

School culture and the affective learning needs of Latino Long-term English Learners



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Outline



- Why research Latino LTEL?
- Purpose of the study
- Research questions and methods
- Participants
- Findings
- Implications
- Conclusions
- Discussion/questions

Who are Latino LTEL?



- Born in the US or started elementary school in US
- Appear to be native speakers of English
- Struggle academically
- In ELD programs for longer than 7 years, and are no longer progressing towards English proficiency
- Have accumulated major educational gaps in their elementary school and/or middle school years

Statement of the problem



- English Learners (ELs) are the fastest growing sector of student population in the United States (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2012).
- By the time English Learners make it to high school, the majority (59 percent) are Long Term ELs (Goldschmidt, 2005; Harklau, 1999; Olsen, 2010).

Justification



- It is projected that by the year 2030 the total EL population in US schools will exceed 40 percent
- A majority of EL students are not developing academic proficiency and are often either graduating from high school unprepared for college or dropping out without receiving a high school diploma
- In 2008, the high school dropout rate for Latino youth, who comprise the majority of ELs throughout the US, was 17.6 percent.

US dropout rates



Ethnicity	Dropout rate
White	5.2
Black	9.3
Hispanic	17.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.4
Native American	13.2

Latino dropout rates



Latino Group	Percent who dropout
All Latinos in US schools	17.6
Immigrant Latinos	31.3
First generation Latinos	11.8
2 nd generation Latinos	10.2

My approach to LTEL research



- The majority of research regarding LTEL focus on ELD programs and seek to find ways to improve program content and delivery (Faltis & Coulter, 2008; Harklau, ;Olsen, 2010)
- This research examines another side of the issue- the role of school culture and school climate as related to the academic acculturation and success of Latino LTEL.

Definition: Acculturation



- Acculturation refers to the varying degrees of adaptation and integration that occur when two cultures are in long-term contact; historically it also recognizes the reciprocal nature of cultural change when two or more culture groups come into contact (Berry, 1997; 2003).
- Not only do students need to acculturate; schools also need to acculturate and adapt to the changing demographics of their student population (Berry, 1997; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Ernst, 1997; Roland, 2008).

Definition: Affective needs



- Elements of students' affective needs include: sense of belonging, a positive sense of themselves as learners, and feeling represented in the school's culture (Collier, 1995; Combs, 1982; England, 1982; Faircloth, 2009; Krashen, 1982; Lalas & Valle, 2007; Volet, 1997).
- Prior Research indicates positive school affect, such as a sense of belonging, feeling valued and cared for, positively impacts students' motivation, engagement and achievement (Combs, 1982; Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Faircloth, 2009; Milner 2002; Osterman, 2000; Volet, 1997).

Purpose of study



- To seek, through interviews with recently graduated LLTEL, understandings of the ways in which LLTELS felt constrained or supported in their academic acculturation.
- Through these understandings, educators can address the affective learning needs of Latino LTEL within the culture of the schools they attend, and thereby more ably assist Latino LTEL learners to successfully acculturate.

Research questions



- 1. What are recently graduated Latino LTEL perspectives of how their high school supported or did not support their academic acculturation while in high school?
- 2. What are recently graduated Latino LTEL perspectives of how their high school supported or did not support their affective learning needs?

Why I chose a qualitative methodology



- Prior research on LTEL, and ethnic-minority students, has largely neglected how LTEL perceive and interpret their relationships with their mainstream teachers and peers (Li, 2010, p. 122).

Participants and data gathering



- 10 recently graduated from high school Latino former LTEL
- Hour –long interviews
- employed open coding techniques to look for patterns and trends in students perceptions and experiences

Findings: this section is organized according
into the following sections

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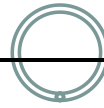
- characteristics of participants
- themes in the data
- participant recommendations
- summary of findings.

