network interaction contributes to positive "embededness" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001. p. 52). Embededness is defined by Stanton-Salazar as the access to "large, resourceful networks; network dynamics oriented towards trust, confidence, and dependability; and a proclivity toward help seeking behavior" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p.52). When Latino students recognize the resourcefulness of these networks, they can used these to drive their own academic success. Students must be exposed to a learning environment that encourages acceptance of other cultures. Counseling programs should encourage college readiness by exposing students to possible career tracks early on in their freshman year and have employees from these sectors come in and discuss what their job or career entails. These opportunities also allow Latino students to gather key pieces of social capital. Additionally, some students can be taken on trips that expose them to different cultures or even exposes them to a college campus, so that when it comes for them to experience life after high school, Latino students have social capital to embed in their new culture, making it easier for them to have a successful future.

Another way to increase networks and social capital for students is to create mentor groups for students. With Latino student's sense of *personalismo*, it has been proven that one on one communication and concern is very beneficial for Latino students. The best way that this

need and cultural paradigm can be used to the advantage of Latino students is by establishing peer mentoring group. Mentoring programs work because mentees are granted the opportunity to form "a relationship with a nurturing older person (that) can contribute to psychosocial outcomes and sociocultural needs". (Phinney et al, 2011, p.600). Typically in high schools there is an availability of mentor/mentee programs and many of them are successful as they match alums or professionals with current students. Peers are also "a good sources of mentorship" because they "have successfully navigated their first two years" (Phinney et all, 2011 p. 602) Peer mentors are beneficial to the mentor/mentee relationship because peers can "relate to the struggle of freshman year… (and can) easily form a relationship based on interests outside the classroom." (Phinney et al, 2011 p. 602). These mentors can also supply a new social network of other current students. This new found network can lead to more positive involvement in various institutions. Studies also found that there is significant attachment to the institution among students that have a secure attachment to the mentor of that same institution (Phinney et al, 2011). With this increased sense of attachment we are increasing the chances for students to graduate and complete their 4 years of college since there is a sense of loyalty and connection to the university. There must be an effort to recruit and match students with their "best-fit" mentors. This is key because an effective mentoring program can have great effects as presented in a mentoring study (Phinney, et al, 2011) where some of the mentored students that had reported higher degrees of depression reported decreases in both depression and stress during the year. The same could not be said about non-mentored students who increased in both (Phinney, et al, 2011). Additionally, there was a positive high correlation between having a good mentoring relationship and a mentee's sense of belonging (Phinney et al, 2011)

CREATING A COLLEGE CULTURE

Access to college is incredibly important because a bachelor's degree from a 4 year college or university offers access to social capital, important symbols, and skill building for various career opportunities. The most basic and straight forward way to create a college culture

is to physically transform the environment where learning is taking place. Many Latino students have a limited point of reference when it comes to colleges and universities (Kiyama, 2010). So much so that when students discuss colleges and some of their preferences they tend to discuss the popular schools based on NCAA school accolades or Ivy League colleges. There seems to be a gap on what types of colleges are out there or accessible to them. Typically high school counseling offices may have college banners as part of their classroom environment, but that sort of classroom environment does not have to stop in the counseling office. Counselors should encourage staff to decorate their rooms based on their Alma Mater. Some other basic changes can be posting pictures of alums and citing their own experiences next to their pictures so that students can see other Latino students that have gone to college and can openly discuss their experience. Banners can also be very explicit about expectations for students. If Latino students are shown that the school has high expectations of them, they will work and strive to satisfy these expectations. Resources can be placed all around the campus in both English and Spanish. Companies like the College Board provide many resources to advertise their exams (SAT and Advanced Placement Exams) and test preparation materials. Counselors and staff are encouraged to make these resources available by not only placing these in the counseling office, but encouraging staff to place them in accessible areas in their classroom. All of these environmental changes do not require an overhaul of the system created in schools, but rather accentuate the message of success the school wants to convey.

