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ABSTRACT

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EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES OF HISPANICS: CULTURAL LITERATURE REVIEW

By

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Abstract

Educational challenges of and reasons for minority students leaving school have repeatedly been examined by researchers. This literature review includes a presentation on various historical theories that provide explanations concerning the success or failure of visible racial/ethnic minorities in United States schools. In addition, Hispanic cultural studies conducted on the elementary, middle, and high school levels by educators and anthropologists are presented. Instructional strategies and programs to engage minority students, teacher-student interaction patterns, and the role of the community and of parents in school involvement are discussed to shed light on the educational challenges faced by minority students, in particular, Hispanic students.

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES OF HISPANICS: CULTURAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Our nation is becoming increasingly diverse. Figures reported in the 1998 Statistical Abstract of the United States, revealed a projected increase in minority populations from approximately 25% in 1990 to 50% in 2050. Hispanics are among the fastest growing and youngest populations in the United States (Chahin, 1993). Exceeding 29 million people, they currently comprise 11% of the total population (United States Bureau of the Census, 1998). According to Donato and de onis (1994), Hispanics will soon become the nation's largest ethnic minority group.

The influx of minorities has affected the population demographics of schools (K-12). Figures reported in the 1997 Digest of Education Statistics revealed that in fall of 1995, Hispanic students comprised 13.5% of the nation's elementary and high school students. According to Valdivieso and Davis (1988), "Hispanics have long been a disadvantaged minority, handicapped by low levels of education and discrimination" (p. 1). As a result, "low educational achievement has been a major barrier to the advancement of Hispanics in U.S. society" (p. 6).

Effects of Hispanic Students' Educational Achievement

Historical Underpinnings

The inferiority paradigm, which promotes the idea of White racial superiority, has contributed to differences in learning performance between Whites and visible racial/ethnic populations (Gould, 1981; as cited in Carter and Goodwin, 1994). The inferiority paradigm assumes that "visible racial/ethnic people are limited biologically and are genetically inferior in comparison to Whites" (Carter & Goodwin, 1994, p. 294). Fredrickson reported that prior to the nineteenth century, it was a socially acceptable custom to treat Indians, Mexicans, and Africans as inferior (cited in Carter and Goodwin, 1994). Disfavor toward non-White populations was also perpetuated by biblical references to evil and darkness, along with

the belief that Anglo-Saxons were God's "Chosen People" (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990, p. 226). Additionally, Social Darwinists such as Herbert Spencer and Sir Francis Galton targeted racial minorities and poor Whites promoting the "survival of the fittest" theory along with the advocation of sterilization and selective intragroup breeding. (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990).

According to Carter and Goodwin (1994), scientists and scholars attempted to establish characteristics of racial differences such as skin-color, hair texture, lip thickness, skull sizes, and genes on scientific grounds that would prove that non-Whites were inferior races and not yet civilized. Additionally, Louis Terman who adapted the Binet intelligence test for use in the United States "observed that non-White Americans had low levels of intelligence" (Carter & Goodwin, 1994, p. 295).

Various ideologies of nineteenth century Anglo-Saxon superiority "encouraged unequal practices against racial minorities and justified the passage of segregationist legislation in the late 1800s" (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990, p. 225). For example, in California the "separate, but equal education code of 1874" was a "blatant method used by the government to sanction segregationist legislation ... the separate but equal legislation essentially encouraged the nonmixture of whites and racial minorities and sanctioned superiority and inferiority beliefs" (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990, p. 227). According to Carter and Goodwin (1994),

> The conventional belief in the intellectual inferiority of visible racial/ethnic individuals has has a powerful impact on educational policy and curriculum development since before the 1800s. Because differences in achievement between White and non-White students were assumed to be genetically based, the inferiority paradigm allowed slavery to be condoned, which resulted in racial/ethnic groups, particularly Blacks and Indians, being considered uneducable and barred from formal or adequate schooling ... The educational proposals supported by this paradigm have often reflected the notion that non-White children are

incapable if learning. (p. 296-297)

Recent and Current Theories on Educational Attainment

In the 1950s and 1960s, social activism resulted in a shift from the inferiority paradigm to the cultural deprivation paradigm, which compared visible racial/ethnic populations with a White standard to determine various ways they are deprived or deficient (Carter & Goodwin, 1994). The determined deficits, by inference, then explained the differences in school performance and behavior, while "nurture replaced nature as the main reason for school failure" (Erickson, 1987, p. 335).

Researchers conducting investigations concluded that environment indeed played an important role in cognitive ability. They encouraged educators to intervene and create experiences for their students during early childhood intellectual development. According to Carter and Goodwin (1994), a variety of compensatory education programs aimed at supplementing poor and low achieving students were a result of the cultural deprivation paradigm such as Head Start, Chapter I, and bilingual education.

