

THE IMPORTANCE OF A TEACHER'S RACIAL/ETHNIC  
BACKGROUND AS A FACTOR IN A STUDENT'S  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY OF  
MEXICAN AMERICANS IN  
LAREDO, TEXAS

By

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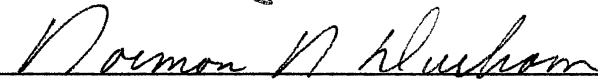
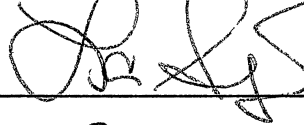
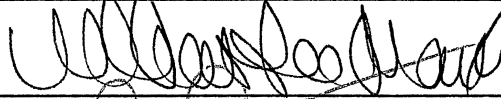
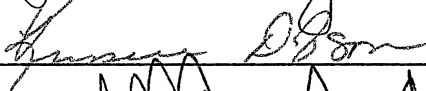
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The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of a teacher's racial/ethnic background to a student's academic achievement. The study involved three groups in a minority school population: teachers, college students, and high school seniors. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide useful data which can be used by those involved in the teaching of Mexican Americans and which will also stimulate further research in this area.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

High dropout rates in the public school Hispanic student population have caused concern among educators in the last several decades. The rate, over forty percent, remains essentially the same as it was twenty years ago (Samora, 1963; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Report VI, 1974; Walsh, 1987).

Researchers have suggested many causes for the problem. These include, among others, (1) language and culture (Cummins, 1986; Nicholl and Gomez, 1980; Johnson and Hernandez, 1970; Gonzales and Roll, 1985; Hyland, 1987; Hurtado, 1987; and Laosa, 1974); (2) the culture of poverty (Selakovich, 1984; Valencia, Henderson and Rankin, 1985; Sola and Bennett, 1985; Walsh, 1987; Mazon and Arciniega, 1974); Lewis, 1966; (3) the lack of parental involvement (Litsinger, 1973; Valencia, Henderson, and Rankin, 1985; and Chavkin, 1989); and (4) the lack of Hispanic role model teachers (Grey and Stull, 1989; Walsh, 1987; and Nicklos and Brown, 1989).

Mexican American children reared in a traditional Mexican American home encounter school experiences which are unrelated to those with which they are familiar. If Spanish is their only language, the school problems are compounded (Ramirez and Castaneda, 1974). Because learning and teaching are significantly affected by cultural orientation, the

Mexican American child would appear to benefit from a school situation where the majority of his teachers were Mexican American (Freedman and Kravetz, 1968).

This researcher, Mexican American by ethnic origin, was educated by a majority of Anglo teachers. Only five out of a total of thirty-four were Mexican American. Because of this fact, I formed the opinion that a teacher's ethnicity or race was not a major determinant in whether a student was successful in school.

Baron (1983) states that:

According to the phenomenological view, our biographical history will change as often as our point of view changes. We begin with current problems and invent or reshape the past to lead up to our present realities. Despite the frequency with which our world view changes, we have the tendency to perceive continuity rather than discontinuity between the past and our present reality.

The present study thus attempts to connect an opinion of the past with present realities.

#### Statement of the Problem

It was therefore deemed appropriate to ask what role a teacher's race and/or ethnicity plays in the student's academic achievement. The central problem of this study was to analyze whether students are more likely to respond positively to a teacher of their own ethnic background or whether there are other qualities a teacher brings into the classroom which encourage academic achievement. Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought: (1) Is there a relationship between the students' and the teachers' evaluation of the importance of a teacher's racial and/or ethnic background and academic achievement?

(2) Is there a relationship in this evaluation and the gender of students and teachers? (3) Is there a relationship in this evaluation and social class?

The following null hypotheses were derived from these questions:

(1) There will be no significant relationship between the students' and the teachers' evaluation of the importance of a teacher's racial/ethnic background and a student's academic achievement. (2) There will be no significant relationship between the male and female students' evaluation of the importance of a teacher's racial/ethnic background and a student's academic achievement. (3) There will be no significant relationship between the male and female teachers' evaluation of the importance of a teacher's racial/ethnic background and a student's academic achievement. (4) There will be no significant relationship between the different social classes' evaluations of the importance of a teacher's racial/ethnic background and a student's academic achievement.

In conducting the study the following assumptions were made: (1) Both students and teachers viewed graduation from high school as a measure of academic achievement. This assumption was based on the fact that because the school dropout rate for Hispanics is so high (40 percent), those students who do graduate are viewed as successful by the Hispanic community. Pishel (1973) states that our society views graduation from high school as a basic educational goal. (2) If there was any racial/ethnic bias in the responses, it was too limited to affect the results. This assumption is based simply on the honesty of the respondents. (3) The predominant number of students (over seventy percent) had over fifty percent of their instruction from Mexican

American teachers. This last assumption comes from the general knowledge of the school system based on my association with it.

### Rationale of the Study

A teacher's pivotal role in the education of a child has long been understood. Research has focused on the relationship between teacher expectations and a child's classroom performance (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968), and the teaching environment which includes nurturing, teacher "image," teacher interest, and teacher attitudes (Klein, 1988; Morgan, 1984; Morse, 1963; Nafpaktitis, Mayer, and Butterworth, 1985; Neisser, 1986; Wright and Sherman, 1963; and Freedman and Kravetz, 1968).

In order to further explore the importance of a teacher's racial and/or ethnic background as a variable in the overall importance to the academic achievement of a minority student, a study designed to measure this effect was deemed necessary. Such a study, among minority educators and minority students, could provide us with the necessary information to determine how important this variable really is and whether gender and social class differences in the groups studied measure any significant relationships.

### Definitions

**Hispanic:** Historically a term labeling the Spanish-speaking peoples of the Southwest. In 1968 the term was sanctioned for official and generalized use in the United States to "denote all the Spanish-origin ethnic groups" (Melville, 1988, p. 68).

Latino: The term designates the Latin American origin of a person (Melville, 1988).

Mexican American: American residents/citizens who retain some, or all, of the Mexican culture and identify themselves as part of the ethnic group (Melville, 1988).

Chicano: A 1960 term adopted by blue-collar Mexican Americans and college student activists (Melville, 1988).

Ethnicity: The self identification and the identification by others of membership in a distinct socio-cultural group based on specific and/or biological characteristics (Melville, 1988).

Culture: The shared history, common language, common religion, and shared memories of the past as they have unfolded themselves in the arts and the literature and commonality of customs and traditions (Macridis, 1989).

Social Class: The stratified structure in the society based primarily on economic status (Spring, 1989).

#### Summary

A pluralistic society is challenged to provide a cohesive energy for the life of its institutions. The educational system is described as the best generating source for this energy. However, a multitude of problems confront the teachers and administrators who seek to socialize all the nation's children into the mainstream culture.

Failure to achieve this standardization, as measured by test scores and accentuated by dropout rates, is attributed to the students who are "culturally disadvantaged" or "deficient". Minority students, especially Hispanics, are said to be disadvantaged because of language

and culture. Since the tests are structured to evaluate knowledge of the dominant culture, these students do not "measure up" to the norm and are consequently placed in classes for the learning disabled. Although this test bias is recognized, the system is still using the evaluation method as a sorting mechanism.

The rapid increase in the Hispanic population has triggered calls for an increase in Hispanic teachers. I am a Hispanic teacher. Reflecting on my experiences both as a student and as a teacher, I acknowledge my interest in learning was nourished early at home and continued at school--schools staffed primarily by Anglo teachers. Neither their ethnicity nor their color affected me, nor did mine seem to affect them. As a teacher I have taught in all-minority schools and all-White schools. In the all-White schools my ethnicity was more of a novelty than an impediment for growth. Therefore, my interest on the question of the importance of ethnicity grew to the point of wanting to seek further clarification.

The next chapter will review the literature that is related to the problem to be studied. It will focus on the teacher/student relationship and identify the studies pertaining to this relationship.

Chapter III will discuss the methodology of the study, explain the instrument used, and describe how the data was analyzed. The findings are reported in Chapter IV. Demographic data and statistical data will be presented in tabular form. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations are discussed in Chapter V.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

#### Introduction

The Americas contained a multicultural mix of peoples when the Europeans moved across the ocean to extend their influence and culture to a "New World." Spain claimed the territorial bulk of the land and proceeded to introduce its culture and genotype among the indigenous people. Today's American Hispanics, of Spanish, African, and Indian ancestry, represent a unique blend of cultures and ethnic groups. Within this classification is the Mexican American, a United States resident of Mexican extraction who may be a new arrival, or a descendant of those Mexicans who opted to remain on the lands ceded to the United States by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

In the United States the dominant culture is a product of the Northern European influence. This difference in culture has been singled out by many as a reason for the lack of assimilation by the Hispanics. It is also used to explain why the Hispanics have failed to use the main vehicle for moving into the mainstream, the school.

This chapter will be concerned with a review of the literature of some of the cultural models which have been used to explain the impediments to achievement in school by Mexican Americans.

## Language and Ethnocentrism

Who am I? After I tell you who I am you may not know me. You may not recognize me. You may deny that I exist. Who am I? I'm a product of myself. I'm a product of you and of my ancestors. Now, one half of my ancestors were the Spanish who were Western European but who were also part African and part Middle Eastern. They came to this country and met with the other side of my family--the Indians. The Indians also were a great race--people of a great culture. There were many kinds of Indians, as there were many kinds of Spaniards. They mixed, they married, they had children. Their children were called Mestizos, and that is what I am.

The introductory quote from an essay written by an anonymous seventh grader identifies one of the many ethnic groups which fall under the umbrella term Hispanic (Johnson and Hernandez, 1970, p. 27). This group shares the language of the Spanish nation that contributed to this birth.

There are many works and studies which address the fundamental problems which result from culture conflict. Fehrenbach's (1968) historical text delineates the attitudes and actions of the Anglos as they became the dominant culture in Texas and focuses on the resultant discrimination and segregation of the Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Acuna (1981) presents his historical analysis of an oppressed, or colonized, people, again within the context of cultural conflict. Both of these works provide a thorough coverage of the ideology behind the dominant culture and its resultant clash with the Mexican American culture. Other works which the reader may be interested in are authored by De Leon (1983), and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Report III (May, 1972).

The language difference has served to enhance the view of Anglo superiority (Schaefer, 1988). There are still many Mexican Americans

who remember being punished and ridiculed for speaking Spanish at school (Schaefer, 1988; Acuna, 1981). Richard Rodriguez's autobiography (1982) addresses the issue of language in a very personal way as he describes his experiences in a white, middle-class school:

I remained a child longer than most. I shared with my family a language that was startlingly different from that used in the great city around us...I remained cloistered by sounds, timid and shy in public, too dependent on voices at home. And yet it needs to be emphasized: I was an extremely happy child at home (pages 16-17).

Rodriguez states that he was obsessed by the way his language (Spanish) determined his "public identity" (page 7).

Bilingual education, implemented by the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, sought to alleviate the transitional problem as students moved from an other-than-English home language to the dominant language in school. The literature is divided on the success/failure of the bilingual program. The reader is directed to Cordasco (1968), Cortes (1978), Walters and Gundersen (1985), Sanchez (1988), Nicholl and Gomez (1980), Grey and Stull (1989), Hurtado and Gurin (1987), Cummins (1986), and Cheney (1987) for a thorough coverage of the subject. It is not within the scope of this study to use the dimension of language as a casual factor because the students surveyed have, apparently, overcome the language problem. Some spoke some Spanish and English at home, and others, perhaps, only English.

#### Discrimination and Segregation

Language was just one of the different cultural characteristics of the Mexican American. Another very evident characteristic was that of color. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo many large landowners of

Hispanic ancestry had remained in the Southwest. A few of these retained their land and wealth and formed part of the elite group as the years progressed (Maril, 1989). A small middle class of craftsmen and businessmen also developed.