Another way one can create a college culture is for change to occur in the classroom. Intrinsic motivation is when learning and motivation is not triggered by positive or negative incentives, but rather based on the interest and joy coming from within. Intrinsic motivation is important because "students who found school relevant reported high levels of intrinsic motivation and higher levels of classroom engagement by the end of 10th grade." (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014, p. 295). This means students are motivated by their own success and the enjoyment they feel when they are aware of their own progress in learning. Teachers can use specific tools like personalized goal setting to trigger intrinsic motivation rather than rely on

positive or negative motivations like compliments of punishments. Personalized goal setting involves giving students a chance to explore their own needs academically and set personalized attainable goals. Mastery goals "enhance intrinsic motivation because mastery fosters seeking persistence and challenges (students) in the academic setting" (DeFreitas, 2014, p. 296). Consequently by setting goals and mastering those, educators create "feelings of competence toward college or one's ability to test well increase, therefore performance goals can enhance intrinsic motivation" (p. 296 Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). Students have far more confidence in their performance and carry on this behavior to college, allowing them to be independent learners.

Other interventions needed to create a college ready culture in a school is to be mindful of the curriculum offered to Latino students. At times principals make decisions on the allocation of funds and choose to place more money or staff on specific curriculum needs. Schools must strive to offer curriculum that is aligned with the needs of students. In order to have curriculum align with college culture it needs to be rigorous. This means the curriculum in schools should aim for having honors courses model the rigor of college courses or even offer classes that transfer over as dual credit for the work students are doing in high school. Counselors play a key role here they know the curriculum standards necessary for college readiness. School counselors need to be aware of these changes and advocate to the principal which classes are needed.

In addition to a rigorous curriculum, faculty needs to be of high quality for ELL students. These students know how to read and write, unfortunately there is a unique language barrier. Schools need to do their best to hire and retain teachers that have proven success working with ELL students (Barbara, 2006). Students enrolled in these classes already have a sense of inadequacy and can have lasting socio-emotional effects due to potential stigma. ELL educators need to create a dynamic and inclusive classroom, to not only deal with the language deficit but to help students cope and understand why they are in specific language courses. ELL students also typically come from a different culture and therefore also require educators that are

understanding of the culture of ELL students and be comfortable with their socio-emotional needs based on their home culture (Delgado-Gaitan, 2014).

CREATING A CULTURE OF CAREER READINESS

Unfortunately one cannot rely on simply creating a college prepatory culture for students. It is also important that students make it through college and find an area of study that is aligned with their career of choice. Latino students need to be exposed to various career options, especially if their parents are overwhelmed or do not feel qualified enough to discuss this with their children. Schools need to fill in this cultural void with examples of possible careers for students. While exploring careers, this can be done in a cultural competent manner. If a student wants to start working immediately after high school, it is good to discuss the positives and negatives of entering the workforce with a high school diploma, but an educator or administrator should never disregard this decision as irresponsible or lazy. Many Latino students, especially if they are male feel the need to support their family in any time of financial woes and "it is not uncommon for Latino/a students to drop out of school to meet job and family responsibilities. (Berrios-Allison 2011, p. 83). With the proper career-readiness, students will be able to outweigh the cost and benefits of dropping out of school early or if they should continue on with their career path. The more knowledge students have about career the more of a reason Latino students find a purpose to their higher education. If the Latino student is first generation or "especially if they are first in the family to go to college (they feel a need to succeed) because Latino students feel like they have to serve as role models for family members." (Berrios-Allison 2011, p. 82).

It is almost impossible for every counselor to meet with all students in schools. Yet Latino students in the school, especially if they are first generation, can benefit from a career readiness group. It would be ideal if this group could be done in high school through various staff members in a type of after school meeting or sort of club. Time can also be allotted during school at specific classes all students take, like a history or English class. Ideally a group would