The cultural deprivation perspective focused on performance differences in school resulting from children's home environment without considering that often the necessary resources were also not available in school environments where students attended. Rather than viewing certain populations as historically disenfranchised, they have been viewed as "products of deficit cultures needing to acculturate to the 'American' way to achieve in the nation's schools" (Carter & Goodwin, 1994, p. 302).

Moving away from the cultural deficit view, social scientists and educators recently have responded in a more sensitive manner toward the racial/cultural backgrounds of non-White populations arguing that "difference is not synonymous with deviance or deprivation" (Carter & Goodwin, 1994, p. 302). Difference should not be looked upon as deviant or inferior. According

to Ramsey, Vold, and Williams (1989) the cultural difference paradigm lead to the introduction of multicultural education in the 1970s. This paradigm stresses that differences in culture and language can have a profound impact on school experiences of non-White populations. As a result, multicultural education programs include instructional practices that reflect racial and cultural experiences of various populations.

One particular program where adjustments in cultural norms and the language of students resulted in positive outcomes was the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). The quality of interaction between teachers and students in KEEP was the critical feature in achievement providing strong support "that cultural compatibility contributes to school success and incompatibility contributes to failure" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1988, p. 355).

Another perspective for the school failure of minority students is that of John U. Ogbu. According to Delgado-Gaitan (1988),

> Ogbu argues that the school failure of some minorities and not others can be explained only partially by the cultural difference theory ... He believes that the historical experience of specific minorities in this country helps explain why some surmount cultural and linguistic barriers and why others do not. (p. 355)

Ogbu has looked at how different minorities adapt to the larger society. "All minority groups face certain similar barriers in school ... Yet some minorities are more able than others to adjust socially and do well academically in school" (Ogbu, 1992, p. 290). Ogbu in his explanatory model classified minority groups as either autonomous, immigrant or voluntary, or involuntary.

According to Ogbu (1992) *autonomous* minorities may be culturally or linguistically distinct such as Jews and Mormons, but they are not to a major degree politically, socially, or economically subordinated and therefore tend to succeed in schools. *Immigrant* or *voluntary*

minorities include populations such as Chinese in California and South American immigrants who have moved to the Unites States voluntarily, mainly for better opportunities. They often experience subordination once here, but their children tend to adjust socially and academically. *Involuntary* minorities such as African Americans, Mexican Americans of Southwest origin, and Native Americans are part of the United States as a result of slavery, conquest, or colonization. Involuntary minorities struggle with school adjustment and academic achievement. Voluntary and involuntary minorities "differ in the degree to which they trust White Americans and the institutions, such as schools, that are controlled by Whites" (Ogbu, 1992, p. 293). According to Delgado-Gaitan (1988), for involuntary minorities "this oppositional stance leads to lower achievement and higher dropout rates" (p. 355).

Hayes (1992) stated that Ogbu's theory "does not reflect an in-depth understanding of the diverse nature of the Latino population in the United States today" (p. 253). She reported that it falls short when applied to studies that focus on Hispanic educational underachievement. Her research revealed the following scenario.

> Parents (voluntary immigrants) held a strong belief in American education as the avenue for success and well-being, In contrast, their adolescent children, schooled in the United States since Head Start or kindergarten, sometimes claimed that school offered nothing to them. Their classroom behavior suggested that their values toward education more closely resembled involuntary minority values in which students reject the symbols, behaviors, and ideals of Anglo American society. (Hayes, 1992, p. 254)

Moll and Diaz (1987) explained how subordinate minorities often do achieve in school. They have argued that "there is nothing about the students' language or culture that should handicap their schooling" (p. 1). Yet they have viewed the school curriculum of working-class children as often "watered-down" in relation to perceived weaknesses in the students. They

suggested that "just as academic failure is socially organized, academic success can be socially arranged" (Moll & Diaz, 1987, p. 302). To help students extend and capitalize on their talents, Moll and Diaz recommended that educators use a more context-specific approach by incorporating minority students' social, linguistic, and intellectual resources into the classroom curriculum.

This context-specific approach is fueled by Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky's concept is described as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Trueba (1988) further explained the necessary components of Vygotsky's theory when working with children.