The flow of immigrants was not great until the advent of the Mexican Revolution. Many educated Mexicans left during the Revolution as did others who were not so well educated (Acuna, 1981). Their speech and their color identified them so emphatically that when school assignments were made there was no mistaking where the children would go; most went to segregated schools. Herschel Manuel (1930) conducted an intensive study of the Spanish-speaking students in Texas and found the educational system sadly lacking. Manuel described the poor condition of the physical facilities, the lack of books and equipment, and the inadequate preparation of the teachers. For those Mexican and Mexican American children who did attend school the inferior quality of education they were receiving precluded their economic advancement.

In 1972 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights was making the same observations Manuel had made forty years earlier, that the children of Mexican extraction were receiving an inferior education. Their cultural exclusion was still pervasive as was evident by the lack of communication between the schools and the parents (The Excluded Student, Report III, 1972).

Maril's (1989) study of the Mexican Americans in the Rio Grande Valley found that in that predominately minority area there were only three non-Anglo teachers in the Brownsville Independent School District prior to 1940.

In Valley high schools in areas where the Mexican-American population out-numbered Anglos four to one, Anglo students formed a majority of the student bodies...Teachers, administrators, and counselors, although there were certainly exceptions, did not encourage Mexican Americans to continue their education. Through the 1950's, as a rule they were not even encouraged to finish junior high school (page 115).

While the legality of segregated schools was challenged early on, it was not until 1970 that the Supreme Court finally ruled in Cisneros vs. Corpus Christi Independent School District that the de jure segregation of Mexican Americans was unconstitutional. The school district appealed the implementation of the decision and delayed its enactment until 1975 (Commission on Civil Rights, 1976).

#### Teachers and Schooling

Within the school institution, it is the teacher who serves as the facilitator of knowledge, the catalyst, so to speak, through which the student reaches an understanding of his milieu. With integration, the commitment to equal opportunity had to be implemented by the teacher. According to Joyce and Weil (1986) how teaching is conducted has a large impact on students' abilities to educate themselves. Teachers could, through overt or subtle means, express acceptance or rejection of the students in their class. The implications of shared race or ethnicity, in this view, would be of minor consequence for it is the how and not the who which would appear to be the key to a student's response. The following studies appear to support this.

Effective teaching is difficult to define. Studies have established that teachers who provide high levels of empathy, congruence, and positive regard enhance a student's growth (Hanna and McGill, 1985).

Morgan (1982) conducted an assessment of teacher empathy by extracting characteristic previously associated with empathic teachers and conducting an independent rating of teachers by outside raters and supervisors. She found that teachers receiving high ratings received them from both groups. She suggested that teacher education programs could start early personality assessments to identify potentially highly empathic students.

In a survey of education majors in New York State, Wood (1985) found that the perceptions of young children held by the college students responding represented the six classified historical viewpoints such as the child is inherently evil, the child is a miniature adult, and so on. While most felt that children were inherently good developing human beings, nearly twenty percent expressed negative attitudes towards children. Wood expressed hope that pre-service teacher education programs could identify students holding these attitudes and would act to modify their thinking.

Kerr and Zigmond (1986) investigated the classroom standards and expectations held by both high school regular teachers and teachers of special education. Over two hundred teachers took part in the study. Regular teachers and special educators both agreed on scoring standard classroom behavior as high on their list of expectations (student

follows rules, listens to teacher, follows instructions, and complies with teacher commands). Both groups downplayed the importance of social skills.

According to Klein (1988), children construct their views of adult roles based on their experiences and interactions with adults in particular settings. Those children who lack day-care center or kindergarten experiences form their views through watching television or listening to older siblings. The perception children have of the teacher is of vital importance in the culture of schools. A good, or positive, perception influences the child to retain his/her excitement for learning. Dobson, Goldenberg, and Elson (1972) studied suburban elementary teachers and found significant differences in the verbal behavior of teachers classified as humanistic versus those classified as custodial.

The role teachers play in a student's satisfaction with school has also been studied. Beelick (1973) noted that the source of school dissatisfaction most often mentioned by students was the teacher's behavior. Out of five other factors mentioned, the teacher's behavior was rated the most crucial to student's satisfaction by over a third of the respondents. A very intensive study on teacher expectations and student achievement which has become the seminal work on the "self-fulfilling" prophecy was conducted by Jacobson and Rosenthal in 1968. This study correlated the actual student achievement with teacher expectations and found a high degree of significance. While the work has received much criticism in its methodology and use of IQ measurements used, other similar studies were spawned in its wake. Kester and Letchworth (1972) studied the effects of teacher expectations

on seventh grade students and found that the only significant change was in student-teacher interaction. They explained the inability of teachers' expectancies to affect the performance of students to the possibility that perhaps the expectancy phenomenon works best in younger children who are not as well developed in their concepts of self and in their reputations among the teachers. At this level, or age, students may be less anxious to conform to teacher expectancies. Just as a teacher affects the behavior of the student, there is evidence which indicates that students affect the behavior of the teacher. A classroom is a continuous web of social interactions where feedback plays an important role. Nafpaktitia, Mayer, and Butterworth (1985) studied teacher approval and disapproval are not effective classroom management strategies. They believe that the attention disruptive students get, even though it is negative, reinforces their disruptive behavior.

A broad spectrum of studies have been conducted to investigate teacher personality, preparation, at the college level, and perceptions of the roles a teacher assumes in the classroom as based on teacher's perspective and other's perspectives. Schuck and Handley (1988) investigated first year teachers at the secondary level and found that the morale of these beginning teachers was related to their image of themselves as teachers. The image had been developed early in their teacher preparation program. Data supported earlier findings that teachers who demonstrate more original and divergent behavior display less satisfaction with teaching than those teachers who rate themselves lower on the creativity scales. In a comparative study of entry year and experienced teachers, Brousseau, Book, and Byers (1988) found that experienced teachers favor a more common curriculum and agree that



schools should act as agents of change. On the other hand, the experienced teachers also felt that the teacher's sense of efficacy was growing weaker. The authors refer to the "cultures of teaching" which are framed by the teachers biography, beliefs and preparation.

Britzman (1988) contends that teacher education is still reflecting its nineteenth-century origin and that the role. The role of the teacher as an agent of cultural reproduction must be challenged.

More precisely, Britzman states:

My analysis rests upon the assumption that teacher education, like any education, is an ideological education. It promotes particular images of power, knowledge, and values by rewarding particular forms of individual and institutional behavior. The ways that prospective teachers understand and experience power throughout teacher education shape their acceptance or rejection of the status quo. Similarly, teacher education's conception of knowledge can promote a view of the teacher as either technician or intellectual, and the extent to which values are rendered explicit can either inhibit or encourage a more critical pedagogy. By situating the problem of becoming a teacher within a political and ideological framework, we can better understand how past teaching and the consequences of cultural reproduction in the lives of those learning to teach (p. 443-44).

Britzman found three recurring myths in the course of her study:

(1) everything depends on the teacher; (2) the teacher is the expert; (3) teachers are self-made. She views the resultant isolation of the teacher as one which encourages the teacher's role to become one of merely instilling knowledge rather than engaging learners; of forcing the teacher to equate learning with social control. What is lost is the fact that the activity of teaching is significantly influenced by the natural relationship between teachers and students.

In a classroom, hundreds of social interactions occur daily-- between the teacher and the students and between the students

themselves. In a multiethnic/multicultural classroom, how does the teacher deal with the learning process? Gay's (1975) studies indicate, as she points out, that ...

How teachers behave towards students, and the opportunities they made available to students to participate in the educational process, are largely functions of their perceptions and expectations. These data have important implications for the systematic analysis of teacher's behavior with and expectations for ethnically different students (p. 167).

While the problem of language may explain some of the difficulties middle-class white teachers have in communicating with ethnically different students, Gay points out that the nation's history of devaluing racial and cultural differences and of considering persons who do not conform to middle class value expectations as somewhat inferior, are necessarily implicated in the kinds of expectancy profiles teachers have towards ethnically different children. Some classroom teachers attended segregated schools. Teachers, like all others, are products of their society. Institutionalized beliefs which are changed by mandate not reflecting unanimous popular support are hard to change.

Gay's (1975) research and that of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission (1973) provided extensive findings of teacher behaviors towards Mexican American students in the Southwest. Both investigations reported similar findings. The research showed that Anglo students are praised, encouraged, and asked to participate more frequently in class discussions by both Anglo and Mexican-American teachers. A major observation in these studies was that Mexican-American teachers gave Anglo students more of the positive attention than they did Mexican-American students. Gay concluded that because teachers expected less of Mexican-Americans the students behaved in ways consonant with those

expectations. Because of the teachers' behaviors, students were being denied a quality education.

A 1990 report compiled by the Quality Education for Minorities (QEM) Project's Action Council enumerated several reasons why the nation's public schools have not served the Mexican-Americans well. Among those listed are: (1) the non-valuing of the culture and language of Mexican-American students, including low expectations regarding their academic potential; and, (2) the social and cultural distance between teachers. This included Mexican-American teachers, who, it should not be assumed, will be naturally effective with Mexican-American students. This same report pointed out that the best minority college graduates abandoned teaching as a profession with the advent of the civil rights movement. It also indicated that teachers in predominantly minority schools were the least experienced, held the most emergency credentials, and were likely to be teaching out of their fields.

Other researchers have contributed to this area of knowledge. Samora (1963) included differing curricula as a reason for inferior education, or low attainment. He also noted that grade school enrollment is high in this minority group but decreases dramatically at the end of junior high. Jeter (1975) refers to research which indicated that low achievement pupils received much less teacher contact than did the high- and middle-achievers. Jeter concluded that for a teacher-expectation to become self-fulfilling, the teacher would have to be able to communicate the expectation and the student would have to perceive this and move in the expected direction.

## The Question of Poverty

There is no question that poverty is endemic in the Mexican-American population. According to the QEM Report, the poverty rate for all Hispanics climbed from 21.6 percent in 1978 to 28.2 percent in 1987. The median family income of Mexican-American nearly doubled between 1976 and 1984, but it was still slightly less than eighty percent of the White family income. By 1987 the median income had decreased to less than 70 percent of the White family income which was estimated to be around \$24,000.

Within an historical context, one can explain the nature of the work the Mexican immigrated to in the United States and the resultant poverty cycle. There were many political and economic barriers in place which forced Mexicans and Mexican-Americans into marginal existence. Braceros and undocumented workers alike helped build the abundant agricultural areas of the San Joaquin and Rio Grande Valleys. Yet, the economic gains went to the land-owning elites and the corporations. Mexico tried to obtain sanctions against employers of undocumented workers but the powerful agriculture lobby interests succeeded in dissuading Congress from this action (Acuna, 1981). Families moved from harvest to harvest with children in tow, contributing to the children's school problems. School authorities did not enforce the compulsory school law on migrants' children and many schools were actually set up to end with the coming of harvest (Manuel, 1930).

The stereotype of a typical Mexican-American even into the 1960's was of an uneducated, lazy, dirty migrant worker who spoke little English and had no ambition and "no future." The belief that being

Mexican is equated with being poor can be traced to Oscar Lewis who referred to "the culture of poverty," among Puerto Ricans and Mexicans (Lewis, 1966). Poverty is not the only characteristic; this culture embraces a deviant life-style, according to theorists (Schaefer, 1988). It embraces all those social ills commonly assigned to the minorities: absence of the work ethic; no future planning; and no enduring commitment to marriage (Schaefer, 1988). Lewis stated that this way of life, "remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation among family lines" (Finsterbusch and McKenna, 1988, p. 23). Edward Banfield states that poverty as a culture results not from lack of economic means, but, rather that the culture itself causes its own poverty through the individual life-styles and is "inwardly" caused. It is strictly a lower class domain with values that conflict with the mainstream society. Externally caused poverty differs, according to Banfield, because once the cause of poverty is removed, the people immediately move away from conditions that denote their poverty-status (Finsterbusch and McKenna, 1988).