be the best method to explore careers because of the various issues that can come up when trying to decide what career may interest students. The following elements should exist in an ideal career-exploration group according to a successful group run by Berrios-Allison (2011). The first is "favoring a transition process to university life by addressing personal, social, spiritual, academic, career, financial, and college environmental stressors" (p.85). Addressing some of these personal issues early on are crucial especially if students are planning on going to elite or private colleges after high school, where they will be interacting with students with a variety of perspectives of the world. In this type of environment students run the risk of experiencing various levels of distorted perceptions of their identity not just linked to ethnic membership, but to the negative experiences and feelings that may arise from societal expectations and stereotypes. This is known as Latino critical theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002). When Latino students go to college or a university these stereotypes may be heightened and internalized and enacted in self-fulfilling prophecies (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Consequently, the second piece in these types of exploration groups should be to promote the "exploration of ethnic identity issues, as well as mutual appreciation of cultural differences" (p.85). Identity exploration is also crucial because students have to understand how their culture will affect their actions in the work force or at the very least they could even affect something as simple as how they're evaluated. For example, "Latinos place strong value on holding decision-making responsibilities to the authority figure" (Berrios-Allison, 2011, p. 89). Therefore many Latinos may display a sort of "submissive attitude in the workplace, rather than assume leadership". This type of behavior may be perceived as "less skillful or to lack initiative" (Berrios-Allison, 2011, p. 89). Also it is important for Latino students to address their experience in a university or college setting as they will be pulled away from their communities and potentially encounter a new community that may highlight their oppression. The third is to be aware of resources that aren't available on campus and accommodate these deficits with successful off campus resources. The fourth piece that must be highlighted in a career group is that it is important to bring a support system of people and resources that will help less

acculturated Latinos to "increase retention, graduation, and post-graduation plans and move to the job market" (Berrios-Allison, 2011 p.85). This could be in the form of a mentor or connections with specific professionals. Allowing these students to access professionals that otherwise they would not have access to.

Other ways schools can help students bolster their career seeking patterns is by offering students an opportunity to explore various activities they have demonstrated interest in. Due to some Latino students' trends of lower SES, they are also going to depend on their institutions to provide opportunities of career exploration. Funds should also be distributed to contribute to after school programs and clubs. Latino students value interpersonal relationships and if they are able to explore their interests with others that are also invested in the similar activities as they are, it will be easier for Latino students to prioritize these activities. Some of these clubs, especially academic and arts clubs, can lead to an interest in specific careers. For example, interest in a robotics club early on, can lead to an exploration of engineering related fields. Trips within this club could include visiting specific colleges during competitions and inviting special speakers within a related academic field to inspire these students. This type of exposure is crucial for some Latino students who may otherwise not have access to these groups or social networks.

Another way to facilitate career exploration if you are limited on funds is to encourage students to join community service programs or to explore possible locations where they would like to do community service work. Some charter schools like YES Prep Public Schools (Youth Engaged in Service) specifically pick at least 4 academic days and dedicate these days to community service and as seniors, students are expected to take a week off to fully immerse themselves in a community service project. All of this is done in hopes that students pursue something they are passionate about that is also cost effective for students. In order for a community service program to function schools need to reach out to their community and make it known that students are in need of these opportunities. If the school has a good connection with the community then students will benefit from these resources.

THE STRONGEST ALLIES: LATINO PARENTS

As we have learned, Latino parents value authority, and "expect an educated person to be disciplined and behave properly" because "respect and authority go hand in hand as parents believe that children respect their teachers and other adults as well as themselves" (Gaitan, 2013, p.120). Parents feel immense respect for the school, therefore if the proper communication exists, there is an even greater opportunity for success with their children. But staff cannot rely on conventional parent/teacher communication to connect with parents. Staff should be encouraged to be involved in the community. In order to this, administrators need to be aware of what events may be taking place. Once the administration has gathered enough information, this information needs to be distributed to all staff and encouraged to participate in these events on the weekend or during the week. An example of these community events are something as simple as a popular soccer league game happening within the community. Staff should be encouraged to introduce themselves as representatives of their high school and conduct themselves in a welcoming manner with those in the community. Eventually the school can introduce the potential formation of a Latino parent group in the school. Latino parents that would want to be involved could be a part of a peer group that meets to discuss issues like financial aid, and understanding the transition of their child into their teenage years and to college. School staff may find some willing parents to lead groups or find ways to help new parents that have just joined the high school community.