> The transition from assisted to independent performance must be anticipated by the parent, teacher, or more knowledgeable peer, and the assisted performance prior to transition requires (1) effective communication between child and adult/peer, (2) shared cultural values and assumptions, and (3) common goals for activities. While the child may only have a limited understanding of the activities, the task and its goals, adults (or more capable peers) guide and model for the child, and the child imitates. Gradually the child understands an activity and its components in its appropriate cultural context, along with the meaning and consequences of the activity. (p. 281)

Phelan, Yu, and Davidson (1994) suggested that adults assist students by acquiring a better understanding of their challenges in dealing with transitions in schools such as with family and peers. On the secondary school level the researchers described pressures and problems in adolescents' family, peer, and school worlds that impact their ability to engage in school learning endeavors. Phelan, Davidson and Yu (1993) developed the Students' Multiple Worlds Model

and Typology that emerged inductively from interviews and observations of ethnically diverse students. The model acts as a framework for examining interrelationships of sociocultural components in students' worlds, in particular, diversity within ethnic groups.

Students' movement between worlds such as with family and peers attributed to differences in four types of transitions. The first type is *congruent worlds/ smooth transitions* with students describing values, beliefs, and expectations as similar across their worlds; characteristic of middle to upper class European American students. The second type is *different worlds/border crossings managed* with students perceiving differences in their worlds but utilizing strategies to successfully manage them; characteristic of high-achieving minority students. The third type is *different worlds/border crossings difficult* with students perceiving differences in their world but not yet incorporating strategies for successful transitions; characteristic of students who are able to adapt in some but not all circumstances. The last type is *different worlds/border crossings resisted* where students perceive borders as insurmountable and resist transitions; characteristic of low-achieving students (Phelen, Yu, Davidson, 1994).

Phelen, Yu, and Davidson (1994) stated that "students voices and concerns ... need to be taken into account as pedagogical strategies, programs, and services are developed and implemented" (p. 443). They were hopeful that the Students' Multiple Worlds Framework will assist educators in addressing the circumstances of today's youth by informing ways that instructional settings can be organized to enable students to "successfully navigate their worlds" (Phelen, Yu, & Davidson, 1994, p. 443).

As presented, various theories exist that attempt to explain how and why minority populations succeed or fail in school. In an effort to address these theories, researchers continually investigate instructional practices that they anticipate will benefit minority students, in turn, all of society's members.

Strategies and Programs to Engage Minority School Students

Teaching Strategies to Engage Minority Students

Moll and Diaz (1987) described two case studies conducted with working-class Hispanic students and their teachers. Local knowledge is applied in both studies to alter instructional procedures that normally constrain what both teachers and students accomplish. The goal in both studies was "to produce instructional change" (Moll & Diaz, 1987, p. 300). The research was influenced by educational anthropologists who examined learning environments and the critical role social interactions play in learning.

The first study took place in a bilingual program with third- and fourth-grade limited-English speaking students. In one room, students received reading instruction in Spanish first; they then moved to another classroom for English instruction. During English reading lessons, decoding was emphasized while comprehension did not enter into the lessons. Frequent interruptions by students occurred when assistance was required with pronunciation or the defining of words. When the teacher then asked the students for their understandings of the story in English, the students struggled. Later, one of the researchers asked the students similar comprehension questions in Spanish and their responses were much more extensive.

The researchers were interested in how they could reorganize the lesson to take advantage of the students' Spanish comprehension skills to advance their reading skills in English. When the researchers conducted reading lessons in English, they made "comprehension the higher order goal" of the lessons (Moll & Diaz, 1987, p. 306). To clarify the meaning of the text, both Spanish and English could be used by the students and researchers if necessary. Initially, to avoid decoding restraints, the researchers read the stories to the students. According to Moll and Diaz (1987),

by the third lesson, the students were able without our assistance, to answer

> comprehension questions required of monolingual readers at grade level ... Our claim is that reading and communicative resources can be strategically combined or mixed to provide the children with the support necessary to participate profitably in reading lessons. This point ... has to do with the social organization of instruction and how it interacts with the children's and teacher's characteristics. (pp. 306-307)

The goal of the second study was to document how writing was used in home and community settings and to explore ways of using this information to improve the teaching of writing to limited-English-speaking junior-high students (Moll & Diaz, 1987). The researchers created a meeting site within the community to discuss information with teachers on how they could change or improve the teaching of writing. Normally, most classroom writing that occurred was in response to teachers' questions or in completing worksheets; yet, writing did occur with homework assignments.

Moll and Diaz (1987) "wanted to change not only the process of writing but the motive for writing" (p. 308). Therefore, researchers requested the teachers to ask their students to write about an issue of significance to them or to their community. Questionnaires were then developed to collect others' opinions on the chosen topics which later contributed to the revision of students' final reports. According to the researchers, whether fluent in English or not, students were able to participate in demanding intellectual activities.

In addition to realizing how instructional changes in the social context of learning can produce changes in student performance, the researchers have also realized the value of developing community-based research sites. Opportunities to examine school in the context of the local community are available for researchers, educators, undergraduate and graduate students, and social institution community members (Moll & Diaz, 1987).