William Ryan argues that Banfield's position is much like "blaming the victim." A ghetto child is said to be "culturally deficient" or "disadvantaged" when he enters school. Because of his family condition, the experiences he should have been exposed to (like the "mainstream" or dominant culture child has) are missing. This is seen as a lack of culture capital. The reaction here is that the child is to blame for his condition and must be given "compensatory" education. This is also true of many minority children, whether they are from the ghetto, barrio, or rural areas (Finsterbusch and McKenna, 1988). The explanation to "downplay" the effects of racism, segregation, and

powerlessness, says Ryan, precludes any needed structural changes in the institution of school. He adds that the "function of the ideology of lower class culture is plainly to maintain inequality in American life" (Finterbusch and McKenna, 1988, p. 33).

Other critics of the "culture of poverty" cite the turnover which occurs annually among the ranks of the poor. Data indicate that some families move up the economic scale while others slide down. In one particular study, one fourth of the families in poverty were no longer poor the following year, while 1.7 million new families were added to the list. Furthermore, the data and analyses were said to be inconclusive/misinterpreted (Matras, 1984).

A study of parental income and the socioeconomic attainment of children by Hill and Duncan (1987) found that working mothers appear to have significantly less successful sons. It also found that the "welfare culture" dollars neither retarded nor augmented significantly the socioeconomic attainments of children. The researchers discuss how the allocation of resources within the family affects the development, or human capital, of their children. Parents assumed to be concerned with the welfare of their children would spend more money on factors which they predict would likely influence their future standard of living. Schooling is one of the factors highly thought to contribute to this. The results of this investigation provided very limited support for the hypothesis that an increase in asset income would have positive effects on the attainments of children. Only the completed education of daughters showed a significant effect (Hill and Duncan, 1987).

In investigating the "working mother hypothesis" the results provided support for the theory that outside employment by mothers has a

detrimental effect on the attainment of the sons. This particular study showed that having a full-time employment by the mother (as opposed to not working at all) was associated with a half-year less completed schooling and 14 percent lower wages (Hill and Duncan, 1987).

The socioeconomic class of minority children is disproportionately in the poverty level. According to the 1987 Bureau of the Census, Hispanic children under age 16 compose 40.6 percent of the estimated 12.8 children living in poverty. The status of these children results in what Synder (1963) calls cultural or socioeconomic deprivation which leads to "situational bias." This he defines as:

...an event wherein a person, persons, or an agency does not have facilities available to counteract the absence or presence of a quality or attribute which restricts or restrains one's participation in an activity accessible to others not so characterized (p. 154).

Synder (1963) then states that our educational system may be prejudging the lower class child and are depriving him of his rightful access to the full benefits of public education.

For the Mexican American poor, the condition of poverty is only one of several compounding factors that produce a multidimensional pit. Distribution of economic benefits alone does not resolve their predicament. There are other dimensions to be achieved in education, health, the political process, and other social resources. The issue of color, however, is one which they themselves cannot ameliorate even if all the above factors were positively resolved (Matras, 1984).

Maril's (1989) study of the poor Mexican Americans in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas details the multidimensional problems confronting this class of people. The other socioeconomic classes ascribe to the stereotypes and myths about the poor:

These myths are traditional in Texas: the poor have more children to collect more welfare; the poor do not want to work even if given a job; the poor leave school because they are not motivated to succeed; the poor have always been that way so any programs to change them are doomed by their very nature to failure; and the poor will always be poor in the Valley because of Mexico. These and other stereotypes about the Valley poor have little basis in fact despite their prevalence among all classes in the Valley, including the poor (page 152).

Thus the upper and middle classes internalize the prevalent myths and probably even justify them. The daily visibility of extreme poverty had perhaps hardened other classes to its harsh reality and its acceptance to forming "part of the human condition" (page 160).

#### Family and Peers

The characteristics of a family such as ethnic group, income, and language are recognized as important parts of a pattern which contribute to the social performance of a child. Investigators seeking to make assessments of other variables have studied family groups to determine their influence in educational achievement.

Laosa (1974) studied familial influence on the development and performance of young children. He also studied the effect of parental schooling on the child. His findings indicated that the degree of schooling by the parent may have an indirect influence on the child's intellectual development since parental/child interaction is governed to a large extent on the amount and quality of a parent's schooling. The researcher posits child-parent interactions "as a mediating variable between social status indicators and school performances" (p. 323).

Valencia, Henderson, and Rankin (1985) conducted a study among 140 Mexican American preschool children which examined the relative



contributions of family status variables, such as child and parental language, parental schooling attainment and geographic location of schooling, and the socioeconomic status as predictors of cognitive performance. They used a Likert type scale designed to "measure home environmental characteristics that have been found to correlate with intellectual performance and to predict scholastic achievement" (p. 236). Their data showed a considerable range of diversity in the family backgrounds of children from a common ethnic group with a relatively low socioeconomic background. The researchers interpreted their results to indicate that:

The variance in intellectual performance of the young children in the present study was best predicted by proximal variables reflecting the intellectual experiences their parents had provided. Distal measures, such as family size, socioeconomic status, and even parental schooling proved to be much less powerful predictors (p. 325).

Sociologists characterize the Mexican Americans as being more "familistic" than other groups in the United States. This characteristic has its positive and negative effects as it places family before individual needs. While the strong family unity may provide strength in time of crisis, it may also influence bright youngsters from moving away from the family constellation (Schaefer, 1988).

The contradictions which advanced schooling brings to some minorities may cause alienation from their families. Rodriguez (1982) and his siblings realized the "American Dream" denied to their immigrant parents. This achievement, according to Rodriguez, was an accomplishment at the expense of other losses:

I had not meant to hurt...I think, however, that education has divided the family...That is something that happens in most families, though it is rarely discussed...I had meant to praise what I have lost...I continue to love you both very much (pages 18-19).

Mercedes Perez de Colon, speaking at the QEM Project Hearings (1988) stated:

One half of what a human being learns from birth to 17 is learned before the age of four. Thus the education of the child begins in the home with the parent. For any child, the first and most important teacher is his/her principal caretaker--his/her parent. Many parents simply don't know how to go about teaching their children or feel that they can make a difference, having failed within the system themselves (p. 53).

QEM is calling for additional support for programs that insure proper care and "wellness" for children. As they say, "the gap that produces fewer minority graduates from high schools, colleges, and graduate schools often begins at birth with poorly nourished mothers who lacked medical care" (p. 57).

In a detailed study of white and black males from housing projects, MacLeod (1987) proposed that both groups "are a testament to the prevalence of social reproduction rather than social mobility in American society" (p. 156). The group of white males who MacLeod called the "Hallway Hangers" do not believe the educational system is a means of social mobility. In essence, school is seen as a ladder without rungs.

The black parents differed in their expectations for their children from the white parents. The blacks, the "Brothers," were encouraged by their parents because they believed that social conditions have changed. The black parents felt that their children could achieve what they had not. The parents of the "Hallway Hangers", on the other hand, did not encourage their children's belief in the achievement ideology. They felt that their children's aspirations should be kept

low to avoid disappointment. This cynicism, MacLeod felt, was a reflection of the parents own history of failure (MacLeod, 1988).

Further manifestations of differences in parental attitudes were listed by MacLeod (1988). He mentioned the enforcement of rules and discipline by the "Brother's" parents, and these students' willingness to comply with parental expectations in academic achievement. MacLeod did not find comparable manifestations of parental authority in the "Hallway Hangers". Craig, a haitian "Brother", notes that the Hangers' parents "aren't helping any" (p. 57).

The Clarendon Heights project, where the "Hangers" and the "Brothers" lived, consisted of 85 percent families which were headed by a single female. These two peer groups influenced each other internally as they formed a sort of subculture. All subcultures, including gangs, have their own set of values. According to MacLeod, the "Hangers" "...valuation of physical toughness, emotional resilience, quick-wittedness, masculinity, loyalty, and group solidarity point to a subculture with its own norms" (p. 117).

MacLeod believed that the Brothers did not have a distinctive subculture because they accepted the norms and value of the dominant culture; therefore, success was not redefined for them within the peer group. Their group ethos encouraged high aspirations and prized school accomplishments. When these were not achieved, they blamed themselves and not what MacLeod termed the "school's partiality towards the cultural capital of the upper classes" (p. 127). Maril reflected on the influence of family on the Mexican American students in the Valley of Texas:

Valley students also stay in school because of their families. Many low-income families encourage their children to stay in school, and when Brownsville Independent School District students do drop out, it is not without some guilt. Poor mothers and fathers want their children to enjoy a higher quality of life, and they realize quite well that education is the key. Yet more than half eventually leave, preferring to take their chances rather than endure a system that promises them much but provides them little (p. 128).

#### Minorities in Education:

##### The Elusive Teacher

The growth of the Hispanic population has brought calls from experts to attract minorities into the teaching profession. Americans of Mexican origin now number over ten million. Because of the historical lack of assimilation by this group, many believe that minority teachers would serve as role models for these minority students (Schaefer, 1988). In any group, bonding is made through the sharing of values and other similarities. A like culture, language, and ideals serve as a foundation from which to build solid relationships. The problems, as perceived by Lauro Cavazos, U.S. Secretary of Education, of the Hispanics can be traced, in part, to the lack of Hispanic teachers. Cavazos states that the overall number of minority students is 30 percent, while the percent of minority teachers stands at nine (May, 1990). Of the total school population, nine percent were Hispanic students and two percent were Hispanic teachers (QEM, 1990).

In an unpublished study conducted by this researcher (1990), seven Mexican American educators, each with over 25 years of experience in the field, responded that the ethnicity of their teachers had no significant influence on them. All seven had been taught primarily by Anglo teachers in a community that was 90 percent Mexican American. A study

of Mexican Americans in a high density Anglo population showed that ethnicity negatively influenced the minority's college aspiration (Mejia, 1980).

An informal study of college students enrolled in an introductory curriculum course at a large midwestern university indicated that less than 10 percent of approximately 500 students were minorities. Over 70 percent of this same population were Caucasian females. A total of 140 students were asked if they had had at least one minority teacher in grades K-12. Only 23 (16 percent) answered affirmatively.

In a study by Brauner (1973) on the educational achievement of Mexican Americans she suggests that migrant children with a positive environment may internalize the idea of upward mobility through observing people like themselves attaining jobs, skills, and material possessions.

Arthur (1989), an inner-city teacher for over 30 years, felt that every teacher needed special training to work with minorities. Cavazos (1990) felt a minority teacher "aids in sensing those moments of self doubt where extra support and encouragement should be offered."

QEM's (1990) prediction for the future emphasized the fact that minority school population will approach 50 percent in some urban areas, while minority teachers are expected to decline from an overall ten percent to just five percent. Of the 700,000 new teachers who will be trained during the next five years, only about 35,000 are estimated to be minority.

The Brownsville Independent School District in Texas was slow to hire Mexican American teachers even though the community was predominately Mexican American. Poor performance, low scores, and high

dropout rates of Mexican American students were explained by Anglo administrators as being reflective of biased tests and cultural deficiencies. The Anglos have historically controlled the economic, political, and educational institutions with, until recently, little opposition from the Mexican American majority (Maril, 1989).

The Laredo community has seen an increase in political participation by Mexican Americans, although the Anglo community was never in total control of its institutions. The school board was served by the upper middle class regardless of race or ethnicity. A survey of surnames of Physicians and Surgeons shows 74 Hispanics and 15 Anglos. Some of the Anglos are married to Hispanic residents and a few of those with Hispanic surnames may have one Anglo parent. A similar survey of Attornies showed 74 Hispanics and 15 non-Hispanics. Over 50 percent of both professional lists are graduates of the Laredo public and private schools (Linares, 1990).

#### Research in Education

Concepts and relationships are couched in language which paints a picture or illustrates connections. The feelings and attitudes about schooling which I had verbalized needed to be expressed in a manner which would produce a realistic and useful response from the population in the study. I, therefore, decided to use a quantitative base in my educational research.

