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The University of San Francisco

DEVELOPING ETHNIC IDENTITY THROUGH CHICANO/LATINO STUDIES: A CASE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CENTRAL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

Sophia Santana Ramirez

San Francisco
December 2008

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Sophia Santana Ramirez, Candidate — Date 1/07/09

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Susan Katz, Chairperson — Date 1/07/09

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Dr. Emma Fuentes — Date 1/07/09

Acknowledgments and Dedication

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Finally this dissertation is dedicated to my family and my community. When I was at the verge of giving up, I let the faces of my nephews and niece take hold of me and instill in me the determination to move forward. This is for you, Julian, Joshua, and Jadah. May your education be the key for your future and freedom.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The popular term, “browning of America,” refers to the vast representation of Latinos, and other people of color, in the United States and their influence on American culture, education, politics, and the economy (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Jones, 2005; Rodriguez, 2002). According to the United Census Bureau (2005), Latinos[1] are the fastest growing and largest ethnic minority group in the United States. In 2004, 41.3 million Latinos were living in the United States, representing 14% of the total U.S. population (United States Census Bureau, 2005). Chicanos/Latinos are projected to be the youngest and largest population over the next 15 years (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2005).

Despite these numbers, Chicano/Latinos [2] continue to be under-represented in the political arena at the local, state, and federal levels of government. The lack of political representation is coupled with institutionalized racism in the educational arenas as exemplified through the anti-affirmative action propositions, anti-immigrant legislation, dismantling of bilingual education, and attacks on ethnic studies courses (Hurtado & Gurin, 2004; Midwest Consortium for Latino Research, 1998; Nieto, 1996; Sánchez, 1997).

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[1] Latino will be used to present the diaspora of all groups, regardless of race, from Latin American countries that share similar language, customs, background and experiences. Latino will also refer to a male and female whose origins are from another Spanish speaking country other than Mexico.

[2] The researcher will use the term Chicano/Latino to be inclusive of groups that self-identify as either Chicano or Latino.

Latinos' lack of success in the political, economic, educational, and social arenas is often attributed to their long history of colonized and racialized experiences in the United States (Darder, Torres, & Gutierrez, 1997; Hurtado & Gurin, 2004; Pérez & Salazar, 1997; Yosso, 2006). The detrimental outcome of underachievement in schooling, racialized policies, and anti-immigration laws that add to the national air of "the Mexican problem" is coupled with social problems (Gonzalez & Fernandez, 2003; Haney López, 2003). Consequently, Chicano/Latino communities are often faced with debilitating odds to overcome societal problems and succeed in educational and political arenas.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2006) reported that in 2004, the drop out rates for Chicano/Latino students, ages 16 to 24 was 23.8%, for African American students 11.8%, and white students 6.8%. Some factors that increase the drop out rate for Chicano/Latino youth are gang involvement, pregnancy and incarceration. Chicanos/Latinos are more likely than whites to enter the criminal justice system. Findings through the Bureau of Justice Statistics on sentenced inmates in 2004 indicated that there are 1,220 Hispanic[3] inmates per 100,000 Hispanic males compared to 463 white male inmates per 100,000 white males (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004).

This imbalance has propelled scholars to document, analyze, and research Latinos' educational history and experiences in the Unites States (Hayes-Bautista, 2000, 2004). Many educators have discussed the social and institutional causes that give rise to student drop out rates for Chicano/Latino students and have concluded that education has failed in serving the specific needs of Chicano/Latino students (Valenzuela, 1999).

[3] The term "Hispanic" will only be used as directly cited by official United States government documentation and/or a direct quotation.

In higher education, statistical data (Huber et al., 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 1995; Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, & Bryton, 1995; Yosso, 2006) show graduation, retention, and matriculation among Chicanos/Latinos are minimal compared to whites. A study by the Rand Corporation (Sorenson, Brewer, Carroll, & Bryton, 1995) on Chicano/Latinos, their growing population and lack of participation in higher education concludes, "Hispanics are among the most severely underrepresented groups in higher education" (http://www.rand.org/pubs/issue_papers/IP152/index2.html). Retaining and matriculating Chicano/Latinos into higher education continues to be problematic, as their performance in any stage of the educational pipeline is well below white and other racial and ethnic students (Yosso, 2006).

To further illustrate the under-representation in all levels of the educational pipeline, Yosso (2006) uses the 2000 Census Bureau statistics to present the data of Chicana/o schooling as compared to whites. Yosso shows that out of 100 Chicana/o elementary school students, only 44 graduate from high school. From the 44 students, 26 enroll in college, of that 17 attend community college and 9 enter a 4-year institution. Out of the 17 community college students, only 1 will transfer to a 4-year institution. Seven ultimately graduate with a Bachelor's degree. From the Chicana/o graduate students only two will pursue and graduate with a professional or graduate degree and fewer than one Chicana/o graduates with a doctoral degree.

Another example of the statistical representation of the U.S. educational pipeline compared across racial backgrounds is shown by Huber, Huidor, Malagón, Sánchez, and Solórzano (2006) in Figure 1 Educational Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2000[4].

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[4] For the purpose of this dissertation, the researcher modified and redesigned the chart.

Table 1 U.S. Educational Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2000

Latina/os	Native Americans	African Americans	Whites	Asian Americans
100/100 Elementary School	100/100 Elementary School	100/100 Elementary School	100/100 Elementary School	100/100 Elementary School
54/51 Graduate From High School	72/70 Graduate From High School	73/71 Graduate From High School	84/83 Graduate From High School	78/83 Graduate From High School
11/10 Graduate From College	12/11 Graduate From College	15/13 Graduate From College	24/28 Graduate From College	40/48 Graduate From College
4/4 Graduate With Doctorate	4/4 Graduate With Doctorate	5/4 Graduate With Doctorate	8/11 Graduate With Doctorate	13/22 Graduate With Doctorate

Note: The first number represents females, the second, males.
Source: (Huber et al., 2006)

Scholars of ethnic identity and minority education have tried to explain the educational and social inequities (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Hurtado & Gurin, 2004; Nelson & Tienda, 1985) through the lenses of oppression, exploitation, and hegemony. In the educational arena, Darder et al. (1997) states that Chicanos have had an arduous history of Eurocentric or colonized education. Understanding Chicano identity through the lenses of domination, subordination, ethnic, and class status may help to analyze the educational experiences of Chicanos.

Valenzuela (1999) concluded in her research that “subtractive schooling” prevents U.S. born and immigrant Mexican students from achieving success and thus having positive associations with their educational experiences (p. 3). She further posited that, “When the definition of what it means to be educated in U.S. society systematically excludes the Mexican culture, the Spanish language, and things Mexican, the prescription

that students 'care about' school can be a hard pill to swallow" (p. 258). The current system of educational inequality leaves Chicanos miseducated about their ancestry, history, culture, and contributions to society (Banks & Banks, 2001; Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Hollins, 1996; Padilla, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). This miseducation, in turn, devalues their sense of ethnic pride, connection with the curriculum, and experience in education. The systemic disjuncture in educational institutions disengages Latino students and further impedes the pipeline to higher education.

Solórzano and Solórzano (1995) discuss the problems students of color face in elementary, secondary, and higher education. For example, in elementary schools Chicano/Latino students are often tracked and given Eurocentric curriculum that portrays racial stereotypes of Chicano/Latinos. Secondary level Chicano/Latinos have minimal opportunities to attend pre-collegiate courses to prepare them for college courses and requirements. At the college level, issues of classroom climate, where Chicano/Latino students are often underrepresented in the student body and isolated in classrooms. This study's findings concluded that institutional and policy changes are needed to meet the needs of Chicano/Latino students. For example, two suggestions were to provide inclusive curriculum and increase access to Chicano/Latino teachers who would alleviate barriers and support the education endeavors of Chicano/Latino students.