Luis Moll (1992) further emphasized the importance of teachers and researchers

redefining their roles by entering into collaborative working relationships. He described the value for teachers when they employ a sociocultural perspective by including resources from children's households and communities to enhance instruction, especially in bilingual education. Moll (1992) stated:

> The role of the teacher ... is to enable and guide activities that involve students as thoughtful learners in socially and academically meaningful tasks. This emphasis on active research and learning leads to the realization that these children (and their families) contain ample resources, which we have termed "funds of knowledge." (p. 21)

According to Moll (1992, p. 21), Greenberg described the term *funds of knowledge* as "the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, to thrive."

Beneficial learning strategies can be integrated into lessons when using the sociocultural perspective. For example, a sixth-grade teacher developed a construction module (thematic unit) based on her students' funds of knowledge. She incorporated parent involvement by inviting parents and other community members to contribute intellectually to the learning module. Approximately 20 community members contributed to the lessons by visiting the classroom (Moll, 1992).

Collaboration efforts by educators and anthropologists can also benefit students. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) described their involvement in a collaborative project with working-class Mexican communities in Tucson, Arizona. The goal of the study was to "explore teacher-researcher collaborations in conducting household research and in using this information to develop classroom practices" (p. 135) while developing "innovations in teaching that draw upon knowledge and skills found in local households" (p. 132). Moll et al. (1992) suggested that in contrast to classrooms where knowledge is imposed by adults, instead, knowledge is obtained

by the children and motivated by their interests and questions. As a result, according to the researchers, teachers developed a more sophisticated understanding of their students' experiences allowing them to begin to know the children as whole persons rather than just as students.

Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) have also argued the importance of incorporating funds of knowledge into classrooms that United States-Mexican households contain. Many Mexican families in the Southwest have ancestors who were farmers, ranchers, or who engaged in manufacturing activities in rural settings.

> Historically, these households not only produced or bartered for much of what they consumed, but their members also had to master an impressive range of knowledge and skills ... these largely rural skills, experience, technical knowledge of habitat and survival, make up the adaptive strategies that we call funds of knowledge. (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 317-318)

According to Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992), for children in U.S.-Mexican households the transmission of knowledge is mostly experimental providing children with opportunities to self-evaluate. Children organize their own learning and while performing tasks, direct the question-and-answer process by asking questions of adults, then emulating their responses. Knowledge is contained in multiple households so children often experiment with various learning environments seeking a zone of comfort where they can reach success and maintain their self-esteem. Traditional classroom learning often threatens these zones of comfort.

Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) have suggested that the evaluation and assessment of U.S.-Mexican children undergo educational reform along with closely analyzing the cultural basis of instruction and pedagogy. They recommended using more dynamic forms of assessment that seek to measure children's learning potential. Additionally, they promoted cooperative learning and strong parent and community involvement that demonstrate cultural learning traditions.

Lastly, they feel that teachers should be provided with opportunities to learn how to incorporate funds of knowledge into learning modules (thematic units) that realistically portray the student population.

In a study conducted in the Midwest, Statzner (1994) discussed how societies develop schools to selectively transmit certain types of knowledge favoring those in the dominant society. In her study, she discussed teaching practices that foster student involvement and how "academic subjects become meaningful to children when lessons are culturally appropriate" (Statzner, 1994, p. 285). Students involved in her study were second and third graders with 51% belonging to minority populations. The teacher who was observed in this study believed that studying different languages such as Spanish validates that there are diverse ways of saying the same thing and that differences are normal and should be accepted. In order for students to make connections with the material, she used thematic units each lasting about one month to organize the Spanish curriculum. The units included drawing, cooking, building with clay, and story telling, which promoted active and cooperative learning.

In support of the constructivist theory, Waters (1988) conducted a study with language minority students on the secondary level. He emphasized the role of the learner in creating personal meanings during a language arts lesson. He stated that "discovery and growth must begin within the bounds of a student's experience" (p. 2). Waters indicated that school is "skill deficit driven" (p. 3) and often concentrates on "parts" without application to the whole. He concluded that by building new learning in the classroom upon prior cultural and personal learning, the lack of in-home language and learning nurturing in many of the student's homes can be overcome.

Educators who respect students' prior personal and cultural knowledge can focus on their students' abilities, skills, and strengths that they exhibit and bring to the classroom. A focus on

students' abilities rather than on their deficits "places teachers in a proactive stance with regard to their students' learning -- instead of seeing failure, they see potential" (Miramontes, 1994, p. 72).