Participants' profiles




Name	Birthplace	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Self-identified economic class
Moises	Mexico	20	Hispanic	m	Lower middle
Leon	US	20	Hispanic-American	m	Working middle
Nayeli	US	20	Hispanic	f	Working
Eduardo	Mexico	21	Hispanic	m	Lower middle
Selene	Mexico	20	Hispanic	f	Lower
Isabela	Mexico	22	Latina	f	Poor- lower middle
Anna	Mexico	19	Hispanic	f	Working
Ariana	US	20	Mexican- America	f	Medium
Andrea	Mexico	21	Latino	f	Working middle
Julius	US	20	Latino	m	Working

Participants' education background



Name	Years schooled in Spanish	Age Spoke English	Years in US schools	College	Parent's education	Home language
Moises	3	8	10	y	hs grad	Spanish
Leon	na	3	13	y	ms	Spanish
Nayeli	na	6	12	y	6th gr	Spanish
Eduardo	2.5	8	10	y	8 gr/ 9th	Spanish
Selene	3	8	10	n	hs grad	Spanish
Isabela	5	11	7	y	ms/ tech	Spanish
Anna	2	7	11	y	ms/ elem	Spanish
Ariana	na	4	13	y	ms/ elem	SpanGLISH
Andrea	1	4	13	y	ms	Spanish
Julius	na	5.5	12	y	ms/elem	SpanGLISH

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Moises	3	8	10	y	hs grad	Spanish
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Anna	2	7	11	y	ms/ elem	Spanish
Ariana	na	4	13	y	ms/ elem	Spanglish
Andrea	1	4	13	y	ms	Spanish
Julius	na	5.5	12	y	ms/elem	Spanglish

Summary: Participant's characteristics



Characteristic	n
US Born	4
Mexican Born	6
Males	4
females	6
2 or more years of college	2
1-2 years of college	3
Less than 1 year of college	4
Home language Spanish	10

Coding the interviews



- Coding is a process of analysis, where one looks for patterns and common ideas, “you use classification reasoning plus your tacit and intuitive senses to determine which data look alike and feel alike when grouping them together” (Saldana, 2009, p. 9).

Code families



Acculturation: adapting to new culture groups and supporting/not supporting Latino students' adaptation

Codes: culture lack of connection to school culture; lack of connection to teachers;

Identity: Latino/ELD: Self-perceptions as a learner developed through school interactions.

Codes: Latino culture not represented; -perception of Latinos; +Latino culture represented; adult

Affective needs: sense of belonging, feeling good about themselves as learners, and feeling represented in the school's culture.

Code eld support; perception that help not equally available to Latinos; relationship at school

Academic support: School provided/didn't provide access to resources that helped LTEL navigate school system,

Codes: academics and culture lack of connection to teachers; + ELD support;

Findings: Affective needs



- All of the participants mentioned their ELD teachers and classes were resources for their sense of belonging, acceptance, inclusion and validation
- However, nine of the 10 research participants expressed that they did not have a sense of belonging or feeling part of their school's culture. All of the participants also expressed that their friends at school were mainly Latino and occasionally ELD students from other cultures or ethnic groups.

Affective needs not met

- Andrea had a sense of attending a school that was a foreign culture; this led to her feeling like she didn't belong to the mainstream culture of her high school.



- *I always felt that I wasn't part of their group. They always made me feel that I didn't belong there, so why try. I mean I did have white friends, but it was mostly because they would speak to the Latino, like they were part of the Latino group I always felt that I wasn't part of their group (Andrea, interview).*

Selene, who moved to the US in 4th grade, explained how this feeling of disconnectedness manifested at school assemblies



- *We would have the assembly and all of the Mexicans would sit in the corner. It was because it didn't appeal to us. I guess because it was a whole different culture and it was not ours and we didn't – I guess we understood it, but we didn't want to accept it, because I guess we wanted to hold onto our culture and it was just very different or like, the – the sense of, like, our parents not going through the whole thing. We didn't know, so it was all new, so we were not accepting with the whole culture in general, so we kind of stayed apart, aside. And I remember I didn't feel part of it at all, I remember not even wanting to stay in the gym. (Selene, interview)*

Acculturation



- In order for an immigrant group to adapt to the social institutions of a dominant culture, it is necessary that the immigrant group be allowed to adapt and provided with resources that facilitate their integration.

