Annotated Bibliography


Benner (2011) conducted a longitudinal study of Latinx and Mexican-American students’ feelings of loneliness through the first 2 years of high school. The researcher examined academic success, including end of course exams and grades across the two years. Benner found that the majority of the adolescents researched reported low levels of loneliness throughout the 2 years, but that a small percentage (11%) experienced chronic loneliness. This number is consistent with previous research on the topic. Benner also found that the students who were more consistently lonely across the study spoke Spanish at school more than the other students. This fact can have multiple explanations, but one is that speaking Spanish excludes a large group of students in everyday conversation. While common language can be a factor in making friends, it also excludes a large group of students.

In relation to educational success, Benner (2011) found that students in the low but increasing loneliness category made the least academic progress of all students examined. Loneliness can result in disengagement from peers, but it also presents as disengagement in course material. One theory for the link between loneliness and academic performance is that students who are lonely in school may begin to associate school with negative emotions. These negative emotions can affect their academic performance and decrease their motivation to succeed. Benner (2011) suggests that, based on the evidence from this and previous studies, fostering an environment where Latinx and Hispanic students make connections at school can decrease the dropout rate and increase the overall academic performance of Latinx and Hispanic students.

Brice et al. (2008) sought to examine the relationship between being bilingual and how that affected students in a gifted track and in a general education track. The focus was on Latinx students who were bilingual. The researchers begin by examining the underrepresentation of minorities, including Latinx students, in gifted education programs. They discover that Latinx students are identified as gifted half as much as White students are. The researchers propose that a students’ bilingual abilities can be a protective factor in gifted education programs.

The ability to switch between two languages automatically is what the researchers call language alternation. This requires a difficult cognitive function that most Latinx students are able to do automatically and with little issues. The researchers interviewed bilingual students from the gifted and general education program to see if they could discern a difference between the two. The researchers found that the bilingual students in the gifted program were more aware of their language abilities than the students in the general education program. The students in the gifted program saw their language abilities as a tool rather than just another aspect of their identity. However, teachers in the gifted program saw bilingual language ability the least important trait a student could have. This research shows a need for bilingualism to be seen as a positive attribute rather than something teachers need to work around.

Garcia-Reid (2008) is a school social worker who explains the effect of structural violence on the educational outcomes of Hispanic students. She defines structural violence as “any constraint on human potential that is due to economic and political structures” (pg 236). Garcia-Reid notes that, while the dropout rate of Hispanic students is declining, it is still higher than that of non-Hispanic White students. The author cites multiple reasons for the dropout rates, including structural (ex: poor academic instruction), lower societal educational expectations, and lack of school resources. Garcia-Reid also cites a lack of cultural understanding between the school staff and the Hispanic students contributes to the higher dropout rates. School staff are not always trained to recognize the cultural capital that multicultural students bring to a school, and often times simple try and ignore it.

Garcia-Reid (2008) then gives multiple implications for social workers (and anyone else reading) to consider. She gives an example of a model that seeks to investigate and address instances of structural violence as it relates to students. The model is intended to be used as an assessment when working with students and seeks to help student support staff recognize the structural, cultural, and societal barriers students face. She then encourages social workers to continue to examine their school settings and look for ways to combat the barriers faced by Hispanic students.


Gonzalez (2015) identifies numerous barriers that Latinx students have to accessing a college education. She also provides some examples of possible theoretical frameworks that could be helpful in breaking barriers for Latinx adolescents. Gonzalez (2015) outlines categories of barriers Latinx adolescents experience: relational, individual, and systemic. Relational barriers
include the inability of supportive people in the adolescents’ life (family, friends, etc.) to help the student access higher education. This lack of access includes difficulty finding college prep materials, limited knowledge of the college application process, and language barriers. Other barriers also included immigration status, lower parental education level, and socioeconomic status. Individual barriers include student academic readiness, decreased motivation to complete college papers, and experience with discrimination in the educational setting. Gonzalez (2015) found that even high achieving Latinx students were less likely to complete a college application because of a combination of individual barriers. Systemic barriers include schools putting Latinx students into lower-achieving classes, poor communication with families, and less community resources.

Gonzalez (2015) also mentioned theories that could help Latinx students achieve. The theories she examines are social capital theory, social cognitive career theory, and bridging multiple worlds model. While not every Latinx student is affected by every barrier, most Latinx students experience at least one barrier to higher education.


The researchers, in partnership with the Latino Education Task Force, examined Puerto Rican fathers’ perspectives and experiences of an urban school district in New York State. The researchers used a mixed methods approach that utilized focus groups and other interviews to collect data. The researchers begin by approaching the research with a strengths-based perspective. Previous research has been conducted with a deficit perspective in regards to Latinx family systems and education, and the researchers here take a different approach. The researchers also examine Latinx parents’ perceptions about what education is. They found that
most Latinx parents believe that education is mainly to provide moral and responsible character, which is something that Latinx parents strive to teach their children at home. These beliefs are the researchers support to promote a family engagement approach to education. The researchers also cite a previous study done in 2007 that contrasts previous findings about Latinx families and education. This new study suggests that Latinx fathers want to be involved in their child’s education and believe that it is important for both parents, not just the mothers, to be involved. This research opened up a new educational question: are Latinx fathers an untapped resource in education?

The researchers found that the fathers who participated in the study all perceived well-behaved and well-liked children as a point of pride for them, and they all believed that education was a family affair. The fathers encouraged their older children to set a good educational example for their younger children and to take advantage of any educational resources that were made available to them. Another theme that the researchers found was the fathers’ unhappiness with the school communication. All the fathers in the program were frustrated with the school staff in one way or another. They have all had negative experiences with communication with the school. Another theme that presented itself was the difficulty that the parents had with advocating for their children at school. The parents all had the desire to be advocates for their students but faced many barriers. The parents were also vulnerable to a system that was not designed to be accessible to everyone.

The conclusion to this article states that parents, specifically Latinx and Hispanic fathers, are an integral part of their children’s’ education. The researchers encourage school staff to utilize parents’ passion and desire for change and to continue to reach out to families and engage them in the education process.