The above suggestions for inclusive curriculum and access to Chicano/Latino professors have been the underpinnings of Chicano/Latino Studies for their students, community and faculty. Such programs within Ethnic Studies have made a historical presence in colleges throughout the nation and furthered the scholarship in multicultural

curriculum[5], inclusion and pedagogical practices within academia. Yet, as Chicano/Latino Studies scholarship is developed nation wide and trickled down to some K-12 educators, no research has been conducted on the effects of Ethnic Studies on student achievement. Furthermore, the inclusion of multicultural education and Ethnic Studies for high school students has been used as an alternative intervention for engaging students of color in their classrooms; however high school administrations have remained skeptical of its purpose and scholarly merit. As a result this investigation aims to understand the link between Chicano Studies programs and adolescent ethnic identity for Chicano/Latino high school students.

In addition to the typical adolescent struggle of self-identity formation, Chicano/Latino students also grapple with their ethnic identity (Guanipa-Ho & Guanipa, 2005). Ferdman and Gallegos (2001), Hurtado, Gurin, and Peng (1994) and Phinney (1989) have demonstrated that ethnic adolescents and children are influenced differently than whites in self-identity formation. Bernal and Knight (1993) concluded that children's ethnic identity may be important for adaptation to various educational and social environments, "for example, children who identify strongly with their ethnic group may be more successful in educational environments that support their cultural characteristics than in educational environments that require assimilation to the dominant culture" (p. 32).

In developing a strategy to combat racially biased education and promote a positive ethnic identity, multicultural educators have developed new ways of engaging

[5] Multicultural education will be defined to include the scholarship of Banks and Banks (2004), Nieto (1999) and Shor (1992) that is inclusive of a socio-cultural and critical perspective.

Chicano students in ethnically based programs. Researchers, such as Valenzuela (1999); Darder, Torres, and Gutierrez (1997), have shown that Chicano students are being miseducated and underserved in the K-12 educational system. In response a few high schools in California have offered ethnic based programs that positively reinforce students' ethnic identity, thus aiding their development and retention. These schools, such as Berkeley High School in Berkeley, California; Hoover and Roosevelt High Schools in Fresno, California; and Reedley High School in Reedley, California, have all developed ethnic studies curricula to foster a sense of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and critical consciousness. Outside of California in Tucson, Arizona, educators have developed a Mexican American and social justice curriculum based program for grades K-12 (TUSD/American Raza Studies Institute, 2006).

However, the effects of Chicano/Latin American studies programs in K-12 schools have not been empirically researched. Furthermore, the academic merit of Ethnic Studies courses and programs has been strongly criticized and continues to face challenges in colleges and universities (Caravantes, 2006; Hanson, 2003; Hu-DeHart, 1995; Wang, 1991). Caravantes (2006) posits,

> On another level, what has to take place in order for Latinos to make themselves more "educable" is for them to abandon the poisonous Chicano Studies departments in the universities, both public and private. Since the late cultural revolution of the last quarter of the twentieth century, these departments have done more to poison the minds of Latino college students and have done little to truly advance their educational success in the United States. (p. 69)

For example, University of California, Berkeley Ethnic Studies Professor Wang (1991) states, "Yet, as successful as they were the five programs in Ethnic Studies were largely isolated from the academic mainstream: their interdisciplinary approach was frequently dismissed by some discipline-bound scholars as "undisciplined" studies" (p. 2). He

further adds, “it [Ethnic Studies] existed still largely as an intellectual ghetto, disenfranchised and having only negligible impact on the entrenched disciplines and institutionalized organizations of knowledge” (p. 2).

Along with Ethnic Studies, multicultural curriculum has also been unsupported and criticized in the K-12 system. In fact, the administration in certain schools, such as Vaughn High School in New Mexico, has even blocked their existence. Two teachers who were incorporating Chicano Studies into the curriculum were fired by the Vaughn High School administration for promoting a Movimento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A) student organization, using *500 Years of Chicano History* (Martinez, 1991) as a textbook, and discussing the farm worker movement along with its leader Cesar Chavez (Midwest Consortium for Latino Research, 1998; Reyes, 2006).

This Vaughn High School controversy propelled a study by Rodriguez (2000) that investigated the effects of Ethnic Studies instruction for junior high school students on their ethnic identity development and political attitudes. The author concluded from his review of the literature that “There is no single study that examines the relationship between Ethnic Studies instruction, and ethnic identity development, and the development of political attitudes among adolescents” (p. 4). Therefore, in my research I explored the effects of Chicano Studies curriculum on high school students in the areas of ethnic identity, critical consciousness, and perceptions of higher education.

This doctoral research study aimed to explore the effects of a Chicano Studies course on adolescents. Although Chicano Studies programs and courses have been implemented in higher education, they have not been sufficiently researched. Little research has investigated the effects of these programs in high schools. In the existing

research on the miseducation of Chicano students, recommendations for change include revising educational policy to support cultural programs (i.e., Chicano Studies, Ethnic Studies, Black Studies, multicultural curriculum), training educators on the specific Chicano educational needs, and creating curricula that incorporate Chicano political and social history in order to encourage a stronger sense of ethnic consciousness and pride (Davidson, 1996; TUSD/American Raza Studies Institute, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). For example, Chicano Studies programs aim to increase student success, retention and matriculation into higher education. These studies stress the severity of the issues of the current U.S. educational apparatus, expressed most demonstrably in Chicano/Latino school failure, and represent educational policy changes to reverse the current schooling situation. Nonetheless, the benefit of these steps toward Chicano/Latino education continues to be minimal and lacks support for institutional change in K-12 education on every level – local, state, and federal.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of a specific Chicano/Latin American Studies course on ethnic identity development among Chicano/Latino high school students in Reedley, California. The researcher also aimed to investigate whether the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected the students' critical consciousness in terms of their ethnic pride, their understanding of oppression, and being an active agent for change. Furthermore, this research attempted to explore their perceptions of the educational pipeline. The underlying assumption was that the Chicano/Latin American Studies course might help to resolve issues of Chicana/o retention and matriculation due to the following: (a) the curriculum fosters a sociopolitical and cultural consciousness;

(b) building of self-esteem; (c) raising of ethnic consciousness; (d) understanding various forms and outcomes of oppression; (e) transforming students to become active agents of change in their educational process; (f) and increasing their academic achievement.

Background and Need for the Study

In the 1960's, civil rights movements, free speech movements, labor movements, anti-war movements, and social unrest (i.e., riots, and police brutality) were sweeping across the United States. In education, specifically in California, students of color were starting to voice their frustrations and triggered a wave of demonstrations over the inequality of representation in higher education, demanding more inclusion and implementation of Ethnic Studies/Departments. Students wanted a core curriculum and instruction from a non-Eurocentric point of view as well as instructors who mirrored the same cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Furthermore, the students demanded that the California State University system continue admissions of underrepresented students and bring forth a College of Ethnic Studies throughout the state system. Ethnic Studies departments were ultimately developed as a haven for solidarity and sovereignty from the institutional racism within traditional academia throughout the nation (Chicano Coordinating Council, 1970; Muñoz, 1989; Whitson & Kyles, 1999).