Educational research is defined by Gay (1987) as the formal, systematic application of the scientific method to the study of educational problems. Because of the nature of the subjects being

studied, human beings, unknown variables may operate in the educational environment making it impossible to replicate the findings.

The researcher designed Likert scale to measure attitudes is not without bias. However, the researcher's familiarity with the culture and setting of the study and the previous researcher (Hodgden, 1990) may provide a less biased result. The scale asked the subjects to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether he or she Strongly Disagreed (SD), Neither Agreed nor Disagreed (N), Agreed (A), or Strongly Agreed (SA). The following point values were assigned: (SD)=1, (D)=2, (N)=3, (A)=4, (SA)=5.

Analyses of the data was done on a mainframe computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which has been in use for nearly 20 years (Gay, 1987). This program is able to handle simple to sophisticated statistics. The sampling size and the number of variables in each of the groups makes a computer a logical research tool which is essentially error free (Gay, 1987).

In viewing the research, the types or kinds of questions asked and the school populations involved, we must acknowledge that there are some educators who underscore that "schools seem to contribute to inequality in that they are tacitly organized to differentially distribute specific kinds of knowledge" (Apple, 1990).

The subjects involved in the study all have been associated with the world of school for a good portion of their lives. Laredo, a predominantly Mexican American community is where the researcher was born, educated, and taught at for eight years. The questions which were generated and some of which were included in another study could be

viewed as having been formulated from a participant/observer's viewpoint and certainly with whether bias may be present therein (Hodgden, 1990).

According to Emerson (1988):

In its most inclusive sense, field research is the study of people acting in the natural course of their daily lives. The fieldworker ventures into the worlds of others in order to learn firsthand about how they live, how they talk and behave, and what captivates and distresses them (p. 1).

In an unpublished study of nine college graduates from Laredo, this researcher conducted extensive interviews regarding the subjects' education. The majority of their teachers (over 70%) were Anglo, both in Laredo and in the college/university attended. When asked whether their teacher's racial/ethnic background had played an important role in the teacher's influence, the nine all responded "No." Seven said that they had no specific teacher as a role model, while two said that they had. The teachers were identified as one Anglo female biology teacher and one Anglo female English teacher. All indicated that they had a particularly outstanding teacher. The descriptions of those teachers were: six Anglo females; three Mexican-American females; and one Irish nun. In discussing the qualities that these teachers possessed the subjects listed the following: fair and sincere; caring and interested in the individual; respected student; well-dressed and well-versed; disciplined; knew their subject very well; and, taught responsibility. Three credited a teacher for their choice of vocation (Hodgden, 1990).

Of the nine subjects, seven are involved in education. When asked what the most rewarding aspect of their educational experience had been, all seven answered that it was knowing that "you have motivated or made



a difference in a student's life." The positive qualities that these educators noted in their students were well-mannered, respectful, and considerate.

Whether one views school as an institution which contributes to the maintenance of a specific social order by teaching consensus values and thus implying that students are mainly value-receiving person (Apple, 1990) or whether one argues that there is no clear "consensus among scholars on what constitutes reality in schooling as an institution or a process" (Selakovich, 1984, p. 24), the questionnaires used in the study apparently reflect the respondents' attitudes toward the variables at the particular time they acted on them.

#### Summary

The literature was reviewed to include several of the variables which research indicates affect the academic achievement of students, and minorities in particular. Because the language variable was not dealt with in this study, it was only marginally reviewed. Research (Cortes, 1978) has shown that language is a significant factor in whether or not non-English speaking students are successful in school. This study dealt with a minority population which had achieved success in school (they were seniors, college students, or teachers) and therefore the researcher felt that there were other variables which needed a more detailed analysis.

The three school populations surveyed in this study were asked to respond to several factors which may have influenced their academic achievement. Among the factors included in the questionnaire were: (1) the teacher's ethnicity; (2) teacher traits, such as attitude and

empathy; (3) parental influence; (4) peer influence; and (5) socioeconomic influence. Some of these factors form the definition of the term habitus, a concept introduced by Bourdieu (MacLeod, 1987).

Bourdieu (MacLeod, 1987) introduces the concept of habitus to define these factors. Habitus encompasses:

...the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of those inhabiting one's social world. This conglomeration of deeply internalized values defines an individual's attitudes towards, for example, schooling (p. 13).

Some individuals maintain that in order for minorities to experience academic achievement they must be taught by teachers of their own racial/ethnic background. The colleges of education are being asked to recruit minorities to staff the classrooms of the next decade. The increase in minority enrollment is seen as a major problem if this does not occur.

U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos (1990) states:

But there is one special reward of being a minority teacher, and that is the opportunity to be a role model for minority students. The minority teacher's own learning experience as a student becomes an invaluable aid in sensing those moments of self-doubt where extra support and encouragement should be offered. Where despair is tangible and immediate, it is the teacher's perception and understanding that will help the student avoid the double disasters of drug abuse and dropping out. By setting an example for others to follow, the teacher can replace resignation with resolution.... Although there can be no immediate resolution to all the problems of public education, there is a clear and vital need for well-qualified teachers to see that all our young people are offered their best chance to achieve (page 70).

While the increase in minority enrollment is a given, the changes that may or may not occur will provide researchers with many avenues to contribute to the literature in this area.

The abundance of literature on the issue of educating minorities, particularly Hispanics, is a clear indication to this researcher that

there is no single solution to the problem. While we continue to investigate causes for failure, we neglect, in many instances, to bring to light, areas where success has been achieved.

External forces which the student has no control over influence the dynamics of their classroom experiences. We cannot predicate our curriculum on the basis of assuming failure (because the child has poor minority parents and peers) before the child has had an opportunity to express his/her person in the classroom. The teacher, clearly, is the pivotal point around which all these forces will interact (parents, peers, language, social class). In my own personal experience the teachers ethnic backgrounds did not appear to have an influence on my schooling experiences. The empathy and the enthusiasm of the individual teachers did contribute to my positive experiences in the classroom. Parental influence was a definite motivator.

At the present time, the teachers' racial/ethnic backgrounds reflect the Mexican American majority, unlike the 1950's when there were more Anglo teachers. Students are still influenced by parents, peers and teachers. This study indicates that the most important attributes a teacher brings to the classroom are found, not in the phenotype of their skin, but in their person as expressed by their concerns, understanding, and care for the students in their classroom.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

#### Introduction

In order to investigate the perceived attitudes of different school populations towards the relationship between a teacher's ethnicity and a student's academic achievement, it was important to identify a population with a high percentage of minority teachers and students to survey. The Laredo Independent School District and the Laredo Junior College met this criterion. This study will also provide data on parental influence, peer influence and family income in terms of academic achievement.

#### The Population

Laredo, Texas was selected as the site for the study because the researcher was familiar with the area and had access to the subjects of the investigation. The city has a population of 128,000 of which 97.9 percent are of Hispanic origin. Over 90 percent of the Hispanics are of Mexican origin.

The Laredo Independent School District's Annual Performance Report for 1987-88 included the following statistics:

The district is one of 18 schools with an enrollment of over 10,000 (22,005 to be exact) whose district wealth is below average and

whose percentage of low income students is over 40 percent (actual percentage is 81). The enrollment was listed as: (K-1) 467; (Grades 1-6-10) 797; (Grades 7-8-3) 737; (Grades 9-12-5) 969.

There were 1,777 high school graduates. Of these, 28 were White and 1,149 were Hispanic. A total of 778 indicated that they would attend college (66.1%). The State of Texas has 59.6% high school graduates indicating that they will attend college.

The racial/ethnic background of the district and the state's school population is:

White.....	509 (2.3% District).....	State..	51.8%
Hispanic....	21,481 (97.6%).....	State..	31.5%
Black.....	9 (0%).....	State..	14.6%
Other.....	6 (0%).....	State...	2.0%

Enrollment by Special Programs was structured in the following categories:

Vocational Education.....	District (18%).....	State (17.4%)
Bilingual Education.....	District (38.3%)...	State ( 7.3%)
Compensatory/Low Income..	District (81%).....	State (38.2%)
Gifted and Talented.....	District (3.8%)....	State ( 4.8%)
Special Education.....	District (7.7%)....	State ( 8.3%)

According to the report there are 1,375 classroom teachers. A total of 925 (67.27%) have bachelors' degrees; 447 (32.51%) have masters' degrees; and 3 have doctoral degrees. Forty Teachers were teaching on special permits. Teaching experience was listed as follows:

1- 9 Years.....	600 Teachers
10-19 Years.....	500 Teachers
20-29 Years.....	230 Teachers
30-39 Years.....	42 Teachers
40+ Years.....	3 Teachers

In order to obtain as broad a sampling as possible of students who had achieved academically, the three high schools of the Laredo Independent School District were surveyed at the senior class level. According to Pishel (1973):

Completion of high school is generally considered to be a basic educational goal in our society. Graduation from high school means that course work in high school has been successfully completed in a variety of subjects. It is assumed that one must perform well to get required grades for successful course completions (p. 166).

The high schools were: Cigarroa, Martin, and Nixon. Of 800 surveys distributed 741 were returned. The researcher arranged for the sampling with the superintendent and later spoke with the principals of the schools involved. The questionnaires were distributed by the English teachers who were aware only that the results were to be used in a dissertation.

Teachers at the above listed high schools were also surveyed. Again, to enlarge the sampling, the teachers at all the middle schools, Christen, Cigarroa, Lamar, and Memorial, also participated in the survey. Five elementary schools out of twenty-one were geographically selected (north, south, east, west, and central) to obtain a more representative sampling. The schools were Dovalilna, Hachar, Ligarde,

Martin, and Pierce. The teachers were given no special instructions and anonymity was assured. A total of 236 questionnaires were returned out of the 300 distributed.

A sampling from the Laredo Junior College students was also obtained after obtaining the president's permission. Teachers were asked if they would allow their students to participate and were given the surveys to distribute. A total of 343 college students returned the surveys out of the 400 distributed.

### The Instrument

The testing and evaluating instrument was developed by the researcher with constructive criticism from Mr. Ger Veglia and Dr. Lee Maril, sociologists. It was based on a Likert scale format which is an instrument that asks an individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether he or she Strongly Disagrees (SD), Disagrees (D), Neither Agrees nor Disagrees (N), Agrees (A), or Strongly Agrees (SA). An introductory statement provided directions. At the end of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to provide demographic information. Copies of the three different questionnaires may be found in the Appendix.

The Teacher Survey was divided into two sections. The first section dealt with the teacher's overall educational experience; the second section asked the teacher to respond to ethnic related issues in the classroom student/teacher interaction. The College Student Survey was also divided into two parts. The first part was generally concerned with college experience; the second portion dealt with previous educational experiences, particularly with regards to the ethnic factor

in student/teacher interaction. The High School Seniors Survey was composed of three parts. The first dealt with overall educational experience; the second dealt with parent/guardian influence; and the third dealt with the teachers in the students' educational experiences.

#### Analysis of Data

In order to prepare the surveys for computation of all the data was coded on a numerical scale. The value labels were: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree. The college student survey was coded starting with 6001 through 6343. The variables, which are identified in the Appendix, were numerically valued. Zeroes were used for missing data. The high school seniors' code was 000# (0001-0741). Variables were again numerically coded and may be found in the Appendix. The teachers' code was 500# (from 5001-5236). Again they were treated like the other two, with numerically valued variables and zeroes for missing data. The last variable in each was family income. In order to code correctly, when the answer was #7 (Don't Know), a zero value was assigned.

The data was processed at the Northwestern Oklahoma State Research Center using the SPSS-11 System (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Frequency runs were obtained for each category label. Correlational studies were also obtained. These correlational studies describe in quantitative terms the degree to which variables are related. Degree of relationship is expressed as a correlation coefficient. If two variables are highly related, a correlation coefficient near +1.00 (or -1.00) will be obtained. If two variables are not related, a coefficient near 0.00 will be obtained. The more



highly related two variables are, the more accurate are predictions based on their relationship (Gay, 1987). A negative coefficient indicates that the variables are inversely related

A Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) was obtained. It is the most appropriate measure of correlation when the sets of data to be correlated represent either interval or ratio scales. It takes into account each and every score in both distributions; it is also the most stable measure of correlation.