Interactions of Minority Students and Teachers

Often, inadequate classroom materials attributes to minority students' low achievement in school. The effectiveness of schools can also be attributed to the manner in which available materials and programs are utilized and implemented by teachers of minority students. The execution of programs creates various interaction patterns between teachers and students that can affect learning.

Ortiz (1988) conducted an ethnographic study entitled "Hispanic-American Children's Experiences in Classrooms: A Comparison between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Children." The study was conducted in a number of southern California school districts and spanned six years; data collection was through observations, interviews, and documents. Although the original intent of the study was to identify instructional systems, the researcher was also able to identify factors affecting instruction that appeared in some classes and not others.

According to Ortiz (1988), the majority of students limited in their English proficiency were Spanish speaking, mainly Mexican. These children attended schools that were located in run-down, poor, and neglected neighborhoods with weaker teachers and principals. Most bilingual classrooms were staffed by teachers who were not bilingual specialists. The quality of education for Hispanic students was reported to be less than that of non-Hispanic students with remedial delivery of instructional programs. Hispanic students were "treated differently and encouraged to stay together and separate from the rest of the students" (Ortiz, 1988, p. 70).

Ortiz (1988) reported that some Hispanic students, depending on a variety of circumstances, attend regular and traditional classrooms in suburban areas. "Their success in

these classrooms is dependent on the degree to which they can 'blend in' with the total environment" (Ortiz, 1988, p. 74). According to the researcher, when students first introduce themselves to their teachers, three different reactions take place. The first set of teachers accepts the students and treats then like all others. The second group of teachers feels that they have dull students who will do poorly and embarrass them. The third set of teachers realizes that some of their Hispanic students might actually do better than others. They begin to resent these students and seek explanations such as cheating and parental help as reasons for their success. "Traditional classroom teachers do not generally appreciate having to accept an Hispanic child. They may at worst view it as a form of punishment from the administrator or at best as an unlucky draw" (Ortiz, 1988, p. 77).

According to Ortiz (1988), Hispanic students are often ignored or given less time to respond to teachers' questions. Teachers often direct Hispanic students in louder and higher pitch voices. Additionally, they are often assigned worksheets for drill rather than regular materials such as textbooks. Ortiz sees the delivery of educational services to Hispanic students as differentiated with the allocation of both material and personal resources. Therefore, she feels that in spite of Hispanic students' efforts, they still are at a disadvantage.

Hayes (1992) conducted an ethnographic study in which students and parents shared their perceptions and beliefs about the quality of their educational experiences. The study included 12 mildly handicapped Mexican-American high school students in Los Angeles, California. Latinos made up 16% of the student population; the white population was approximately 68%.

According to Hayes (1992), although school was important to them, most sample students did not like school. Students expressed their dissatisfaction with the boring dead-end classrooms where they were expected to complete countless worksheets, view outdated

filmstrips, copy verbatim from encyclopedias, and have endless time devoted to "free time." In addition, being in special education classes labeled them as members of the "dummy class" (Hayes, 1992, p. 259) often making them targets of unkind remarks by other students.

Parents of these students shared that not only was language a barrier between them and school personnel but also discrimination often occurred toward them and their children. Parents were not able to help their children with their school work nor communicate with teachers concerning their children's progress. With students seldom sharing school occurrences with their parents, a lack of communication existed between the home and the school. Therefore, parents knew very little about their children's academic lives.

Patthey-Chavez (1993) discussed teacher perceptions of students as well as student perceptions of teachers in a study she conducted in an inner-city Los Angeles high school. Latinos comprised more than an 80% of the student population. The study focused on the relationship between the mainstream teaching staff and the Latino student population.

According to Patthey-Chavez (1993), teachers developed a differential ranking system for the various ethnic groups they associated with. The most cooperative and academically motivated students were Asians; immigrant Latino students were moderately motivated and generally well behaved; and, Latino students who were native-born were unruly and the most difficult to work with. Teachers felt that home environments of Asian students were more supportive than those of other students. Often, Latino students had to acquire outside jobs and assist with child care responsibilities in support of their families. These responsibilities often interfered with Latino students' studies. The researcher also mentioned that to avoid burnout teachers often focused their energies on academics rather than contact with students. But by doing so, "they closed themselves off from a crucial source of information, a source that could improve their effectiveness as teachers" (Patthey-Chavez, 1993, p. 47).

Patthey-Chavez (1993) also noted that Latino students felt that teachers underestimated their competence reflecting the teachers' racist attitudes and subtle discrimination toward Latino intelligence. One student told the researcher that in 1986 Asian students only were selected as honors students. The Latino students generally went about their own business in school yet had their own network systems and teacher rating scales. Additionally, the researcher mentioned that many students had positive experiences with their teachers as well as a positive attitude about attending school. They liked school and saw it as a place "to make something of themselves" (Patthey-Chavez, 1993, p. 49).