Ethnic Studies curricula aimed to empower students' ethnic identity, build solidarity amongst communities of color, develop critical skills, and raise consciousness. Furthermore, they gave the university a space to discuss issues of race, gender, class and a historical perspective of people of color. In particular, Chicano/Latino Studies programs, under the umbrella of Ethnic Studies, sought to reach the following goals:

(a) decolonize and liberate Chicano/Latino students from their schooling experiences of Americanization and assimilation; (b) teach Chicano/Latino history and culture, thus giving Chicano/Latino students a sense of self-esteem and ethnic pride; (c) understand Chicano/Latino political, social and cultural histories within the context of the United States and throughout Latin America; (d) request administrative control of the program; (e) produce Chicano/Latino scholars that were activist-oriented; and (f) promote research within the community and Chicano agency (Duran & Bernard, 1973; Flores, 2001; Muñoz, 1989). These goals addressed the inequities in higher education for the Chicano/Latino community.

During the last forty years, activists-turned-academic-scholars (Acuña, 2004; Anzaldúa, 1999; Martinez, 1991; Muñoz, 1989) have followed the Civil Rights Movement's intentions of educational equity within not only higher education, but also Grades K-12 (Gorski, 1999). By the 1980's multicultural scholarship was trying to reach the K-12 mainstream and was promoted in curriculum, instruction, policy, and textbooks (Banks & Banks, 2004). During the early stages of implementing a multicultural approach in K-12 education, only superficial changes occurred in the curriculum and were unsupported by school administration. The works of Banks and Banks (2004), Sonia Nieto (1996), Ira Shor (1996), and Christine Sleeter (2005) added a deeper level of sociopolitical and critical consciousness to the study of multicultural curriculum and pedagogy.

Multicultural pedagogy has been redefined and transformed (Banks & Banks, 2004; Nieto, 1996; Shor, 1996) and incorporates the following: (a) inclusiveness of all cultural and ethnic histories and experiences in the United States; (b) notions of social

justice and colonization; (c) critical consciousness; (d) linguistic and learning diversity; (e) combating issues of racism and (f) liberating students of color and white students' experiences of privilege. Even though multicultural curriculum has been further developed, there still remains a lack of support by school administration and implementation into the mainstream curriculum.

Ethnic Studies and multiculturalism are tools used to combat issues of racism in and out of the classroom, educational inequality, and educational policy. Nieto (1996) supported curriculum that would foster children's everyday reality at home and in the community. Hollins (1996) asserts that reframing the K-12 curriculum to be inclusive and pluralistic will decrease dissonance in school learning for ethnic groups. Due to the Eurocentric curriculum, some ethnic or cultural groups will be unaffected, and thus the curriculum will be less meaningful for learning. More importantly, Hollins (1996) believes that providing ethnically and culturally inclusive curriculum can assist their sense of personal and group identity. It can also support pride in their history, community, accomplishments of their ancestors, and understanding of their contemporary position in society. In this way multicultural curriculum posits a positive reality, a hopeful future oriented vision of self-improvement, self-determination, and collaboration with other groups and scholarly preparation needed to participate within society.

These disciplines are interconnected, but stem from different ideological standpoints (Belle & Ward, 1996). Multicultural education at its best employs a liberating pedagogy for all students regardless of race, while Ethnic Studies concentrates specifically on the oppressive and liberating experiences of students of color. For example, Chicano Studies focuses on the socio-historical political context and the

development of critical consciousness in Raza[6] students. It aims to create a sense of cultural and ethnic pride, and encourages retention and matriculation to graduate programs that will contribute back into the Chicano/Latino community.

Currently, Ethnic Studies and social justice programs in K-12, even though sparse, are being used as a means of engaging students of color in the classroom (TUSD/American Raza Studies Institute, 2006). The goals reach more depth at the university level, where Ethnic Studies programs aim to deconstruct oppression and instill a positive sense of ethnic pride and critical consciousness. Research (Banks & Banks, 2004; Nieto, 1996; Shor, 1996) shows that multicultural pedagogy and curriculum for K-12 also aim to bring forth issues of critical consciousness and liberatory education. In analyzing both the goals and effects of Chicano Studies and multicultural curriculum at the university level, it seems that applying a similar curriculum for K-12 may yield the same results of educational liberation and empowerment for students of color.

This study fills a void in the field of Chicano Studies by studying the effects of Chicano/Latin American Studies in K-12 education for Chicano/Latino high school students. This dissertation also expands the current space within academia for meaningful research on cultural identity, ethnic identity and critical consciousness for Chicano/Latino adolescents.

Theoretical Framework

In this section I provide the theoretical basis for exploring the effects of Ethnic Studies-based education on ethnic identity formation of Chicano/Latino high school students. To accomplish this in a comprehensive way, I use a combination of five

[6] The term La Raza,"the people," is used by Latinos to represent all Latinos within the Western hemisphere that share similar cultural traits and backgrounds.

different theories: (a) social identity theory, (b) ethnic identity formation for adolescents, (c) border identity theory, (d) critical race theory, and (e) critical consciousness. Below I describe each of these theories in more detail and analyze their applicability to my study.

Social Identity Theory

Tajfel and Turner's (1986) theory defined social identity as "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 255). People identify themselves in relation to groups and group membership both positively and negatively. The term "minority" reflects more a group's social position than its actual numbers. Ironically, Latinos, for example, form the largest minority group in the United States; however their numbers are not representative of their achievements, particularly in education. Consequently, Latinos are seen by society as oppressed, disadvantaged, and illegal immigrants who are depleting social services (Chabram-Dernersesian, 2006; Haney López, 2003). The way individuals internalize their social position, either within a marginalized or dominant group, is reflected in their beliefs and self worth in both individual and group identity. Social identity theory illuminates how people of color perceive their ethnic group identity.

Hurtado and Gurin (2004) found limitations in Tajfel's (1981) use of social identity theory in that he did not "elaborate how individuals become aware of other groups in the environment and on what basis they make judgments about the inferiority or superiority of their group membership" (p. 50). In other words, Hurtado and Gurin (2004) point out that understanding one's ethnic group in terms of the dynamics of power

is what makes an individual conscious of his or her ethnic group. This point is important in terms of defining oneself positively with in one's group even if one is socially represented as having minimal to no power. For example, identifying oneself as "Chicano" represents consciousness of his/her position in society while yet still retaining cultural pride and identity within that group.

Ethnic Identity Theory for Adolescence

The psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson (1956), delineated the eight stages of psychosocial development from infancy to adulthood. Based on his original works of adolescent formation, he understood the importance of both the psychology and socialization for human development. Building upon Erik Erikson's (1956) psychosocial development of adolescence, ethnic identity theorist Phinney (1989) has concentrated on the following stages of ethnic identity development of adolescence:

> (1) Diffuse: Little to no exploration of one's ethnicity and no clear understanding of the issues. (2) Foreclosed: Little or no exploration of ethnicity, but apparent clarity about one's own ethnicity. Feelings about one's ethnicity may be either positive or negative, depending on one's socialization experiences. (3) Moratorium: Evidence of exploration, accompanied by some confusion about the meaning of one's own ethnicity. (4) Achieved: Evidence of exploration, accompanied by a clear, secure understanding, and acceptance of one's own ethnicity. (p. 38)

Phinney (1989) used these stages in order to measure ethnic identity across racial groups for adolescents. The importance of understanding one's stage in the process is highly correlated with how one perceives his or her self-image and sense of belonging. The research suggested that being in the achieved stage was coupled by positive self-image and sense of belonging.