Likewise when parents come to campus there has to be a welcoming environment. Many Latino parents may already feel like they are intruding on the schooling environment and may have some anxiety coming over to campus (Gonzalez et al, 2013). Latino culture also highly values the *saludo* (the greeting) where it is common for strangers to say hello to each other. Staff members can create a positive school environment by making an effort to say hello to parents and introduce themselves when some visit campus. Even if it seems like parents are not comfortable speaking English, most parents are familiar with the English basic greeting and will appreciate the effort to acknowledge them as valued individuals. Establishing a warm and

positive environment also builds trust between parents and schools. This allows the school to host parent nights where they can give parents resources for college and career exploration that can benefit their children. These parent nights need to have resources in both Spanish and English and preferably two venues where one room host the information in Spanish and the other has the information available for parents in English. These meetings should also be hosted towards the beginning of the year and towards the end. At these meetings, administrators should take advantage of having Latino parents all in one location so they can take surveys in either English or Spanish to see if their needs are being met and gather data on ways to improve Latino parent outreach. Scheduling may also seem like an issue so it would be beneficial if counselors offer alternate dates for these meetings at least during one weekend. It may seem like counselors are giving up a weekend but eventually parents or alums can be allies and take over these meetings once a strong Latino alliance has been established.

If schools do not have resources or need help, school administrators need to feel comfortable enough to invite others in the Latino community to come help parents navigate information about financial aid, college admission process, career exploration, and regular stresses that may arise for their children depending on their age and developmental level. If the school has not established a good relationship with the community yet, school administrators or counselors need to be at least familiar with these resources and communicate this information to parents. Eventually Latino parents will be engage in the education of their children and this will be the most important ally an educational institution can have because "parents who were more involved in their child's learning process had higher achievement in math and reading while also showing greater intrinsic motivation, higher grade point averages, better performance on standardized tests, fewer behavior problems and more positive attitudes at schools. (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014, p. 302). Parental involvement leads so many benefits for Latino students and if educational institutions want them to be successful then they must above everything else engage parents.

Latino students also have lessons to learn from parents. These lessons can help them navigate many of the systemic issues that arise for Latino youth today. Many Latino parents are resilient considering many of their past or current experiences, some of which potentially include assimilating to a different culture, language, and lifestyle. Many of them at one point could be struggling with poverty and these experiences of "survival" are transferred over to their children. Many of them want better lives for their children and will emphasize this through storytelling. They want to instill resilience and hard work for their children once they understand how to navigate the educational system. Once again, this is an opportunity for parents to become allies with educators and institutions to help their children succeed. Parents can lead by example through their demonstrations of resiliency and educators need to find a way to make the most of the experiences of parents to motivate children, rather than to see it as a hindrance to the success of their children.

Parents are the most important allies an institution can have because they will continue with the child on their journey to adulthood as they go through their college experience and career exploration. Culturally, Latino students may not see these decisions into adulthood as an independent action, but rather a decision that could involve many family members. If needed some students will prioritize financial issues at home over their own career exploration or preparation (Berrios-Allison, 2011, p. 83). This is not a disadvantage since it is found that "Latino college students who have high levels of familism- a cultural value that includes loyalty and dedication to one's family were more likely to have higher levels of intrinsic motivation" (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014, p. 302). So the missing piece is that parents, when helping their children make decisions, need to understand statistically what may be more beneficial for their children in the long-term.

CONCLUSION

Latino students are the future of the United States. They are and will be an even greater part of our workforce. In order to guarantee that Latino students are successful, their cultural

values must not be ignored. In regards to program planning, administrators at every single type of educational setting need to make an effort to accommodate and make the most of these cultural differences. These differences are not a hindrance, but rather they are a gift and an opportunity to learn and embrace another culture. Latino culture is filled with respect and unity and these values will help Latino children be successful. There are several ways that institutions can facilitate identity conversation, academic success, career seeking, and overall respect for the development of Latino children. The use of groups, one on one mentoring and the use of parents as allies have all proven successful with these groups. Most importantly institutions do not have to do it alone. It is crucial that it not be done alone. The community and other allies and programs whose mission is to help Latino communities will be great resources in helping Latino students overcome many systemic barriers.

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