Student-teacher interaction patterns were also examined in a study conducted by McCollum (1989). The study compared turn-allocation patterns in lessons with third grade North American and Puerto Rican students. Individual nomination, invitation to bid, and invitation to reply explained the teachers' initiations in instructional sequence. Both teachers directed whole group lessons but the manner in which they conducted their lessons differed; therefore, so did the classroom interaction patterns.

According to McCollum (1989), in the North American teacher's class, "lessons were fast paced and tightly knit. The teacher maintained strict control of the lesson in order to complete her academic agenda" (p. 142). She used individual nomination to elicit responses from the students and most often ignored student initiations. The teacher managed talk and strictly directed the lessons.

The Puerto Rican teacher seemed "to act as a facilitator of interaction rather than a director of it" (McCollum, 1989, p. 142). A conversational discourse occurred in the Puerto Rican third grade room with the teacher allowing students to reply freely while acknowledging students' comments. Students' discussions were often tangents to the main topic but, in the process students would reveal personal information about themselves allowing students who

may not always contribute academically to still be validated by the teacher. The teacher would return to the central topic of the lesson while providing opportunities for students to mutually construct lessons (McCollum, 1989).

To assist with student-teacher interaction patterns, an awareness on the part of preservice and inservice educators of various teaching and learning styles would be beneficial. In order to teach more effectively, educators should be sensitive to the need to adjust their teaching styles when working with minority populations. According to Goldenberg (1992), although teacher expectations can affect student learning, the most critical factor in affecting achievement is teachers' actions.

Parent Involvement for Minority Populations

As revealed in some of the previous studies, a need exists to involve parents in their students' school experiences. The value of parent involvement and the context of each family's household was emphasized when discussing the benefits of incorporating funds of knowledge into the school curriculum when educating Hispanic children.

Goldenberg (1988), a first-grade teacher and research psychologist in Los Angeles, discussed his experiences with parents of Hispanic school children. He mentioned that parents he interviewed wanted their children to succeed in school and to go as far as possible with their education. He felt that most parents are willing to take an active role in their children's education but are often hampered by schools that fail to adequately communicate with them. Delgado-Gaitan stated that the relationship parents have with schools becomes a cultural issue because school systems are "bound by rules, language, and values that privilege some and exclude others" (cited in Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, p, 299).

Delgado-Gaitan (1994) in a literacy study conducted in 1985 discussed how Hispanic families often benefit by using *consejos* with family members, particularly with children. The

word *consejos* means nurturing advice for problem solving and "implies a cultural domain of communication, imbued with emotional empathy, compassion, and familial expectation" (p. 314). According to Delgado-Gaitan (1994), these parent-child interactions guide children with school matters and encourage them to be self-sufficient individuals. The conversations are usually spontaneous but often are initiated by reports from teachers such as good work and positive actions, or school behavior concerns. *Consejos* have multiple purposes. They act as instructive support for children, bonding mechanisms with parents, opportunities to think critically and, as motivators to increase children's ability to accomplish tasks and be advocates for themselves.

Delgado-Gaitan (1994) discussed how educators need to consider various factors that immigrant children bring to school to bridge the differences between immigrants and the dominant culture.

> Educators are placed in a strategically important position to capitalize on their dynamic of positivism, hope, and desire to succeed. Latino parents often play a pivotal role as brokers between their family and school even if they have limited knowledge about schools. Familial cultural narratives, folktales ... and consejos serve as motivational strategies for children's educational efforts. (p. 302)

Delgado-Gaitan (1994) also discussed the value of forming Latino parent organizations. Organizations as such provide opportunities for educators to interact with Latino parents and "learn how they are at the heart of pedagogy affecting Latino student achievement in a culturally appropriate way" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, p. 305). They also provide opportunities for parents to be advocates for their children.

Another ethnographic study conducted in the state of Colorado by Delgado-Gaitan (1988), dealt with the value of support from others. The researcher was concerned with evaluating reasons why many Hispanic high school students drop out of school while others

remain in spite of similar sociocultural traditions and socioeconomic conditions. The degree of support from others that students experienced whether within the school, between the home and school, or within the family was a critical factor for remaining in school.

All 12 students in the Delgado-Gaitan (1988) study expressed profound boredom in most of their classes because they felt topics were of little relevancy. In spite of the boredom, those students who remained in school had steady support systems outside of school. Parents encouraged their children to remain in school by verbally encouraging them, attending school activities, and meeting regularly with school personnel. Additionally, parents often demanded accountability from the school for fair treatment of their children. Those students who were accepted by faculty members and students and reached success in school realized that in spite of their educational needs, it was necessary for them to conform to school standards, beneficial or not (Delgado-Gaitan, 1988).