Border Identity Theory

I use border theory for discussing Chicano/Latino youth identity as applied in Bejarano's (2005) research that focuses on border theory for Chicano/Latino youth identities within the context of their schooling experiences. Border theory has been implemented to understand the Chicano/Mexicano experience of living in two worlds, where there is a physical border that separates two geographical locations. Scholars such as Aldama (1997) and Elenes (2001) have documented the application of border theory for Chicano/Latino identity and the geopolitics of lived experiences in the borderlands. The United States and Mexico border is significant for the people who live within the borderlands and creates a dual identity, or what Anzaldúa (1999) calls *mestiza* consciousness. She continues to explain the new *mestiza* consciousness as a place of restlessness where anxiety and strife are submerged in the psyche because of the multiple complexities of being from neither here nor there, of not belonging in one world but two. These points of references inflict opposing messages that create what she calls *un choque* or cultural collision.

Furthermore, Bejarano (2005) defines and validates border theory for analyzing Chicano/Latino youth identities because it "provides a rich matrix for describing the racial/ethnic, class, gender, language, and geopolitical issues that urban Latina/o subcultures confront" (p. 26). In addition, border theory can be applied to the structural and metaphorical borders that are reflected in schools' hierarchical foundation. Bejarano in her research encountered Latina/o youth who, "found themselves within an oppressive informal hierarchy on school grounds, where the social stratification of the United States is reproduced" (p. 33). Youth find themselves in *un choque* once they enter school and

encounter diverse peer interactions or relationships with non-Chicano/Latino or non-U.S. born Latinos.

Bejarano's (2005) application of border theory for Chicano/Latino youth is relevant to my research due to the hybrid identities and identity seeking that Chicano/Latino youth confront in their schooling experiences that potentially affects their achievement. In addition, to overcome this *choque*, they seek affiliation with a peer group that shares their own ethnic identity, immigration status, culture, and/or language.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged from the scholarly work of legal studies and was adopted into the education realm in the mid-1990's (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Several educators/activists have used CRT as a lens to analyze the U.S. educational system and problems that are encountered by people of color. CRT is used to view issues of racial inequity in schools, such as school discipline, school systems, tracking, curriculum, graduation, retention and IQ or achievement measurements.

CRT is defined by the following six themes: (a) racism comprises a central part of American society within the historical, political and social context that continues to be pervasive and stagnant; (b) CRT opposes the popular belief of objectivity, neutrality, colorblindness, and merit; (c) CRT analyzes the law in a contextual/historical cannon; (d) CRT recognizes the importance of people of color's experiential knowledge when analyzing the law and society; (e) CRT is interdisciplinary; and (f) CRT strives to end racial oppression with ending all forms of oppression (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).

Well-known educational scholars, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995), introduced CRT's framework and its application to education. The two central themes that pertain to education and outcomes for students of color are explained by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) , "The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity" (p. 46).

Property rights for rich white men have been the American way throughout U.S. history (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005). First the pilgrims landed in the Americas and seized Native American land. Then the United States forefathers gave white landowners the right to own African Americans as property. Race continues to be pervasive and influential on the experiences of inequities for Chicanos/Latinos and African Americans.

Property and human rights are understood as two separate notions that implicitly and explicitly affect the equality of education for students of color. Therefore, in upper class sectors where tax revenues are higher, a disproportionate amount of money is being funneled into these school districts. With a higher proportion of tax dollars going into these affluent areas, more money can be allocated for upgrades of building facilities, such as smart rooms, updated computer technology, qualified personnel, and extra-curricular activities such as student organizations, after school tutoring, higher numbers of advanced placement courses, and an overall positive outlook for the students and their future (Kozol, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

The second theme, or outcome, that has particular meaning to my research is the element of voice. Voice is a large piece of what CRT believes to be fundamental to law and the experiential knowledge of people of color. Hence, giving people of color the

opportunity and forum to be heard offers a chance to be agents of change and empower others, as well as to give a group of people a common voice of their shared experiences of racism. CRT uses counterstorytelling as a way to combat the stories of the dominant group and their shared reality of superiority. As Yosso (2006) explained, "counterstories do not focus on trying to convince people that racism exists. Instead that counterstories seek to document the persistence of racism from the perspectives of those injured and victimized by its legacy" (p. 10). Counterstorytelling is used in order to voice students' experiences in schooling and their experiential knowledge.

Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) uses the same principles of CRT but also incorporates language rights, cultural discrimination, immigration policy and theory (Hernández-Truyol, 1997; Johnson, 1997; Solorzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). These factors are important to understand the relationship between the judicial system, educational policy, and immigration laws with the Latino experience. These issues that are common for Latinos comprise an important aspect of my research study that has been accounted for in the observations, interviews and dialogues with the participants.

Critical Consciousness and Liberation Theory

Paulo Freire (1973) defined "*conscientization*" for education both in and out of the classroom and where one perceives social oppression in society. Paulo Freire's term, "*conscientization*," is the process of authentic dialogue, reflection, and action. For the purpose of this study I use the term "critical consciousness" to refer to the process and outcome of *conscientization*. Authentic dialogue provides the space where both teacher and student are present, where there is respect for one's lived experiences and where both teacher and student have an equal chance to be heard. As the teacher or student brings a

problem-posing question to the classroom, she or he engages in an open dialogue where they are in a process of reflection. Reflection is where the student and teacher are critically reflecting on the problem-posing question, while at the same time the student is learning he/she is also teaching. As possible solutions surface, the teacher/student comes up with action-oriented steps to the problem for making change. The process does not end with action; once the action has been taken, the process starts all over again and reflection and dialogue continues.

Education as a process for liberatory thought and action results in raising one's critical consciousness. Educators (Banks & Banks, 2004; hooks, 1994; Nieto, 1996) have supported Freire's *conscientization* and use his concepts as a foundation for multicultural, ethnic, social justice, and other popular educational pedagogy. Another fundamental process for a liberatory education is to support a democratic classroom. hooks (1994) states, "Making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy" (p. 39). Progressive educators must take the opportunity to confront issues of class, racism, and gender discrimination in order to help students through a process of transformation and self-actualization. Furthermore, cultural responsive teaching validates and affirms the students' cultural, ethnic and various learning styles that are often excluded in the classroom (Gay, 2000). Conversely, this means that both the teacher and student interact together to become engaged and active participants in learning.

Another element in liberatory education is progressive teaching. This involves a democratic exchange of ideas between the educator and the student. Freire (1992) states, "The curiosity of the teacher and the students, in action, meet on the basis of teaching-

learning" (p. 81). When authentic dialogue takes place, there is an exchange of generative themes and the student is able to create and recreate his/her world. Furthermore, the student is able to put theory into practice, strive for liberation, become transformative, and act as a change agent of history.

Another point that is stressed by Freire (1992) is the importance of knowing your students as complex people. He stated, "I can understand them only as historically, culturally, and socially existing" (p. 97). This brings a sense of humanity to the educational process in terms of educator and student relationship and honoring their culture and identity.

All people should be given the opportunity to be liberated. Freire (1992) states, "The working class has a right to know its geography, and its language—or rather, a critical understanding of language in its dialectical relationship with thought and world: the dialectical interrelations of language, ideology, social classes, and education" (p. 132). This is a direct connection to Ethnic Studies and its principles. It has taken account of the social conditions of the marginalized and oppressed in communities of color. Moreover, building upon one's liberation is to not only assist the individuals, but the overall goal is to assist to liberate their own oppressed community.