Findings: Acculturation



- *For me, my parents they didn't have education, they didn't graduate, didn't even finish high school. I didn't have support either from them. So I just had to learn on my own what school was like. And I didn't have actually the background knowledge of school (Eduardo, interview).*

Some of the participants expressed that the school as an institution didn't quite know what to do with EL



- *I feel like our school didn't do a good job at letting our other students know, we were there or that we were – you know, we were part of the team. I don't feel like a lot of administrators at the time were – I'm not gonna say aware, but I don't think they cared much about that population until – I think to them, it was more of a – the troublemakers. They assume we don't care about school, because we tend to have, you know, not-so-good grades and don't speak English well (Isabella, interview).*

Acculturation



- *“I don’t think the school was addressing our culture or our needs appropriately. I feel like they needed a lot more resources and they needed to be more sensitive to kind of like the socioeconomic background issues. There’s a lot going on in our family and there’s a lot of – I feel like it’s so different because we’re the ones showing our parents what’s needed a lot of the time.” (Isabella, interview)*

Acculturation



I mean not only are we going through puberty at that time, which is crazy, but we're also you know, we're in a different country, in a different setting, and different culture so I feel like a lot of it needs to be approached from a very friendly way instead of just, like, oh, "We're the school. We make the rules. Here, adhere to them (Andrea, interview).



- *They should be trying to connect with us or putting some of our culture – making our culture and I’m talking the Hispanic culture, but other cultures too, you know, the ones not from Europe. Help make them feel part of the school. Make new traditions that include everybody, not just the regular 50 years ago tradition that’s been there in the high school for that long. That’s the best way to start. (Selene, interview)*

Academic Support



- Eight out of the ten participants expressed that, outside of their ELD classes, teachers rarely reached out to them when they were struggling or made an effort to check-in for content understanding.

Academic support



- *Especially in my AP classes, that's where I didn't receive any help at all. Even though they knew I wasn't doing so well, they never really helped me. They just told me to drop out of the class. I just didn't know what to do, so I just stopped going to school. I felt like a failure.*
(Eduardo, interview)

Findings: academic support

- *I guess we were going along with whatever was going on, but nobody really helped us, except for our ELD teachers. (Selene)*
- *I didn't have that communication with any other teacher but my ELD teachers. Like when I needed something or when I had a question or something or like, for my senior year, I was just lost. (Moises)*

Findings: Academic support



- *Language was a barrier. So, if they would've taken that into consideration, I think the students sometimes – I remember I was afraid of asking for help, so instead of having the students ask for help, maybe have them [teachers] reach out to you (Isabella, interview).*

Findings: Identity



- How we are seen by others and what others think we are capable of impacts what we believe we are capable of (Lopez, 2010; Oyserman, & Destin, 2009; Usher, & Kober, 2012)
- The major themes that emerged in this code family is that participants felt that, as both Latinos and ELD students, they were perceived as not equal academically to their mainstream peers.

Findings: Identity



- *They would think, like, you were completely different, just because you, you know, were from Mexico. Like, they had the perception that you spoke Spanish and Mexico is like this –they thought Mexico was poor, undeveloped and just different. (Isabelle)*

Findings: Identity



- *Well, with students, I felt like they were already in their minds and maybe through their families they have – they already judged us before they even knew us because of stuff that goes on television or stuff – or like, you hear in the news or radio stations. ... A lot of the kids– they – sometimes they would look at me and they’ll be like, “Oh, do you speak any English,” like in a rude way, but you know, I kinda just avoided those people and just went my own way (Nayeli, interview).*