According to Delgado-Gaitan (1988), high school personnel expected parents to be involved in their children's schooling but did not provide adequate ways to teach parents how to relate to the school so their children would benefit. As a result, students without parent advocates often experienced failure. Children in single-parent homes did not want to apply additional pressure on their family so they often kept school concerns to themselves. Additionally, many parents were consumed with their own social and economic pressures and could not devote time elsewhere.

Programs to Engage Minority Students

Several studies have been conducted on programs for minority populations where students have reached educational success. One such program called AVID is an untracking program in San Diego high schools. The acronym AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. According to Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva (1994) the expressed goals for

AVID are "to motivate and prepare underachieving students from underrepresented linguistic- and ethnic-minority groups to perform well in high school and to seek a college education" (p. 98).

According to Mehan et al. (1994), parents of the selected eighth- or ninth-grade Latino and African American students signed contracts to have their children participate in the high school AVID program. AVID marked their students publicly by providing them with logoed school materials signifying group membership. As a result, students often developed new friends with similar academic interest. AVID students were placed in college preparatory classes to work cooperatively in heterogeneous groups with their high-achieving peers. As part of their course load, AVID students, in isolation, took a special class that emphasizes writing, inquiry, and collaboration. A basic plan for weekly instruction activities was followed: 2 days were designated as tutorial days, the other 2 days were writing to learn days, and 1 day a week was a motivational day for scheduled guest speakers or field trips to colleges.

According to the researchers, the AVID program emphasized accommodation without assimilation, whereby the students accommodated to the norms of school and society without compromising their ethnic identity. Although AVID students recognized that discrimination, prejudice, and racism exist, and therefore develop strategies for dealing with discrimination, they also believed in individual effort, motivation, and opportunity. To succeed in the program, many AVID students maintained two identities and move between two cultures, one to foster academics at school and the other to identify with a supportive community (Mehan et al., 1994).

Abi-Nadar (1990) conducted an ethnographic study that investigated the motivations of high school Hispanic students who succeeded academically. A college preparatory program was selected called *Programa: Latinos Adelantaran de Nuevo* [Program: Latins Shall Rise Again] (PLAN). According to the researcher, PLAN had been in place for 15 years and was created as

part of a Title VII project. The high school was located in a metropolitan area in northeastern United States with the Hispanic population at 21% of the student body.

Abi-Nadar (1990) stated that the central figure in the study was a teacher whose instructional strategies encouraged and supported learning. Three major themes emerged from the study which pointed to the success of the program.

The first theme discovered by Abi-Nadar (1990) revolved around students creating a vision of the future. Mentors and models were presented to students providing proof that college is a real option. To reinforce the value of PLAN, an oral tradition of the program and former students' success stories are promoted. The second theme that emerged from the investigation was the improvement of the students' self-image as Hispanics and as learners. The teacher had high standards and expectations of his students. Additionally, although not Hispanic, he promoted a sense of pride in the Hispanic heritage by making positive references to cultural values. He also integrated pedagogical strategies into his curriculum such as simulations, role-plays, and dramatizations, which helped students redefine their self-images. The third theme dealt with the value of building a supportive community emphasizing family traits such as acceptance and mutual support. The instructional strategies of plan allowed the teacher and his students to move beyond stereotypes of failure and to "reach for our dreams even if they seem impossible" (Abi-Nadar, 1990, p. 56).

Another ethnographic study that dealt with successful school strategies of Hispanics was conducted by Cordeiro and Carspecken (1993). This study involved 20 highly successful Hispanic high school students in two inner-city schools in the southwestern United States who attended magnet school or honors programs. All of the students were from low socioeconomic backgrounds with no role models in their families with educational achievement. According to Cordeiro and Carspecken, several factors lead to the students' success. Students expressed the

importance of educational role models and caregivers in their early school years along with the value that positive reinforcements had on them. The students, although they acknowledged their Hispanic identity, also were aware that they had adopted dominant culture success interests such as material rewards.

Cordeiro and Carspecken (1993) discussed that in order to experience academic success, students adopted two cultures during high school. One culture reflected the dominant culture's emphasis on individualistic accomplishment and competitiveness, the other reflected the Hispanic culture of the neighborhood. Without academic support from the family, students would seek a role model or caregiver from outside of the family. Also, students emphasized how important their middle school relationships were with other students. At that time, it was important to identify with achieving youth and avoid negative influences. Additionally, the honors and magnet school programs students were involved in provided institutional segregation allowing the Hispanic students to participate in competitive programs that they regarded as important. The students were also able to acquire time management and achievement skills that were reflected in their participation in cheating, outside jobs, and extracurricular activities.