Research Questions

This study investigated the effects of a Chicano/Latin American Studies course on high school students in terms of their ethnic identity development, academic achievement, and critical consciousness. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected ethnic identity among high school students?
2. How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected students' critical consciousness?
3. How has participation in this course changed Chicano/Latino students' academic achievement and aspirations?

Significance of the Study

This study investigated a Chicano/Latin American Studies course that illuminated possible solutions in terms of educational reform in favor of Chicano/Latino students. This investigation also indicated how Chicano/Latin American Studies curriculum affected Chicano/Latino high school students. Ascertaining the intricacies of Chicano/Latino identity, self-image, and consciousness, this study found ways to accomplish three objectives: (1) enhancing the educational experience of Chicano/Latino youth and foster the advancement for a more inclusive educational policy by adding to the academic discourse pertaining to Chicano/Latino students in high school; (2) raising students' critical consciousness in regard to not only their individual agency but also their participation in the national and global social, political, and cultural constructs; and (3) expanding the traditional social studies curriculum by including Ethnic Studies curriculum and courses.

Definition of Terms

Chicana/o

Chicana/o refers to a female or male born in the United States and of Mexican descent. While the term "Chicana/o" started as a derogatory word for referring to

Mexicans, it was reclaimed by Mexican-Americans in the 1960's during the student and Chicano movements as a political and unifying responsibility to bring about change for their communities (Acuña, 2004). It is also important to note that Chicana/o has a philosophical meaning that reclaims indigenous ancestry, the land of Aztlan, and the political, historical and social consciousness of the lived experiences and realities of colonization, racism and internal racism within the U.S. experience (Chicano Coordinating Council, 1970).

Latina/o

Latina/o is used to represent the diaspora of all groups, regardless of race, from Latin American countries that share similar language, customs, background and experiences. Latina/o also presents a political left wing progressive pan-ethnic label as opposed to the Hispanic label, which infers that Hispanic people have origins to Spain and Europe (Hurtado and Gurin, 2004). The Hispanic label came out of the Nixon administration in order to create a political platform for the Latino people (Muñoz, 1989). The United States Census Bureau also uses the word "Hispanic" for statistical purposes. Hispanic is a Eurocentric term that refers to origins from Spain.

Chicano/Latino

Chicano/Latino term is used by the researcher to be inclusive of all Spanish-speaking groups regardless of immigration status and national origin.

La Raza

This term originally came from the philosophical writings of Jose Vasconcelos (1997), first published in 1925 in his book, *La Raza Cosmica*/The Cosmic Race. The term "la Raza" literally translates to mean "the race." La Raza is also a unifying and

commonly used term by Spanish-speaking and Spanish-surnamed people located in Latin America and the United States (Cuellar, 1998). While it is used to describe a group of people with many commonalities such as language, colonial experience, mestizo, indigenous, African and or Spanish roots, it also unifies the group regardless of the vast spectrum of nationality, immigration status, race, geography, and language.

Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of race, ethnicity, and an emphasis on marginalized groups. This specialized field legitimizes the historical and socio-cultural experiences of people of color that are often neglected in history (Yang, 2000).

Multicultural Education

The goals of multicultural curriculum are to bring forth engaging critical thought, dialogue and reflection; help the students internalize a positive appreciation of diversity; and overcome ethnocentric prejudices and racist ideology (Banks & Banks, 2001; Nieto, 1999). Multicultural education derives its pedagogical and epistemology stances from Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, history, and behavioral sciences. It uses a vast breadth of interdisciplinary studies and tools across educational K-16 settings (Banks & Banks, 2001; Hollins, 1996; Nieto, 1996; Shor, 1992).

Educational Pipeline

"Educational pipeline" is a term that is used to represent the connection and matriculation of the schooling institutions. Yosso (2006) adds, "Schooling structures, practices, and discourses facilitate the flow of knowledge, skills, and students along the educational pipeline." (p. 4)

Critical Consciousness

Freire's (1973) term "critical consciousness" is used to describe one's awareness of oppression and the ability to critique society's role in influencing a capitalistic and power-based ideology. In education, the dominant ideology of power is perpetuated in schooling. In transformative education, critical consciousness is where the teacher and student are both engaged in the process of learning, teaching, and challenging a particular problem-posing question through praxis. Praxis is when the teacher and students are engaged in dialogue, reflection and action. This process is transformative and liberating because it encourages the act of mobilization toward a particular problem as well as the drive to find solutions. (Freire, 1973; Freire & Shor, 1987; hooks, 1994).

CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature covers three key areas concerning Chicano/Latino education. The first area, "miseducation," illustrates and summarizes the current dilemma in schooling. The second explores Chicano/Latino adolescents' identity formation. The third examines the history of multicultural education and the formation of Chicano/Latino studies programs. Cumulatively, these three areas illuminate the historical, pervasive issues of Chicano/Latino education in the United States, and demonstrate attempts by scholars/activists to provide solutions for Chicano/Latino miseducation.

Miseducation in Chicano/Latino Schooling

History of U.S. Public Schooling for Chicano/Latinos

Education for Latinos in the United States has an turbulent history dating back to the early 1900's (Gonzalez & Fernandez, 2003; Soltero, 2006). A history of oppressive and racialized U.S. public education has led to low academic achievement for Latino students (Haney López, 2003; Hayes-Bautista, 2004). Two significant court cases reveal the extent of this inequity. The case of *Roberto Alvarez v. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District* was one of the nation's first desegregation court cases in 1930. Alvarez and other parents complained that their children were not allowed to attend school with white students and were instructed by the principal to attend a two-room building solely for the purpose of Americanization of Mexican students. The ruling was in favor of Alvarez, declaring that the district was in violation of wrongfully segregating the Mexican students.

Another court case that shows the inequities in public schooling for Mexicans was *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez in 1973*, in which Rodriguez filed suit against San Antonio's school district's funding system. According to Soltero (2006), Rodriguez argued two points: first, that San Antonio's funding system was unconstitutional because it relied on local property taxation for funding, thus violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The more affluent neighborhoods had extra funding resources for schools, while poorer neighborhoods, representing Mexican communities, had inferior funding for their schools. The second argument was that education was a right and the schools' financial system "violated equal protection by infringing on poor students' rights to public education" (p. 80). These court cases are two examples of how race and class have historically affected Chicanos/Latinos in education. These factors continue to play a role in present day immigration laws and educational policy, influencing the restriction of Chicano/Latino representation in the 21st century educational pipeline.

School Failure

Valencia (2002) describes school failure for Chicano/Latino students as "their persistently, pervasively, and disproportionately, low academic achievement" (p. 4). Along with recognizing oppressive public policies with a negative effect on Chicano/Latino schooling, scholars (Darder, Torres, & Gutierrez, 1997; Delgado-Bernal, 1999; Moreno, 1999) have synthesized other factors and theories to account for the low academic achievement of Chicano/Latino students. Barrera (1997) discusses the role of racism in contributing to deficiency theories, such as providing biological or cultural explanations, or in misconceptions that Mexican-American families play a powerless role

in their children's schooling. Deficit theories have unfortunately shaped the way that scholars have viewed people of color since the beginning of the United States public educational system.

Specifically for Chicano/Latino educational experiences, much research has been premised upon Chicano/Latino inferiority. This in turn has supported racial inequalities in the United States public education system for Chicanos/Latinos through policy as well as pedagogical practices such as tracking methods, teachers' low expectations, banking method of instruction, limited resources for Spanish speaking parents and English language learners. These theories have reinforced the biased assumptions of the inferiority of Chicanos/Latinos because they put the locus of responsibility on Chicanos/Latinos rather than on structural factors within society (Katz, 1999).