Cross tabulations were made on the pertinent ethnic variables of the three surveys and the gender and income of each of the three groups. This allowed us to test for the null hypothesis. The resultant Pearson's  $R$  and the level of significance allow us to decide whether we can reject the null hypothesis and infer that each difference is significantly greater than a chance difference. If the difference is too large ( $p > 0.05$ ) to attribute to chance, we reject the null hypothesis; if not, we do not reject them (Gay, 1987).

#### Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited in the following ways:

1. At the student level, only seniors were surveyed.
2. The college sample did not include students who attended out-of-town colleges.
3. Because of the selected geographic area studied, the extent to which findings can be generalized is limited.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

There were three separate questionnaires developed for each of the school populations to be surveyed. Of the 800 High School Seniors' instruments distributed to the high school English teachers, 741 were returned. There were 400 College Students' questionnaires distributed of which 343 were returned. The schools received 300 questionnaires to distribute to their teachers for the Teacher sampling; 236 were returned.

The demographics gathered by this survey is presented in tabular form. The data generated was tabulated and evaluated for significant correlations. The three separate surveys were also compared for significant correlations. The three separate surveys were also compared for significant correlation.

The High School Seniors Survey contained 16 opinion items and 14 demographic items; the College Students Survey contained 14 opinion items and 16 demographic items; the Teachers Survey contained 14 opinion items and 16 demographic items. It should be noted that some respondents failed to answer the demographic portion (in part or total). The missing information was treated as a missing value.

Tables I, II, and III illustrate the percentages of respondents in the various racial/ethnic groups. Tables I, II, and III reveals the

high percentage of Hispanic population among Teachers, College Students and High School Seniors. All are over 80 percent. The respondents' parents show a similar distribution.

TABLE I  
ETHNICITY OF TEACHERS  
(N=236)

Ethnic Group	Teacher	Mother	Father
	-----Percent-----		
White	11.0	13.6	13.1
Hispanic	84.3	81.8	79.7
Black	0.4	0.4	0.4
Missing	4.2	4.2	6.4

TABLE II  
ETHNICITY OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS  
(N=741)

Ethnic Group	Student	Mother	Father
	-----Percent-----		
White	0.5	0.8	1.6
Hispanic	94.3	93.7	83.8
Missing	5.1	5.5	14.6

TABLE III  
 ETHNICITY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS  
 (N=343)

Ethnic Group	Student	Mother	Father
	-----percent-----		
White	3.8	4.7	7.9
Hispanic	89.5	88.6	88.2
Oriental	0.9	0.9	0.3
Black	0.3	0.3	0.3
Missing	5.2	5.5	9.3

TABLE IV  
 GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THREE GROUPS

Respondents	Female	Male	Missing
	-----percent-----		
Teachers	66.5	28.8	4.7
College Students	56.3	39.7	3.8
High School Seniors	53.2	40.2	6.6

The distribution for all three categories of respondents closely reflects nationwide averages. According to the 1986 Statistical Abstract and the 1986-87 report by the Department of Education, Center for Education statistics, the teaching profession is composed of 75 percent females and 25 percent males. Also, in 1986, women constituted 52 percent of all college students. The high school graduates, in 1983, were evenly divided nationwide. The data shown here shows a wider difference.

The District's own 1988 Report shows 11 percent males at the elementary level and 47.6 percent males teaching at the secondary level. It also shows that 5 percent of the elementary teachers are White and that at the secondary level the percentage of White teachers is 17.

TABLE V  
TEACHER AGE DISTRIBUTION  
(N=236)

Age	Relative Frequency -----percent-----
27 - 26	8.5
27 - 31	10.2
32 - 36	21.2
37 - 41	19.9
42 - 46	14.8
47 - 51	8.1
52 - 56	5.1
57 - 61	7.6
62+	0.4
Missing	4.2

Over half of the teachers are between the ages of 32 and 46. The age group correlates with the data in Table VI which shows that over half of the teachers have from 10 to 24 years of teaching experience.

TABLE VI  
YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

# of Years	Relative Frequency -----percent-----
1st	5.1
1 - 4	8.1
5 - 9	16.5
10 - 14	21.6
15 - 19	21.6
20 - 24	10.6
25 - 29	5.5
30+	6.4
Missing	4.7

In studying the data from Table VI the respondents indicate results which differ from the district's own reports. While over 60 percent of the responding teachers have over 10 years of experience, actual LISD breakdown is 600 out of 1,375 (43.6 percent) teachers have less than 10 years experience. The remaining 56.3 percent have over 10 years and is close enough to our sample results to indicate its validity. On the other hand, our sample showed teachers with over 30 years experience at 6.4 percent while the actual numbers in 1988 indicate 3.4 percent.

TABLE VII  
FAMILY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

Income Amount	Teachers	College Students ----- percent	Seniors
\$10,000 & Under	0.	21.9	20.9
\$10,000-19,999	3.4	17.2	20.6
\$20,000-29,999	32.2	13.1	9.0
\$30,000-39,999	19.9	9.3	5.4
\$40,000-49,999	11.4	5.2	3.8
\$50,000 +	28.4	10.4	2.5
Don't Know	0.8	9.2	36.6
Missing	3.8	3.8	

Over 20 percent of the participating college and high school students are in the poverty category with regard to income. Close to 40 percent of the college students and slightly over 40 percent of the high school students report family incomes of less than \$20,000.



TABLE VIII  
 LIKERT SCALE RATING: ETHNICITY FACTOR--  
 TEACHERS

	Age	Sex	EBTE	EBMOM	EBDAD
V1	-0.2635 ( 226) P=0.000	-0.0790 ( 225) P=0.119	0.0487 ( 226) P=0.233	0.0956 ( 226) P=0.076	0.0656 ( 221) P=0.166
V2	0.0408 ( 226) P=0.271	-0.0911 ( 225) P=0.087	-0.0409 ( 226) P=0.270	-0.0960 ( 226) P=0.075	-0.0700 ( 221) P=0.150
V3	-0.0155 ( 226) P=0.408	0.0209 ( 224) P=0.378	-0.0694 ( 225) P=0.150	-0.0263 ( 225) P=0.347	-0.0627 ( 221) P=0.177
V4	0.1400 ( 226) P=0.015	-0.0510 ( 224) P=0.224	0.0429 ( 225) P=0.261	0.0402 ( 225) P=0.274	0.0137 ( 220) P=0.420
V5	0.0376 ( 225) P=0.288	0.0986 ( 223) P=0.071	0.0394 ( 224) P=0.279	-0.0125 ( 224) P=0.426	0.1032 ( 219) P=0.064

V1 = The teachers I learned the most from were of my racial/ethnic background. V2 = I entered the teaching profession because of one or more teachers' influence. V3 = I never encountered a particular teacher I looked upon as a good role model. V4 = My parents were most influential in my career decision. V5 = I decided to enter the teaching profession because of peer influence.

The top figure is  $r$  = Pearson correlation coefficient; (# of cases); and  $P$  = level of significance.

EBTE = Ethnicity of Teacher; EBMOM = Ethnicity of Mother; EBDAD = Ethnicity of Father.

TABLE IX  
 LIKERT SCALE RATING: ETHNICITY FACTOR--  
 TEACHERS

	BPTE	VRSTE	GRDTE	BPMOM	BPDAD
V1	-0.1125 ( 229) P=0.045	-0.2155 ( 225) P=0.001	-0.1129 ( 228) P=0.044	-0.1128 ( 225) P=0.046	-0.0865 ( 218) P=0.102
V2	0.1715 ( 229) P=0.005	0.0557 ( 225) P=0.203	0.0230 ( 228) P=0.365	0.0853 ( 225) P=0.101	0.1064 ( 218) P=0.059
V3	-0.0166 ( 228) P=0.401	-0.0678 ( 224) P=0.156	0.0306 ( 227) P=0.323	-0.0718 ( 225) P=0.142	0.0250 ( 218) P=0.357
V4	-0.0401 ( 229) P=0.273	0.1155 ( 224) P=0.042	0.0176 ( 227) P=0.396	-0.1413 ( 224) P=0.017	-0.0408 ( 217) P=0.275
V5	-0.0729 ( 228) P=0.136	0.0707 ( 223) P=0.147	-0.0403 ( 226) P=0.274	-0.0827 ( 223) P=0.109	-0.1494 ( 216) P=0.014

From Table DT2, BPTE = Birthplace of the teacher; YRSTE = Years of teaching experience; GRDTE = Grade or subject taught; BPMOM = Birthplace of the mother; BPDAD = Birthplace of the father.

TABLE X  
 LIKERT SCALE RATING: ETHNICITY FACTOR--  
 TEACHERS

	PAR	SPOUSE	SIB	KID	RELIG	INCOME
V1	0.1466 ( 26) P=0.237	0.2198 ( 56) P=0.052	-0.1635 ( 84) P=0.069	0.0832 ( 17) P=0.375	-0.1336 ( 202) P=0.029	-0.0233 ( 277) P=0.364
V2	-0.3214 ( 26) P=0.055	-0.0185 ( 56) P=0.446	0.0692 ( 84) P=0.266	-0.2970 ( 17) P=0.123	0.1215 ( 202) P=0.043	-0.0699 ( 227) P=0.147
V3	0.0249 ( 26) P=0.452	0.1406 ( 56) P=0.152	-0.0808 ( 84) P=0.233	-0.1180 ( 17) P=0.326	0.0848 ( 201) P=0.116	-0.1374 ( 226) P=0.020
V4	0.0752 ( 26) P=0.357	0.1042 ( 55) P=0.225	0.1520 ( 84) P=0.084	0.1176 ( 17) P=0.327	0.0112 ( 202) P=0.437	0.0319 ( 226) P=0.317
V5	-0.0935 ( 26) P=0.325	-0.0053 ( 55) P=0.485	0.0032 ( 83) P=0.489	-0.1436 ( 17) P=0.291	-0.0196 ( 201) P=0.391	0.0717 ( 225) P=0.142

From Table DT3, PAR = Parents in teaching/administration; SPOUSE = Spouse in teaching/administration; SIB = Sibling in teaching/administration; KID = Children in teaching/administration; RELIG = Religion; INCOME = Total family income.

From Table V6 = In teaching minority children, a minority teacher of the same racial/ethnic background is more effective than a teacher of a different one. V7 = While shared racial/ethnic background may provide a common bond, teachers from other racial/ethnic backgrounds can be as effective as the teachers from the same racial/ethnic group as the student. V8 = Students who do well in school are influenced more by their friends than their teachers. V9 = The socioeconomic status of the student is the most important factor in his/her academic achievement. V10 = A student will respond to a highly empathetic teacher regardless of the teacher's racial/ethnic identification. V11 = Parental involvement is the most important factor in a student's academic achievement. V12 = Students depend on good role-model teachers of their own racial/ethnic background to model themselves after. V13 = Teachers of different racial/ethnic groups are just as likely to inspire students to academic achievement as teachers of the same racial/ethnic group. V14 = I was inspired by teachers of different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

TABLE XI  
MEANS DISTRIBUTION -- COLLEGE STUDENTS

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V9:	I found teachers of my own ethnic/racial background to be more understanding than other teachers.
SD=14.3	D=16.6
Mean=3.021	Standard Error=0.066
N=33.5	A=22.7
SA=12.2	
V10:	Teachers of my own racial/ethnic group motivated me to do well more than my parents motivated me.
SD=23.9	D=21.6
Mean=2.618	Standard Error=0.067
N=-31.2	A=13.4
SA=9.0	
V12:	A teacher's attitude, enthusiasm, and ability are more crucial in motivating a student than shared racial/ethnic backgrounds.
SD=4.1	D=3.5
Mean=4.074	Standard Error=0.056
N=14.3	A=36.2
SA=40.8	

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\*Values expressed in Relative Frequency (PCT)

Ethnicity does not appear to play a significant role in the schooling of Mexican Americans relative to the findings in the three groups surveyed in Laredo. The High School Seniors agreed rather strongly that the teachers' attitudes and enthusiasm (Mean=4.258) and interest in their students (Mean=4.313) were more important than their racial/ethnic background. They also felt that good teachers could teach any student regardless of background (Mean=4.469).