Findings: Identity



- *“I think there was also this thing about Latinos being bad or being in gangs and stuff. And you being seen as that separates you from having that respect.” (Eduardo)*
- *Ms. V gave me detention and suspended me when she saw me get out of a car with some people. When I asked why, she told me that those people were in gangs. I told her that they were my cousins and that I wasn't in a gang and they weren't either (Moises)*

Findings: Identity



This guy like, I sat – I was sitting down already and they told him to sit next to me. He's like, "I don't want to sit with a Mexican." And he's like, "Oh, sorry." I'm like don't be fake– don't be sorry, like it's who you are. You're – it's who you are and you're never going to change if you're going to just be like that (Julius, interview).

EL Identities



- *Well, mostly teachers because they would know that you have ELD and I don't know. For some reason, they think that you're like more – how do I say – not dumb – but that you're not prepared kind of thing. So, like other students, once they get out of ELD, they're like, "Oh, I'm free." It's like, okay. You know, I'm there (Andrea, interview).*



- *When they found out I was an ELL person they would think that I'm a person with special needs, but I wouldn't let it affect me or anything because I know that if somebody tried to help me improve my English or the way that I talk or the way – you know, everything, so I thought of it more as a help thing ... so it didn't affect me at all whatsoever what people thought of me (Leon, interview).*

Findings



- Many of the participants expressed that as Latino students they were viewed and ended up viewing themselves as lower-status students.
- This perception was fueled by the participants' lack of knowledge about school culture and their teachers' lack of knowledge about their students' cultures

Implications



- This research points to the importance of supporting our bi-cultural students in developing positive academic and ethnic identities.
- English Learners' and bi-cultural students' pathways to academic success not only need to be supported, schools need to make sure that the school's cultural impediments to EL's academic acculturation are recognized and addressed.

Implications for practice



Administrators

Seek to understand the ways Latino LTELs perceive and interpret their relationships with mainstream teachers and peers to provide access to that sense of belonging for bi-cultural and EL students

School District

If we do not facilitate a sense of belonging students can end up feeling alienated and developing negative academic identities as a result of their day-to-day school interactions.

ELD Teachers

ELD teachers are where Latino LTELs' academic and affective needs are being met. However, all of the participants experienced negative stereotypes associated with being identified as ELD students

Recommendations



Administrators

Educating staff and teachers about the cultures of their EL, and for teachers, administrators and school staff to consider how they perceive and treat Latino and bi-cultural students.

Administrators take time to get to know their bi-cultural students and reach out to their families as well.

School District

Outreach to Latino students and their families to reframe the ways Latino LTEL and their families perceive and interpret their relationships with their schools, core teachers and peers

ELD teachers

Reframe the way ELD services are perceived
Concerted efforts to facilitate students affective and acculturative needs



- *They should be trying to connect with us or putting some of our culture – making our culture and I’m talking the Hispanic culture, but other cultures too, you know, the ones not from Europe. Help make them feel part of the school. Make new traditions that include everybody, not just the regular 50 years ago tradition that’s been there in the high school for that long. That’s the best way to start. (Selene, interview)*

Conclusions



- This research indicates that schools would benefit students by taking proactive steps that actively work to integrate culturally diverse students, and seek to understand the ways Latino LTELs perceive and interpret their relationships with mainstream teachers and peers

Conclusions



- Validating the voices and experiences of our Latino EL students can provide schools opportunities to transform those features of inequity that are invisible to those of us from the dominant culture and bridge the achievement and culture gap in which many high school Latino LTEL find themselves wedged.

Thank you



- Questions?