Subtractive Schooling

Valenzuela (1999) uses the concept of "subtractive schooling" and theories of "social capital" and "subtractive assimilation" in her ethnographic study of a predominately Mexican high school in Houston, Texas. She explores the way this particular school subtracted resources from their students, why certain teachers were successful or not, and the students' perceptions of their schooling experiences. She witnesses and describes differences between Mexican immigrant and U.S.-born students in terms of their social capital, generational differences, and outlook on school achievement.

Valenzuela (1999) defines the concept of "subtractive schooling" as one that "divests [these] youth of important social and cultural resources, leaving them progressively vulnerable to academic failure" (p. 3). In other words, the educational

system will continue to fail Chicano/Latino students through the process of "subtractive schooling." Valenzuela further explains that the school distances Mexican and U.S.-born Mexican students from their own cultural knowledge base through biased curriculum and uncaring teacher-student relationships.

In discussing the subtractive schooling experiences of Chicano/Latino students, Valenzuela (1999) introduces the concepts of "subtractive assimilation" and "social capital" (p. 25-27). "Subtractive assimilation" describes how the educational policies support the ideal to assimilate to the U.S. mainstream through a Eurocentric curriculum, de-ethnicization and dismissal of cultural preservation. Valenzuela describes her interactions with Mexican immigrant students and their perceptions of schooling in the United States. One student, Amalia, felt teachers should have a responsibility to teach students their culture and history of origin. Amalia suggested that the development of ethnic pride would also lead to a greater appreciation of their education and build solidarity between Mexican immigrants and U.S. born students.

Social Capital

Valenzuela (1999) further uses the concept of "social capital" to explain how subtractive schooling does not support cultural networks and solidarity between students of color. Valenzuela sees the social networks among U.S. born students as important aspects of their social capital, which Chicano/Latino students lack. Social capital relies on group dynamics and networking relationships; limited social capital contributes to impaired achievement for Chicano/Latino students.

One of Valenzuela's (1999) student groups gave examples of how they support each other through their commonalities of experiencing racism, poverty, bicultural

identity, and being bilingual. For instance, Mexican immigrant students are more able to support one another through their understanding of Mexico's school system in contrast to the U.S. school system. They have social capital to network amongst each other through language and ability to tutor one another. Community support is also apparent in the example of one family who had the means to buy a computer and opened their home to their child's peers so they too can do their homework over the weekends. Having this support group increases their social capital and opportunity for their academic future, yet the schools do not recognize or value this type of social capital.

Inclusive Curriculum

Miseducation is demonstrated in the lack of support from school administration for cultural competent teaching and multicultural education. Consequently students are left with curriculum that does not embrace cultural differences, and teachers who are not trained in cross-cultural teaching (Diller & Moule, 2005). Duncan-Andrade (2005) states, "in addition to the absence of teachers and professional role models, Chicano students are also faced with a curriculum that too often reduces their role in the historical development of the modern world to that of a conquered people whose contributions are hardly worth mentioning" (p. 593). Similarily, De Jesús and Antrop-González (2006) found non-caring based school curriculum to be biased or hidden, perpetuating the class based positionalities of marginalized groups.

> The hidden curriculum, then, becomes the mechanism by which students learn their place in the economy, accept their position and develop the necessary skills for their role in the labor force. (p. 290)

As an alternative, De Jesús and Antrop-González (2006) elaborate a curriculum that reflects the student's culture and community as one of their student participants

described, “We are exploring ourselves. In global studies, we’re learning about the Taíno—the indigenous people of Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. We’re learning about our roots” (p. 288). This above example illustrates the importance of one community-based school, The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School (PACHS), which has implemented curricula that give students the ability to conceptualize, deconstruct, and critically analyze Eurocentric ideologies through an alternative paradigm.

Educación

Carger’s (1997) qualitative study in the school district of Chicago sought to understand why many teachers were experiencing Latino preschoolers as lacking readiness skills. Her interviews illuminated that many Latino families saw the importance of their children’s education as embedded in the concept of *bien educado.* To be *bien educado* or (*well educated)* is to raise your child with good manners, well behaved, respectful, and with an understanding of being loved and cherished as an integral part of the family. Being *bien educado* also refers to how children are expected to be fully obedient to adults, respectful to teachers and mindful of their role in their families’ responsibilities. The concept of *bien educado* does not necessarily fit within the U.S. mainstream notion of education for Latino families; and may mistakenly leave teachers with the false impression that Latino families do not care about their children’s education.

Non-Latino teachers may not understand that “*educación*” or “*bien educado*” are culturally embedded in Chicano/Latino families, and thus they, perhaps inadvertently, dismiss their students’ “*Mexicanidad*” (Mexican-ness) (Valenzuela, 1999). When the

non-Latino teacher dismisses their "*Mexicanidad*," Chicano/Latino students may become disengaged due to perceiving that they are not accepted nor respected. For instance, if they continue to receive negative messages about their culture, they may internalize these negative messages and develop an "I give up attitude." On the other hand, they may try to abandon their cultural practices in order to assimilate as a way of gaining acceptance. The intention of Chicano Studies programs is to reflect the "*educación*" pedagogy where one is respected, building upon solidarity across Raza and valuing the dignity and individuality of everyone.

Role of Teachers

Yosso (2006) noted that teachers in California public schools are approximately 75 percent white, whereas the majority of students are of color. The school districts' hiring practices do not reflect the students and community they serve; hence students of color do not have the opportunity to have teachers that reflect their own lived experiences. Consequently, a non-diverse school staff under serves students of color. This teacher-student mismatch in turn influences how the student learns from the teacher's own cultural lens. Therefore, the teachers tend to implement the curriculum from their own experiences and cultural experiences (Latham, 1999). Shared experiences between teachers of color and students of color can validate and support their shared social and cultural realities.

De Jesús and Antrop-González's (2006) ethnographic study of two Latino community-based schools on the East Coast presented factors that made these schools successful. One student participant had this to say regarding her experience with non-Latino teachers at her previous school,

> The teachers in my other high school were mean. They would speak down to you. I had no Latino teachers. My teachers didn't even know my name. If they wanted to get my attention, they would poke at me or yell at me. After a month of this shit, I was like, "I'm outta here!" (p. 291)

De Jesús and Antrop-González found that teachers that mirrored the community and students they served gave students a non-alienating presence and reaffirmed their cultural values.

Caring in Teaching

Valenzuela (1999) found that both immigrant and U.S.-born youth benefit from a caring relationship with their teachers. A supportive student-teacher relationship encourages academic enthusiasm and commitment. Similarly, more representation of Chicano/Latino teachers and bilingual teachers is important for Chicano/Latino students. Also beneficial is supportive curriculum that reflects the Chicano/Latino culture and history. Incorporating programs such as Chicano/Latino Studies into the curriculum may combat the schools' tendency to assimilate and negate anything Mexican. Educators that value biculturalism and community, as well as show authentic caring for their students, are all essential to improve student achievement and the school's social system. Valenzuela concluded,

> While abandoning one's original culture may seem appropriate to the teacher, principal, district-level administrator, or state level board member for whom the worth of the dominant culture is simply self-evident, it is inherently alienating for Mexican youth whose lived ethnic experience requires that they retain some measure of competence across the varied contexts that characterize their existence. And it is especially alienating for the vast majority of youth who are not located in the privileged rungs of the curriculum. Marginality evolves when children are socialized away from their communities and families of origin. The politics of difference that emerge between immigrant and U.S.-born youth not only reflect but follow from the distancing elements of schooling. While youth indeed enter school with these divisions among them, schooling exacerbates and legitimates these differences through the structure of the academic program. (p. 264)

In summary, Valenzuela's (1999) study captures the first-hand experiences of Mexican and Mexican-American youth in the high school system. It impresses the importance of authentic caring for students, validating their ethnic and schooling identity, and developing a positive schooling identity despite often alienating arenas like curriculum and pedagogy.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Challenges in navigating through the educational system create yet another barrier preventing Chicano/Latino parents from being involved in their children's schooling. Parents with limited English skills have limited access to English-speaking teachers, and thus have a harder time engaging and investing in their children's schooling. Furthermore, migrant families face a highly mobile lifestyle, often placing them in poor economic and housing conditions that impede their children's educational outcomes (López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Due to these factors many schools may not be successful in outreach efforts for migrant families or understand the impact of the socioeconomic barriers that impede parental involvement in their children's education.