The College Students who responded to a like question on the importance of teacher's ethnicity versus ability, attitude, and enthusiasm also agreed on the former (V12). The expressed Mean was

4.074. Similar Teacher responses were noted in Variables 10 and 13. These two variables measured students' responses to teachers who displayed empathy regardless of ethnicity (Mean=3.922) and who inspired students to academic achievement regardless of ethnicity (Mean=4.149).

TABLE XII  
MEANS DISTRIBUTION -- HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

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V9:	A teacher's attitude and enthusiasm is more important to the students than whether or not the teacher is of the same racial/ethnic background.				
	SD=2.0	D=3.1	N=12.0	A=32.3	SA=49.9
		Mean=4.258		Standard Error=0.034	
V11:	It is very important to have teachers of the same racial/ethnic background as students.				
	SD=27.9	D=24.4	N=28.5	A=13.1	SA=5.0
		Mean=2.422		Standard Error=0.043	
V12:	As long as their teachers are interested in their students, their racial/ethnic background is not important.				
	SD=3.1	D=3.4	N=7.3	A=31.4	SA=54.5
		Mean=4.313		Standard Error=0.036	
V13:	Good teachers can teach students from any racial/ethnic background.				
	SD=1.6	D=1.9	N=5.1	A=30.4	SA=60.3
		Mean=4.469		Standard Error=0.030	

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\* Values expressed in Relative Frequency (PCT)

TABLE XIII  
MEANS DISTRIBUTION -- TEACHERS

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V1:	The teachers I learned the most from were of my racial/ethnic background.				
	SD=14.0	D=16.5	N=28.0	A=24.6	SA=16.9
	Mean=3.14		Standard Error=0.083		
V6:	In teaching minority children, a minority teacher of the same racial/ethnic background is more effective than a teacher of a different one.				
	SD=15.7	D=18.2	N=23.3	A=23.7	SA=18.2
	Mean=3.107		Standard Error=0.087		
V7:	While shared racial/ethnic background may provide a common bond, teachers from other racial/ethnic groups can be as effective as the teachers from the same racial/ethnic group as the students'.				
	SD=2.1	D=4.2	N=12.3	A=55.1	SA=25.4
	Mean=3.983		Standard Error=0.056		
V10:	A student will respond to a highly empathic teacher regardless of the teacher's racial/ethnic identification.				
	SD=0.8	D=6.8	N=14.8	A=51.7	SA=23.3
	Mean=3.922		Standard Error=0.057		
V12:	Students depend on good role-model teachers of their own racial/ethnic background to model themselves after.				
	SD=3.0	D=25.4	N=25.8	A=36.0	SA=9.3
	Mean=3.234		Standard Error=0.067		

TABLE XIII (Continued)

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V13: Teachers of different racial/ethnic groups are just as likely to inspire students to academic achievement as teachers of the same racial/ethnic group.

SD=1.3      D=3.0      N=7.2      A=56.4      SA=31.8

Mean=4.149      Standard Error=0.051

V14: I was inspired by teachers of different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

SD=6.4      D=11.9      N=21.2      A=39.0      SA=21.6

Mean=3.576      Standard Error=0.075

---

\*Values Expressed in Relative Frequency (PCT)

Both the college students and the teachers expressed neutrality to the attitude on whether one learned more from the same background teachers (Mean=3.14V1) and whether these teachers were more understanding (V9, Mean=3.021). Teachers were also neutral, overall, in the need for having an ethnic role-model (Mean=3.234).

TABLE XIV  
HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS...CROSS TABS BY  
GENDER AND INCOME

Variable	CrossT	Pearson's R	Significance	Missing Observations
V13	Gender	-0.06409	0.0466	54
	Income	0.09969	0.0037	18
V14	Gender	0.00713	0.4262	58
	Income	0.05724	0.0626	22
V15	Gender	0.09566	0.0061	56
	Income	-0.09542	0.0052	20
V16	Gender	-0.07833	0.0198	51
	Income	0.10827	0.0018	16

In V13 which states that the teacher's attitude and enthusiasm is more important than their ethnicity (as shared with the student) the negative R indicates that for the females this is highly significant. It is also highly significant for the higher income group (positive R). V14 (student's attitude toward himself more important than teacher's attitude) only shows significance with the students in the higher income bracket. V15 (it is important to have same ethnic background teachers) both the males (positive R) and the lower income students show a very high level of significance. V16 (a teacher's interest is more important than her/his ethnicity) shows a high level of significance for females (negative R) and high income groups.



TABLE XV  
TEACHERS...CROSS TABS BY GENDER AND INCOME

Variable	CrossT	Pearson's R	Significance	Missing Observations
V22	Gender	0.11463	0.0438	13
	Income	-0.06406	0.1689	13
V23	Gender	-0.06970	0.1501	13
	Income	0.06344	0.1717	13
V26	Gender	-0.02887	0.3355	17
	Income	0.07594	0.1305	15
V28	Gender	0.05271	0.2126	12
	Income	-0.06540	0.1639	12
V29	Gender	-0.05802	0.1937	12
	Income	-0.04248	0.2626	13

V22 (minority teachers are more effective for minority students) cross tabulations do not allow for any significant conclusions as the gender shows a high R value and the income shows a level of significance which is also too high. V23 (other ethnic teachers can be just as effective), V26 (empathy of teacher more important than ethnicity), V28 (students depend on ethnic role models), and V29 (different ethnic teachers also inspire) also present results whose levels of significance are too high. The females (negative R) were consistent in their responses to other variables being more important than ethnicity. The lower income teachers' (negative R) results in V22, V28, and V29 had too high a level of significance to be meaningful.

TABLE XVI  
COLLEGE STUDENTS...CROSS TABS BY  
GENDER AND INCOME

Variable	CrossT	Pearson's R	Significance	Missing Observations
V13	Gender	0.00835	0.4402	16
	Income	-0.03590	0.2588	16
V15	Gender	0.03089	0.2883	14
	Income	-0.03083	0.2887	14
V16	Gender	-0.03121	0.2870	16
	Income	0.07856	0.0785	17

V13 (ethnic teachers more understanding), V15 (teacher not effective if there is no help from home), and V16 in this survey (attitude and ability of teacher more important) show only one result (V16, Income) of some significance. The higher income College Students tended to agree more with V16.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if three different school populations, teachers, high school seniors, and college students, felt that the racial/ethnic background of a teacher was a contributing factor to the academic achievement of the student. Within the study the objectives were to determine whether there was any significant difference between (1) the teachers' attitudes and the students' attitudes, (2) between the males and the females in the study, (3) and between the different socioeconomic groups. The study also gathered data on parental influence and the influence of peers.

#### Conclusion

The relative frequencies computed for the variables in which the ethnicity factor was present in all three groups indicated that, overall, the three distinct groups in the school population didn't view the ethnicity of a teacher as a major factor in the academic achievement of a student. This leads us to a state that  $H_1$ , which stated that there would be no significant difference between the groups, is therefore, not rejected.

A strong negative correlation was found in variable one. This means the younger teachers (as internally validated by the years of teaching) of Hispanic background and teaching in the elementary grades felt they learned more from teachers of their same background. This may be explained by the fact that the majority of the teachers in Laredo are Hispanic (Mexican American). In variable six we found three negative correlations with a  $p$  of 0.000. These three variables were the birthplaces of the teacher, the mother, and the father (Mexico or the border). In variable seven, teachers born away from the border showed a positive correlation, believing that other background teachers can be as effective as the same ethnicity. Variable ten showed a strong positive correlation with age and years of teaching. The older teachers, with more years of teaching experience (another example of internal validity) agreed that a student will respond to a teacher who displays empathy regardless of the teacher's racial/ethnic background.

The older teachers with more years of experience were taught by a high number of Anglo teachers and therefore could make a more accurate assessment of whether ethnicity did or did not play a critical role in their achievement. In another study of eight educators, conducted by this researcher, none of the eight attributed importance to the ethnic factor of the teacher in their achievement. These educators all had over 25 years of experience each and had been taught by a majority of Anglo teachers (Hodgden, 1990).

The Cross Tabulation with Gender and Income and the Ethnic variables showed some interesting results in the High School Students. There was a significant difference in V15 (important to have same ethnic teacher) for males and lower income students. Other teacher qualities

(V13, V14, and V16) were more significant to females and higher income students. There may be several explanations for this. Male students may feel the need to have a "common" identification because they are being taught primarily by female teachers. The lower income group may also be the group who has language difficulties, has a sense of culture conflict, and can accommodate less. These results, then, indicate that we should reject  $H_2$  and  $H_4$ . These results, then, indicate that we should reject  $H_2$  (which stated that there would be no significant relationship between the male and female students' evaluation of the importance of a teacher's ethnicity) but only so far as it concerns the High School Seniors. We should also reject  $H_4$  for the same group. This hypotheses stated that there would be no significant relationship between the social classes' evaluation of the importance of a teacher's ethnicity and a student's academic achievement.

Results from the Cross Tabulations in the Teachers' Survey indicate that we fail to reject  $H_3$  and  $H_4$ . Results from the Cross Tabulations in the Teachers' Survey indicate that we fail to reject  $H_3$  (which stated that there would be no significant difference between the male and female teachers evaluation of the importance of a teacher's ethnicity and a student's academic achievement) and  $H_4$  (there will be no significant relationship between the different social classes' evaluation of the teacher's ethnicity and the student's academic achievement). No significant relationship was obtained between the male and female teachers and between the different levels of income of teachers with regard to the ethnic variables.

In the College Student Survey the only significant data show higher income students indicated teacher qualities other than ethnicity

were more important. There were no significant gender differences. While both groups of students surveyed (high school and college) showed almost identical income distribution, it may be that male collegians feel more secure and may have a higher ratio of male teachers at the college. Thus, we fail to reject  $H_2$  and reject  $H_4$  for this particular group.

In the college student's responses regarding the ethnicity of the teacher, there was negative correlation (V9) in the high school graduated from. This meant that the Cigarroa and Martin graduates felt the same ethnic teachers were more understanding. However, they may not have had a strong basis for comparison as most of their teachers were Mexican American. In variable twelve we found positive correlation in the declared major and income of family. Students whose families are in the higher income bracket and who are majoring in business, law or engineering agree that there are other qualities of the teacher, besides ethnicity which motivate a student more. This would support data which shows that teachers promote middle class values and these middle class students would respond to them regardless of the teacher's ethnicity.

In other results not directly related to ethnicity, college students who graduated from Martin and Cigarroa are attending college, but not because of peer pressure, while United graduates and "other" are responding to peer pressure. Teachers showed a positive correlation in the gender variable and the ethnicity of the teacher variable. This means that the male teachers who were Hispanic were influenced by peer pressure to enter the teaching profession.

Both teachers and students felt that parental influence was very important. In the Hispanic culture this is especially true as pointed

out by Schaefer (1988). The results of the Senior survey indicate that close to 80 percent are interested in attending college. This is in spite of the fact that around 40 percent are in the less than \$20,000 family income. In this case, income and economic achievement do not fit the description of the "Culture of Poverty" (Lewis, 1966).

The Mexican American High School Seniors agree that parental influence is important to their achievement, as are caring teachers, and indicate that peer pressure is not an important factor in their schooling. These may be cultural characteristics or they may result from the type of community in which they have grown up. Another possible explanation may be that those students who respond more readily to peer pressure have already dropped out of school. It is possible that if the support system is absent at home the students may simply follow their peers' actions and leave school altogether.

