

Public Abstract

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Title: Investigating the Headwater: An Examination of the PK-12 Student Experiences of Mexican-American PK-12 Educators to Promote Authentic Educator Recruitment Strategies

A collective case study examined the perceptions of six practicing PK-12 Mexican-American educators regarding their experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how those perceptions may have positively or adversely impacted their consideration of education as a career. Through data analysis of the elementary and secondary headwater (Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005), the researcher sought to determine ways in which transformative PK-16 educational leaders can fashion authentic strategies to bolster the future recruitment of talented Latino students during the formative years.

Latino youth need to accumulate at least as much (if not more) social capital as their majority peers to secure resources through durable social networks to access information, influence, and social credentials while reinforcing and recognizing their Latino identity (Lin, 2001). Additionally, critical collaboration is needed among PK-16 educational leaders to curtail the perpetuation of subtractive schooling (Venezuela, 1999) practices via programs that could provide both students and parents added social capital to navigate the often-convoluted transition process from PK-12 to postsecondary institutions.

The implications of this inquiry suggested that leaders in both PK-12 institutions and higher education institutions should further aspire to cultivate an authentic commitment to diversity with educational practices that respect and validate the unique cultural (and socioeconomic) qualities that Latino youth bring to school each day. It is the intent of the researcher that more institutions will infuse the relational and institutional support necessary to address (and someday ameliorate) the inverse growth of PK-12 Latino educators relative to the American population as a whole.