López at al's. (2001) qualitative study on parent involvement for migrant families involved four districts: three in Texas and one in Illinois. These school districts were selected due to their successful migrant serving programs. The researchers found that these districts were successful because they first recognized the socioeconomic barriers that impeded the parents' involvement in their children's success in school. One district personnel talked about getting to know the migrant families in a personal way.

> We've been out in the community since day one that we started working. We know which families are needy…They have a dirt floor, no running water…I would go crazy you, know? And to them it is an every day experience. (p. 257)

The researchers further established that these schools and districts were also successful because of the unconventional ways they reached out to communities. Their caring approach gave them a better understanding of conditions, addressed basic needs of the families, and allowed them to provide assistance to the migrant parents so that the latter could better participate in their children's educational process.

Another barrier that stands in the way of parental involvement in schools for Latino immigrants is language. Ramirez (2003) interviewed Latino parents in Southern California regarding their experiences and involvement in their children's schooling. He indicated that the inability to have a fluent dialogue with teachers and school administration prevented parents from fully participating. One parent stated, "It does make it easier if the school people [employees] speak Spanish, but I would like it if an interpreter was present as well" (p. 99).

Other areas that immigrant parents were concerned about were the teacher's low expectations of their child's learning, accountability to parents' cultural sensitivity, and knowledge of cultural differences. An important as parental involvement is to a student's success, many factors impede Latino immigrant families' ability to participate in their children's educational process.

Socioeconomics of Communities

Factors such as segregation in schools and disproportionate representation in low socioeconomic neighborhoods are reflected in unequal social strata in schools and schooling experiences for students of color. Social class is salient to school success and educational opportunity since it is directly correlated with educational attainment (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004; Portes, 2005). In theory, the more schooling and educational

degrees one obtains, the larger amount of income one will earn (Vasquez, 2006). The U.S. Census Bureau (2001) report on education and income showed the monthly income for Hispanics with a high school diploma to be $1,397, Bachelor's degree $2,903, and Master's degree $5,642. According to statistics on poverty in the United States in 2005, (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Hill-Lee, 2006). Hispanic households are 21.8 percent below the poverty level, whereas Black households are 24.9 percent and whites 8.3 percent below the poverty line. From this we can deduce that the level of completed schooling has a direct effect on earning power. This correlation between income and education is also a persistent factor within school.

The K-12 school system represents a hierarchy where the more economic power a family or the surrounding community may have, the better the resources the child or school will receive. Kozol (2005) discusses the depressive environment and poor conditions of schools that serve underrepresented and low socio-economic neighborhoods. He further stresses that the lack of resources and funding of these schools limits their potential for learning. Moreover, parents with financial resources have more clout and influence over the school's administration since they are better able to build alliances with the schools, whereas low-income parents do not hold the same power and privilege.

Conversely, communities that reflect a lower socio-economic status are rarely taken seriously and are considered less of a threat with little political power or resources (Knapp & Woolverton, 2004). For example, parents with limited resources are less able to take time off work, so they more often miss the opportunity to be involved in their child's schooling. A parent who is able to take time from work or can afford to not work

has more opportunities to visit the school, talk with their child's teachers, attend school functions, and/or volunteer.

Even when schools are not segregated and represent the full spectrum of all levels of class and race, social inequities remain. Students of privilege have more access to credentialed teachers, college prep courses, school counselors, greater parental influence on the kinds of curriculum, and are more likely grouped toward high achievement. At the other end of the spectrum, Chicano/Latinos from lower socioeconomic strata are often subjected to overcrowded classrooms, tracked in vocational courses, and have limited access to Chicano/Latino teachers who share their own backgrounds (Darder, Torres, & Gutierrez, 1997; Oakes, 1985; Pérez & Salazar, 1997; Tejeda & Leonardo, 2000; Valencia, 2002).

The aforementioned inequalities in schools illustrate how social stratification affects Chicano/Latino schooling. As a result of miseducation, the Chicano/Latino community experiences negative repercussions of school failure, including unequal access to the political, social and job market in the United States. Solórzano and Solórzano (1995) state, "this lack of achievement and representation at each point in the [education] pipeline has resulted in both a talent loss to U.S. society and a loss of important role models for the next generation of Chicano students who aspire to educational and professional careers" (p. 294).

In all facets of the educational pipeline, Latinos continue to be underrepresented, which then affects the United States workforce and economy (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004). As the workforce is becoming more ethnic/racially diverse, school diplomas and college degrees for high skilled and paid jobs are declining.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2005) projected that the lack of educational improvements for racial/ethnic groups will result in a sharp decline in the skills of the workforce, which will ultimately affect the income of U.S. residents in the next two decades.

Chicano/Latino Youth Identities

Identity and Generational Status

Bicultural and bilingual youth often struggle with identity development in our Eurocentric nation. Valenzuela (1999) observed distinct differences in identity development across generational status (i.e., 1st, 2nd or 3rd U.S. born) and level of cultural assimilation. Their generational status, degree of segregation within their own ethnic-peer groups, and politics of difference between immigrant and U.S. born Latino students are all factors that shape their schooling experiences. While immigrant and U.S. born Latino youth lose the understanding of their experiences and friendships within their own peer groups. The school system devalues their culture by excluding a multicultural curriculum and supports mainstream students' misconceptions of their identity and solidarity. For example, school administrators and teachers support assimilation and losing one's original culture, thus alienating students' experiential knowledge.

Ethnic Identity

Researchers (Hurtado & Gurin, 2004; Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Sánchez, 1967) have studied the importance of ethnic identity for Chicanos/Latinos and their experiences in U.S. society. Ethnicity plays a significant role in American society, and as a construct, defines commonalities among groups of people and creates opportunity for community empowerment. On the other hand ethnic divisions can lead to oppression, conquest and

exploitation. Since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, ethnicity and race have been reclaimed as positive and unifying sources of identity (Santos, 1997). Santos argues, "Ethnicity is not a static attribute; it is a contending arena of dynamic social relations that "crystallize" in an identity, a sense of peoplehood" (p. 216).

Keefe and Padilla's (1984) empirical study, *Chicano ethnicity,* was groundbreaking in its use of ethnographic research and survey methodology to investigate a particular group's ethnic identification and acculturation. The authors focused on three scales: cultural awareness, ethnic loyalty, and ethnic social orientation. Using a three-year mixed-methods study, Keefe and Padilla found Mexican-Americans acculturated in certain areas, yet certain ethnic traits such as family ties were strengthened over generations. Regardless of the degree of acculturation and assimilation, Mexican-Americans maintained strong ethnic social circles, yet also developed other non-ethnic relationships. The level of generational status gave Mexican-Americans the ability to expand their relationships and social circles outside their own ethnicity. They also found Chicano identity rooted in ethnic loyalty and ethnic social interaction. In particular, Mexican-American youth's social interactions and their ethnic loyalty represent an important aspect of ethnic identity and peer relationships in schools.