#### Recommendations

In view of these findings in the study, there is a need for further research in the area. QEM's (1990) recommendations for improving minority education can provide an excellent beginning to achieve this goal. Among their recommendations are a closer relationship among parents of minority students and schools, holding higher expectations for minority students, being knowledgeable of the culture and language of all children in the classroom, and the recruiting of minority teachers.

It is the last recommendation I take issue with. I strongly believe, both on the basis of this study and a previous one (Hodgden, 1990) that the ethnicity of the teacher is not paramount if the

minorities in the classroom are being taught by teachers who care, who nurture, who are interested in the students as human beings, and whose attitudes towards children are not affected by exterior make-up of the children. On the other hand, I would strongly recommend that minority teachers be hired to teach in schools where the mainstream culture predominates (over 70 percent). Students of the dominant culture are not being taught by minorities and experience no positive relationships with minorities who are talented in academic fields. This lack of contact fosters stereotypes about minorities which are hard to overcome. The researcher taught at a large midwestern institution in the area of teacher preparation. The majority of the students were White females. Of 140 students only 23 had been taught by minority teachers. Also, out of that 140 total, 29 were males. I taught no minority females and only four minority males.

Stereotypes are already ingrained at the college level. The time to teach students that all children are of equal value is at a very young age. Mainstream culture teachers could work with minorities then. Programs, financed by government or private foundations could recruit high school graduates who were interested in the teaching profession into an apprentice-type program for one or two years, then pay their way through college. The minorities could work in the mainstream culture and vice-versa.

Another type of program could use retired minority teachers two to three months out of the year. They could hold classes in their field of expertise in the mainstream culture schools, or they could conduct seminars for students and teachers. The possibilities are endless and could acquaint the majority population with minorities who are their



colleagues, or who could be their teachers. In the study of teachers I conducted previously (Hodgden, 1990), only one of the teachers, out of seven, expressed no interest in a similar type program.

As QEM (1990) states:

To provide educational excellence for all is not simply to address problems faced by minorities: our destiny as a great nation hangs in the balance (p. 77).

This problem, however, must not be used to further divide the different races and ethnic groups. A national mandate (as expressed by Secretary of Education Cavazos) that only ethnics can teach ethnics serves to emphasize differences. While the ethnic teachers may feel pride that perhaps they are better at something than their White colleagues, will these same teachers be the scapegoats five or so years down the road when achievement rates do not improve (as they won't because of the basic structure of the system)? The national "leadership" can have more statistical proof that even "they" cannot solve "their" own problems.

Richard Rodriguez makes an eloquent statement about the kinds of teachers all students need (1982):

To improve the education of disadvantage students requires social changes which educational institutions alone cannot make, of course. Parents of such students need jobs and good housing; the students themselves need to grow up with three meals a day, in safe neighborhoods. But disadvantaged students also require good teachers. Good teachers--not fancy electronic gadgets, to teach them to read and write. Teachers who are not overwhelmed; teachers with sufficient time to devote to individual students; to inspire. In the late sixties, civil rights activists might have harnessed the great idealism that the southern movement inspired in Americans. They might have called on teachers, might have demanded some kind of literacy campaign for children of the poor--white and non-white at the earliest level of learning. But the opportunity passed (p. 152).

The opportunity now is to unite teachers, not to divide them; it is to unite the nation, not to fragment it more. School achievement and a teacher's contribution should have a national consensus, not an ethnic bias. As Carl Rogers stated:

The facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner (p. 305) (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1989, p. 305).

Further studies could be conducted in other predominantly minority areas (regardless of race or ethnicity) to explore the same criteria in this study and to see if this is just an isolated case due to historical development, geographic isolation, or other aspects of bicultural formation. Students, because they are the most concerned, need to be asked what it is about schooling that determines whether or not they become interested in the experience. School systems and society can gain from this information by using the knowledge to restructure, or reconceptualize, the way in which we school our youth.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT USED IN TEACHER STUDY

## TEACHER SURVEY

I am conducting an opinion survey and respectfully request your assistance in completing this. There are no right or wrong answers. I only ask you to answer the questions below to the best of your ability. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation.

If you STRONGLY AGREE with the statements listed below circle number (5); if you AGREE circle number (4); if you neither AGREE nor DISAGREE circle number (3); if you DISAGREE circle number (2); and if you STRONGLY DISAGREE circle number (1).

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I. Your overall educational experience.					
A. The teachers I learned the most from were of my racial/ethnic background.	1	2	3	4	5
B. I entered the teaching profession because of one or more teachers' influence.	1	2	3	4	5
C. I never encountered a particular teacher I looked upon as a good role model.	1	2	3	4	5
D. My parents were most influential in my career decision.	1	2	3	4	5
D. I decided to enter the teaching profession because of peer influence.	1	2	3	4	5

If you circled (4) or (5) on part B, was that teacher(s) of your own ethnic/racial group? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Gender: (1) Male \_\_\_ (2) Female \_\_\_  
 Subject (grade) taught \_\_\_\_\_

## II. In Your Opinion

A. In teaching minority children, a minority teacher of the same racial/ethnic background is more effective than a teacher of a different one.	1	2	3	4	5
B. While shared racial/ethnic backgrounds may provide a common bond, teachers from other racial/ethnic groups can be as effective as the teachers from the same racial/ethnic group as the students'.	1	2	3	4	5

	SD	D	N	A	SA
C. Students who do well in school are influenced more by their friends than their teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
D. The socioeconomic status of the student is the most important factor in his/her academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
E. A student will respond to a highly empathetic teacher regardless of the teacher's racial/ethnic identification.	1	2	3	4	5
F. Parental involvement is the most important factor in a student's academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
G. Students depend on good role-model teachers of their own racial/ethnic background to model themselves after.	1	2	3	4	5
H. Teachers of different racial/ethnic groups are just as likely to inspire students to academic achievement as teachers of the same racial/ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
I. I was inspired by teachers of different racial/ethnic backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5

THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IS FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE FILL IN THE SPACE PROVIDED OR CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST APPLIES.

- (A) Age \_\_\_\_ (B) Gender: 1 Female 2 Male
- (C) Your racial/ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_
- (D) Mother's racial/ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_ (E) Father's \_\_\_\_\_
- (F) Your place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ (G) Years taught \_\_\_\_\_
- (H) Subjects or grades currently teaching \_\_\_\_\_
- (I) Mother's place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ (J) Father's \_\_\_\_\_
- (K) Members of your family in teaching/administration: Parents \_\_\_\_  
Spouse \_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_



- (L) Religious affiliation (If no religion is claimed, please leave blank.) \_\_\_\_\_
- (M) Family income (Please circle the number that best describes your income).
- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Under \$10,000 yearly   | (4) 30,000 to 39,000 yearly |
| (2) 10,000 to 19,999 yearly | (5) 40,000 to 49,000 yearly |
| (3) 20,000 to 29,000 yearly | (6) 50,000 or over yearly   |
|                             | (7) Do not know             |

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT USED IN COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY

## COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY

I am conducting an opinion survey and respectfully request your assistance in completing this survey. This is a confidential opinion survey so there are no right or wrong answers. I only ask you to answer the questions below to the best of your ability. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation.

If you STRONGLY AGREE with the statements listed below circle number (5); if you AGREE circle number (4); if you neither AGREE nor DISAGREE circle number (3); if you DISAGREE circle number (2); and if you STRONGLY DISAGREE circle number (1).

	SD	D	N	A	SA
<b>I. College Experience</b>					
A. The main reason I am going to college is because my parents wanted me to.	1	2	3	4	5
B. I want to achieve economic success.	1	2	3	4	5
C. I am going to college because my friends are going.	1	2	3	4	5
D. A college education will allow me to do something worthwhile with my life.	1	2	3	4	5
E. I was well prepared academically to attend college.	1	2	3	4	5
F. I intend to live in Laredo after I graduate from college.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>II. Previous Educational Experience</b>					
A. My overall K-12 education was excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
B. My teachers expected me to do well in school	1	2	3	4	5
C. I found teachers of my own ethnic/racial background to be more understanding than other teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
D. Teachers of my own racial/ethnic group motivated me to do well more than my parents motivated me.	1	2	3	4	5

	SD	D	N	A	SA
E. Overall, a teacher has no effect on the student who receives no encouragement from the home.	1	2	3	4	5
F. A teacher's attitude, enthusiasm, and ability are more crucial in motivating a student than shared racial/ethnic backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
G. A student's academic achievement is influenced more by his/her parents than by the teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
H. I had at least one teacher in school I would classify as outstanding.	1	2	3	4	5

If you circled (4) or (5) on statement H (above):

What racial/ethnic background were they \_\_\_\_\_

They were MALE \_\_\_\_\_ FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

What subject (grade) did they teach \_\_\_\_\_

(If you are describing more than one teacher, please specify.)

THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IS FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE FILL IN THE SPACE PROVIDED OR CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST APPLIES.

(A) Age \_\_\_\_\_ (B) Gender: 1 Male 2 Female (C) Major \_\_\_\_\_

(D) Your place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

(E) Mother's place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ (F) Father's \_\_\_\_\_

(G) High school you graduated from \_\_\_\_\_

(H) Your racial/ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_

(I) Mother's R/E group \_\_\_\_\_ (J) Father's R/E \_\_\_\_\_

(K) Family college education (2 or more years). Please check ( )  
One or both parents \_\_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_\_

(L) Religious affiliation (if none claimed, please leave blank)  
\_\_\_\_\_

(M) Family income (Please circle number that best applies to your income)

(1) Under \$10,000 yearly (4) 30,000 to 39,000 yearly

(2) 10,000 to 19,999 yearly (5) 40,000 to 49,000 yearly

(3) 20,000 to 29,000 yearly (6) 50,000 or over yearly

(7) Don't know

APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENT USED IN HIGH SCHOOL

SENIORS SURVEY

## HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS SURVEY

I am conducting an opinion survey and respectfully request your assistance. As this is an opinion survey, there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation.

If you STRONGLY AGREE with the statements listed below circle number (5); if you AGREE circle number (4); if you neither AGREE nor DISAGREE circle number (3); if you DISAGREE circle number (2); and if you STRONGLY DISAGREE circle number (1).

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I. Overall educational experience.					
A. My public school education has been excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
B. I am thinking about dropping out of school.	1	2	3	4	5
C. I feel I have been successful in school.	1	2	3	4	5
D. My parents/guardians are pleased with my academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
E. I am planning on going to college after graduation.	1	2	3	4	5
II. Parental/Guardian Influence.					
A. Parents'/guardians' interest in their children's schooling is more important than the teachers' interest.	1	2	3	4	5
B. My parents/guardians do not consider school important to my economic future.	1	2	3	4	5
C. My parents/guardians inspired me to stay in school.	1	2	3	4	5
III. Teachers in your educational experience.					
A. A teacher's attitude and enthusiasm is more important to the students than whether or not the teacher is of the same racial/ethnic background.	1	2	3	4	5

	SD	D	N	A	SA
B. A student's attitude toward himself is more important than the teacher's attitude towards the student.	1	2	3	4	5
C. It is very important to have teachers of the same racial/ethnic background as students.	1	2	3	4	5
D. As long as their teachers are interested in their students, their racial/ethnic background is not important.	1	2	3	4	5
E. Good teachers can teach students from any racial/ethnic background.	1	2	3	4	5
F. I had at least one teacher in school whom I considered outstanding.	1	2	3	4	5
G. My teachers have encouraged me to achieve in school more than my parents/guardians have.	1	2	3	4	5
H. Parents/guardians develop a child's attitude towards learning (and school) before the child begins school.	1	2	3	4	5

If you circled (4) or (5) on letter F, please answer the following:

Number of teachers you would classify as outstanding \_\_\_\_  
 Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_ Ethnic Group \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subject-Grade Taught \_\_\_\_\_

THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IS FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE FILL IN THE SPACE PROVIDED OR CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST APPLIES.