According to Cordeiro and Carspecken (1993), the academic framework of the dominant culture that the students adopted helped them to construct identities other than what is often considered typical of Hispanic students. Cordeiro commented that the school experiences of the students in this investigation reflect this group of students only and should not be generalized across other low-income Hispanics or taken as a blueprint to improve education.

As presented, researchers have investigated the schooling of language-minority students on the elementary and high school levels. On the middle school level, according to Donato and de Onis (1994), a program called Project Theme was created as a collaborative reform effort between the University of California and a California school district. Project Theme was "an intervention

program that offers school and classroom restructuring alternatives at the middle school level" (Donato & de Onis, 1994, p. 178).

In 1988, a group of teachers, administrators, parents, and university faculty organized the project, focusing on a group of seventh grade students, in an attempt to "increase the academic achievement of Mexican-American language-minority students in reading, writing, and math. In addition, the project aspired to increase the self-esteem of these students" (Donato & de Onis, 1994, p. 178).

According to Garcia (1993), as cited in Donato and de Onis (1994), the project de-emphasized tracking and promoted heterogeneous grouping concentrating on effective schools research, instruction for language-minority students, and higher order learning. Project Theme also promoted

> peer tutoring, cooperative leaning, and literacy activities that stressed interactive journals, small group discussion, and student authored literature. To further increase language development and literacy, students participated in an integrated curriculum that revolved around themes of ethnic identity, the fine arts, the Olympics, career choice, and AIDS. (Garcia, 1993, p. 328-33; as cited in Donato & de Onis, 1994)

The results of Project Theme interventions were quantified as academically successful; the project also improved students' self-esteem (Donato & de Onis, 1994). Project Theme students experienced long-term success by exhibiting a positive sense of self-worth, expressing pride in their heritage, developing plans for further education, and realizing the value of being bilingual and how it would contribute to their lives (Garcia, 1993; as cited in Donato & de Onis, 1994).

Project Theme, according to Donato and de Onis (1994), provided language-minority students with opportunities often not provided at the middle school level. The restructuring

efforts of the project can act as a middle school model for educators interested in meeting the needs of language-minority students. The program not only valued cultural and linguistic differences but also included staff development, encouraged parental involvement, and recognized student achievement. The researchers are hopeful that a project as such has the potential to reduce the high school dropout rate and school failure of language-minority students (Donato & de Onis, 1994).

Summary and Conclusion

In this literature review, the reader was presented with various historical theories that provided explanations for the success or failure of visible racial/ethnic minorities in United States schools. The inferiority paradigm assumed that visible racial/ethnic minorities were inferior to the White population. This nineteenth century Anglo-Saxon superiority resulted in unequal educational practices. The cultural deprivation paradigm emphasized the role of an individual's environment in relation to school achievement; differences meant deprivation. Eventually, with the introduction of multicultural education, the word differences was no longer synonymous with deprivation. Ogbu (1992) introduced a typology that focused on historical experiences of some populations in America resulting in barriers to belonging. Phelen, Davidson, and Yu (1993) introduced a model that provided a framework for examining interrelationships in ethnically diverse students' worlds. Additionally, Moll and Diaz (1987) emphasized that language and culture should not handicap students in their schooling. They stated that academic achievement is socially organized.

Numerous researchers have emphasized the value of incorporating effective teaching strategies and programs into curriculums. Studies conducted on the elementary, middle, and high school levels by educators and anthropologists were presented. Instructional strategies used to engage minority students in learning were discussed such as the integration of a student's native

language; relevant learning opportunities involving home and community funds of knowledge; thematic units focusing on cultural experiences; and, active, hands-on, discovery, cooperative, and inquiry learning opportunities. Additionally, teacher-student interaction patterns were discussed that emphasized the importance and influence of teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and actions toward students and vice versa. The effects on students who are able to "fit-in" with the mainstream culture along with the value of support groups for minority students, plus other factors leading to students' educational success were also presented. Lastly, roles that parents and community members play in Hispanic students' educational experiences were also discussed with an emphasis on the value of advocacy.

According to Donato and de Onis (1994), Hispanic Americans currently comprise 9% of the total United States population and are soon projected to become the nations's largest ethnic minority group. The growth of the Hispanic population has influenced school demographics with Hispanics now reported to be "the most segregated ethnic minority group in American public schools" (Donato & de Onis, 1994, p. 179).

As previously mentioned, Hispanic students have been handicapped by low levels of achievement and high levels of discrimination, with a 40% high school dropout rate (Valdivieso & Davis, 1988). This dropout rate affects not only Hispanics but all of society. In order to better understand why many Hispanic students are not performing well in United States' schools, an investigation of the past may prove beneficial.

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