Interview questions

1. Tell me about your high school experience.
2. Tell me about a teacher who was supportive of your academic growth.
3. Tell me about a teacher who wasn't supportive of your academic growth.
 - b. how could they have been more supportive?
4. How long were you in an ELD program?
 - a. How was the program supportive of your social growth?
 - b. How was the program supportive of your academic growth?
 - c. Explain how you feel it has helped you.
 - d. Explain how you feel it may have hindered you.
5. Tell me about your friends in high school.
 - b. Did you have friends who were from other ethnicities?
6. How would you describe your sense of feeling part of your school?

7. How did your in an ELD program affect how others viewed you?

b. What about teachers?

8. How did being Latino/a affect how other students viewed you?

b. What about teachers?

c. Were adults, at your school (s), supportive of Latino culture being expressed at school? Give me an example?

9. Do you think you were prepared for college after graduating high school? Explain

10. Did you feel comfortable speaking Spanish at school?

11. Do you think the school treats Latinos fairly? Give me an example.

12. Were adults at school available to help you? What about other Latinos?

13. Who at school took time to make sure you knew how to navigate school rules and procedures? Give me an example.

14. How could the high school you attended better serve the needs of their English Language Learners?

15. What would you tell a high school administrator to help them provide a socially and supportive environment for their Latino ELL students?

Critical pedagogy

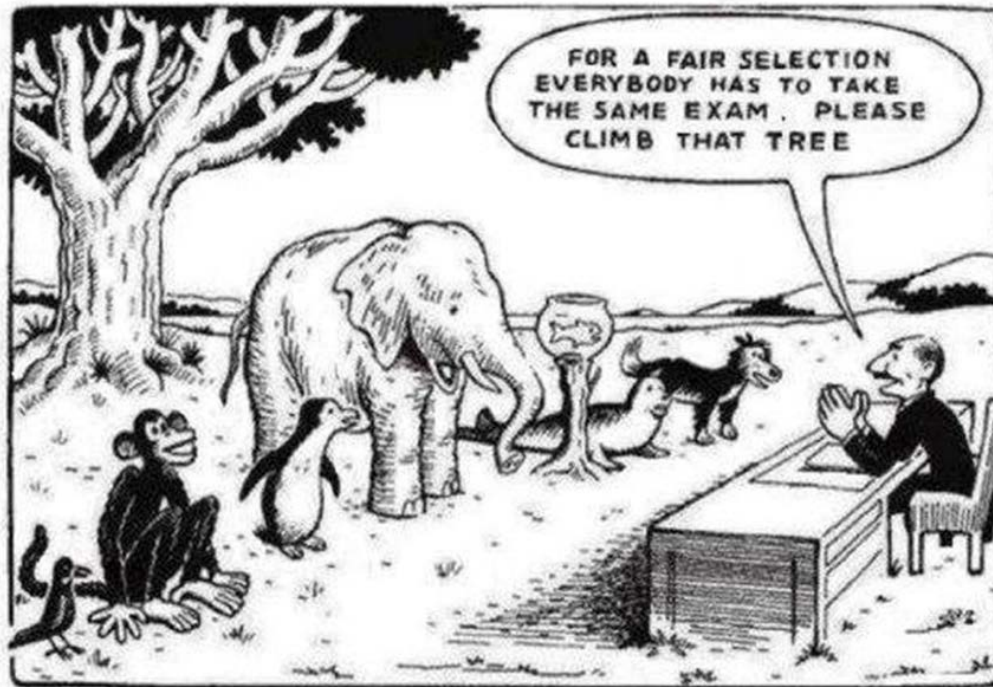


- teach LLTEs how to navigate cultural relations and differences, so that students may participate in the school's learning community (Delpit, 1995; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2000; McClaren, 2003; Roland, 2008; Lave, 1996; Peguero, 2010).
- teach LLTEL how to access mainstream cultural relations and navigate power in order to get their academic and socio-cultural needs met (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2000; Delpit, 1995; Faltis & Faircloth, 2008; Valdes, 2001).

Questions and comments



Our Education System



If you judge a fish by its 'ability' to climb a tree, it will spend its entire life believing its stupid - Albert Einstein