- (A) Age \_\_\_\_ (B) Gender: 1 Female 2 Male
- (C) Your racial/ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_
- (D) Mother's racial/ethnic \_\_\_\_\_ (E) Father's \_\_\_\_\_
- (F) Mother's occupation \_\_\_\_\_ (G) Father's \_\_\_\_\_
- (H) Your place of birth \_\_\_\_\_
- (I) Mother's place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ (J) Father's \_\_\_\_\_

- (J) Plans after graduation \_\_\_\_\_ (if college, please state major) \_\_\_\_\_
- (K) Religious affiliation: (If you are not affiliated with a specific religion, please state the name of the church you attend most often. If no religion is claimed, please leave blank.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (M) Family income: (Please circle the number that best describes your income. If you receive parental support, circle your parents' income.)
- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Under \$10,000 yearly   | (4) 30,000 to 39,000 yearly |
| 2) 10,000 to 19,999 yearly | (5) 40,000 to 49,000 yearly |
| 3) 20,000 to 29,000 yearly | (6) 50,000 or over yearly   |
|                            | (7) Don't know              |



APPENDIX D

CODE FOR TEACHER VARIABLES

## TEACHER'S SURVEY

## CODES FOR VARIABLES

- V1-V4 Identification number (5001-5236)
- V5 (IA) The teachers I learned the most from were of my racial background
- V6 (IB) I entered the teaching profession because of one or more teacher's influence
- V7 (IC) I never encountered a particular teacher I looked upon as a good role model
- V8 (ID) My parents were most influential in my career decision
- V9 (IE) I decided to enter the teaching profession because of peer influence
- V10 Role model teacher was White
- V11 Hispanic
- V12 Native American
- V13 Oriental
- V14 Black
- V15 Teacher was (1) Male
- V16 Teacher was Female
- V17 Teacher taught elementary
- V18 Junior High Social Studies/English/Foreign Language
- V19 Junior High Science/Math
- V20 High School Social Studies/English/Foreign Language
- V21 High School Science/Math
- V22 (IIA) In teaching minority children, a minority teacher of the same ethnic/racial background is more effective than a teacher of a different one
- V23 (IIB) While shared racial/ethnic background may provide a common bond, teachers from other racial/ethnic groups can be as effective as the teachers from the same racial/ethnic group as the students

- V24 (IIC) Students who do well in school are influenced more by their friends than their teachers
- V25 (IID) The socioeconomic status of the student is the most important factor in his/her academic achievement
- V26 (IIE) A student will respond to a highly empathetic teacher regardless of the teacher's racial/ethnic identification
- V27 (IIF) Parental involvement is the most important factor in a student's academic achievement
- V28 (IIG) Students depend on good role-model teachers of their own racial/ethnic background to model themselves after
- V29 (IIH) Teachers of different racial/ethnic groups are just as likely to inspire students to academic achievement as teachers of the same racial/ethnic group
- V30 (III) I was inspired by teachers of different racial/ethnic backgrounds
- V31 Age of respondent: 22-26=1, 27-31=2, 32-36=3, 37-41=4, 42-46=5, 47-51=6, 52-56=7, 57-61=8, 62+=9
- V32 Gender: 1=Female, 2=Male
- V33 Respondent racial/ethnic group: 1=White, 2=Hispanic, 3=Native American, 4=Oriental, 5=Black
- V34 Mother's racial/ethnic group: Same as above
- V35 Father's racial/ethnic group: Same as above
- V36 Place of birth of respondent
- V37 1=Mexico, 2=Texas, 3=Southwest, 4=West, 5=Other U.S., 6=Other
- V38 Years taught: 1=1, 2=1-4, 3=5-9, 4=10-14, 5=15-19, 6=20-24, 7=25-29, 8=30+
- V39 Subject or Grade taught: 1=Elementary, 2=Junior High Social Science/English/Foreign Language, 3=Junior High Science/Math, 4=High School Social Science/English/Foreign Language, 5=High School Science/Math
- V40 Mother's Place of Birth: 1=Mexico, 2=Texas, 3=Southwest, 4=West, 5=Other U.S., 6=Other
- V41 Father's Place of Birth: Same as above
- V42 Members of Family in Teacher/Administration: Parents=1, Spouse=2, Siblings=3, Children=4

- V43 Religion: 1=Catholic, 2=Jewish, 3=Mainline Protestant,  
4=Mormon, 5=Fundamentalist
- V44 Family Income: 1=under \$10,000 yearly, 2=under \$20,000,  
3=under \$30,000, 4=under \$40,000, 5=under \$50,000, 6=over  
\$50,000, 7=Don't Know (zero value computation)

APPENDIX E

CODE FOR COLLEGE STUDENT VARIABLES

## COLLEGE STUDENTS' SURVEY

## CODE FOR VARIABLES

- V1-V4 Identification number (6001-6343)
- V5 (IA) The main reason I am going to college is because my parents want me to
- V6 (IB) I want to achieve economic success
- V7 (IC) I am going to college because my friends are going
- V8 (ID) A college education will allow me to do something worthwhile with my life
- V9 (IE) I was well prepared academically to attend college
- V10 (IF) I intend to live in Laredo after I graduate from college
- V11 (IIA) My overall K-12 education was excellent
- V12 (IIB) My teachers expected me to do well in school
- V13 (IIC) I found teachers of my own ethnic/racial background to be more understanding than other teachers
- V14 (IID) Teachers of my own racial/ethnic group motivated me to do well more than my parents motivated me
- V15 (IIE) Overall, a teacher has no effect on the student who receives no encouragement from the home
- V16 (IIF) A teacher's attitude, enthusiasm, and ability are more crucial in motivating a student than shared racial/ethnic backgrounds
- V17 (IIG) A student's academic achievement is influenced more by his/her parents than by the teachers
- V18 (IIH) I had at least one teacher in school I would classify as outstanding
- V19 (V3HA) Racial/ethnic teacher White
- V20 (V3HB) Hispanic
- V21 (V3HC) Native American
- V22 (V3HD) Oriental
- V23 (V3HE) Black

- V24 Male Teacher (1)
- V25 Female Teacher (2)
- V26 Teacher-Elementary
- V27 Junior High Social Studies, English, Foreign Language
- V28 Junior High Science/Math
- V29 High School Social Studies, English, Foreign Language
- V30 High School Science/Math
- V31 Age (1) 17, (2) 18-19, (3) 20-21, (4) 22-23, (5) 24-25,  
(6) 26+
- V32 Gender--Female=1, Male=2
- V33 Major: (1) Humanities, (2) Social Science, (3) Art,  
(4) Nurse, Therapist, (5) Education, (6) Science/Medicine,  
(7) Business Law, (8) Agriculture; Law Enforcement
- V34 Place of Birth: Mexico=1, Texas=2, Southwest=3, West=4,  
Rest of U.S.=5, Other=6
- V35 High School graduated from: Cigarroa=1, Martin=2, Nixon=3,  
St. Augustine=4, United=5, Other=6
- V36 Ethnic Group of Student: White=1, Hispanic=2, Native  
American=3, Oriental=4, Black=5
- V37 Ethnic Group of Mother: Same as above
- V38 Ethnic Group of Father: Same as above
- V39 Family Members with two or more years of college:  
Parents=1, Siblings=2, Spouse=3, Children=4
- V40 Religion: Catholic=1, Jewish=2, Mainline Protestant=3,  
Mormon=4, Fundamentalist=5
- V41 Income: Under \$10,000=1, Under \$20,000=2, Under \$30,000=3,  
Under \$40,000=4, Under \$50,000=5, Over \$50,000=6, Don't  
Know=7 (taken as zero value in computations)

APPENDIX F

CODE FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS VARIABLES



## HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS' SURVEY

## CODE FOR VARIABLES

V1-V4	Identification number (0001-0741)
V5 (IA)	My public school education has been excellent
V6 (IB)	I am thinking of dropping out of school
V7 (IC)	I feel I have been successful in school
V8 (ID)	My parents/guardians are pleased with my academic achievement
V9 (IE)	I am planning on going to college after graduation
V10 (IIA)	Parents' Guardians' interest in their children's schooling is most important than the teachers' interest
V11 (IIB)	My parents/guardians do not consider school important to my economic future
V12 (IIC)	My parents/guardians inspired me to stay in school
V13 (IIIA)	A teacher's attitude and enthusiasm is more important to the students than whether or not the teacher is of the same racial/ethnic background
V14 (IIIB)	A student's attitude toward himself is more important than the teacher's attitude toward the student
V15 (IIIC)	It is important to have teachers of the same racial/ethnic background as the student
V16 (IIID)	As long as their teachers are interested in their students, their racial/ethnic background isn't important
V17 (IIIE)	Good teachers can teach students from any racial/ethnic background
V18 (IIIF)	I had at least one teacher in school whom I considered outstanding
V19 (IIIG)	My teachers have encouraged me to achieve in school more than my parents/guardians have
V20 (IIIH)	Parents/guardians develop a child's attitude towards learning (and school) before the child begins school
V21-22	Number of outstanding teachers
V23	Male teachers

- V24 Female teachers
- V25 Ethnic/racial group of teachers--White
- V26 Hispanic
- V27 Native American
- V28 Oriental
- V29 Black
- V30 Subject/grade taught--Elementary
- V31 Junior High Social Science/English/Foreign Language
- V32 Junior High Science/Math
- V33 High School Social Science/English/Foreign Language
- V34 High School Science/Math
- V35 Respondent's age: 1=15 and below, 2=16-17, 3=18+
- V36 Respondent's gender: Female=1, Male=2
- V37 Respondent's Racial/Ethnic Group: 1=White, 2=Hispanic, 3=Native American, 4=Oriental, 5=Black
- V38 Mother's Racial/Ethnic Group: same as above
- V39 Father's Racial/Ethnic Group: same as above
- V40 Mother's Occupation:: 1=Professional, 2=Semi-professional, 3=Own Business, 4=Service, 5=Industry, 6=Law/Military, 7=Agriculture, 8=Housewife
- V41 Father's Occupation: same as above
- V42 Student's Place of Birth: 1=Mexico, 2=Texas, 3=Southwest, 4=West, 5=Other U.S., 6=Other
- V43 Mother's Place of Birth: same as above
- V44 Father's Place of Birth: same as above
- V45 Student's Plans after Graduation: 1=Work Force, 2=Military, 3=College
- V46 Student's College Major: 1=Humanities, 2=Social Science, 3=Art, 4=Nurse/Therapist, 5=Education, 6=Science/Medicine, 7=Business/Law, 8=Agriculture/Law Enforcement

- V47 Religion: 1=Catholic, 2=Jewish, 3=Mainline Protestant,  
4=Mormon, 5=Fundamentalist
- V48 Income: 1=less than \$10,000, 2=less than \$20,000, 3=less  
than \$30,000, 4=less than \$40,000, 5=less than \$50,000,  
6=more than \$50,000, 7=Don't Know (assigned a zero value in  
computations)

VITA

Aurora Sanchez Hodgden

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE IMPORTANCE OF A TEACHER'S RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND AS A FACTOR IN A STUDENT'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY OF MEXICAN AMERICANS IN LAREDO, TEXAS

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Laredo, Texas, September 26, 1939, the daughter of Arturo and Maria Trevino Sanchez.

Education: Graduated from Martin High School, Laredo, Texas, in May, 1957; received Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Texas Women's University in 1961; received Master of Natural Science Degree from Oklahoma State University in August 1965; received Master of Education Degree in International Relations from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in August 1987; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Oklahoma State University in December, 1990.

Professional Experience: Taught Biology and Chemistry at Martin High School, Laredo, Texas from 1961-1964; taught Biology II and Biology I at Martin High School, Laredo, Texas, from 1965-1966; taught Biology I at Cushing High School, Cushing, Oklahoma from 1966-1967; taught Physical Science at Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas in 1967; taught Biology I at Martin High School and Nixon High School from 1968-1972; taught grades 7-12 Science at Ringwood High School, Ringwood, Oklahoma, from 1976-1980; taught Political Science at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma from 1987-1988; served as a graduate assistant in Curriculum from 1989-1990.