Investigating ethnic identity development for school-aged youth, Ferdman and Gallegos (2001) discuss the importance of out-group perceptions and influences on ethnic youth in schools. Latino youth initially receive ideas of their ethnic group through family and loved ones. The positive messages they may have received through their home community are not always reinforced within the school community. In fact, Latino youth are often confronted with negative messages of their own ethnic group. How these

messages are assimilated is critical to ethnic identity development. When they encounter negative messages of their ethnic group, they can either reject or accept these perceptions. Ferdman and Gallegos found that "upon entry into educational institutions do they begin to encounter people unlike themselves and get messages from others about how their group is seen" (p. 46).

Hurtado and Gurin (2004) also discuss the importance of understanding group membership for young adults and their social identities when they encounter diverse environments. The authors illustrate that if Chicano/Latino college students' close networks and communities only reflect other Chicano/Latinos, they may take their ethnicity for granted. For example, if a Chicano/Latino student has the opportunity to take courses in Chicano Studies, he/she may reevaluate his/her ethnicity and its importance. Not only will the Chicano Studies course give them a sense of community within a college campus, but also the curriculum reflects Chicano/Latino history and current issues within the broader community. Similarly, Chicano/Latino Studies at the high school level can offer a positive development of ethnic identity and acclimation to a diverse campus.

As Bejarano (2005) explains, Chicano/Latino youth identity development is complex and dynamic, "Ethnic identities have a profound impact on young immigrants and native minorities caught at the crossroads of identity making" (p. 16). Ethnic identity includes gender, generational status, linguistics, and dual experiences. For instance, second or third generation Mexican-Americans can fluidly move from one identity formation to another, such as Chicano, Xicano, Tejano, Mexican or Mexican American. One purpose of Chicano/Latino Studies is to broaden the scope of social and ethnic

identities. Increased awareness of the students' own culture and history leads to a greater ability to incorporate various identity labels upon their social situation or environment.

Due to the fluidity of ethnic labels, students are able to increase their social capital because they are more apt to have relationships outside their own ethnic group. Mexican and Mexican-American youth have the opportunity to recreate and understand their ethnic identity within the context of their home, peer relationships and schooling experiences. Furthermore, whether they perceive their self-identity as positive or negative is influenced by the concept of "social mirroring" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

"Social mirroring" is a concept used by Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) for analyzing the identity formation of immigrant youth. Originally, the term refers to the child's sense of self from his/her mother's reflection in order to understand his/her gestures and experiences. The authors convey that all people rely on the reflections mirrored back to them, not only by their family or parental figures but also by other social strata. The Suárez-Orozcos broaden social mirroring for immigrant youth to include culture and other social strata (i.e., peers, teachers, media, siblings). These reflections mirrored back can be either positive or negative, and then can be internalized or rejected.

Significantly, if ethnic adolescents internalize negative societal reflections and accept these assumptions, they will suffer in their self-worth. As youth internalize these negative assumptions, they may respond to these hostilities in an unconstructive manner. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) explain, "the child responds with self-doubt

and shame, setting low aspirations in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: 'They are probably right. I'll never be able to do it' Yet another potential response is one of the 'You think I'm bad. Let me show you how bad I can be" (p. 100). This student's response can be seen as resistance or oppositional behavior which Delgado Bernal and Solorzano (2001) study defines as "reactionary resistant behavior" (p. 317). The student is expressing reactionary behaviors because he/she lacks the ability to critique his/her oppressive conditions.

Chicano/Latino youth experience this hostility and powerlessness within their schooling experiences (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). One example of this theory of social mirroring in practice for Chicano/Latino youth is disengagement from the dominant Eurocentric curriculum in schools. The covert messages students receive imply that the educational system is not concerned with their cultural history or vital contributions to U.S. history. Another example of the covert expression of social mirroring is the low expectations which teachers hold for immigrant youth (Valenzuela, 1999). Inadequate schooling conditions impede their learning and send messages that the school system does not care about their safety or learning environment. The implication is that they do not deserve clean, up to date technology equipment, and safe classroom environments (Kozol, 2005). Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) further express, "When there is too much cultural dissonance, negative social mirroring and role confusion, and when the cultural guides are inadequate, an adolescent will find it difficult to develop a flexible and adaptive sense of self " (p. 217).

Chicano/Latino students are faced with many challenges in and out of school as they form their sense of self. However, schools can be empowering for students and

minimize the cultural dissonance and negative social mirroring by incorporating multicultural/critical pedagogy into the school's curriculum and instruction. Moreover multicultural pedagogy could offer courses that facilitate critical analysis of oppression, critical consciousness and ethnic consciousness raising. Allowing students to be empowered can build the basis for a positive teacher-student relationship and transformative education. Giving students access to curriculum that is reflective of their culture, experiences and history can provide a motivation for learning, ethnic pride, and solidarity across ethnic groups (Vasquez, 2005).

School Identity

Understanding Chicano/Latino students' ethnic identity within the school setting is central to identifying solutions for Chicano/Latinos' poor academic performance. Fránquiz and Salazar's (2004) five-year ethnographic research study of Chicano/Mexicano high school students investigated three distinct academic settings: an English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classroom, a leadership skills elective course, and a school-within-a-school program called Opportunity School. The research site was located in Northern Colorado where the school's Chicano/Mexicano student population comprised 26 percent of the total student body. The methodology consisted of interviews and observations with students, teachers, and school administration. The researchers found that implementing a humanizing pedagogy entailed four elements salient for Chicano/Mexicano academic resiliency. These elements, culturally based in Chicano/Mexicano values and morals, represented a model for school success: *consejos, confianza*, *buen ejemplos,* and *respeto.*

Consejos was illustrated as a form of passing on verbal teachings. For instance, the researchers pointed out that one student who overcame incredible odds to graduate gave *consejos* of encouragement and advice to another student. Students also exemplified *confianza* between peers and teacher, which was expressed through their confidence and feeling comfortable in the classroom, being valued, and feeling trustworthy. Another element that was seen as an important aspect of Chicano/Mexicano schooling was *buen ejemplos*. Students represented *buen ejemplos* when they were able to be good role models among each other, which in turn, built on their interpersonal skills. Lastly, above all, *respeto* (respect) was key to the transformation and humanizing pedagogy. Fránquiz and Salazar (2004) stated, "Respect is the bonding agent for Chicano/Mexicano youth to embrace trust, verbal teachings and exemplary people into their lives" (p. 47).

Thus, when teachers in Fránquiz and Salazar's (2004) study used humanizing pedagogy, they were able to embrace students' ethnic uniqueness and experiential knowledge and give students the ability to transform their academic identities in the classroom. One example was the reading of a book called *Bless Me Ultima,* by Rodolfo Anaya (1972) which had both English and Spanish words. This project gave the students the opportunity to be connected to the readings and the ability to examine their ethnic differences and similarities as Chicanos/Mexicanos.

Re-education

History of Ethnic Studies

The field of Ethnic Studies was born out of the strife of the civil rights, anti-war, and free speech movements where university students, faculty and community activists were demanding structural changes within the university-level academic framework.

These changes included curriculum revisions, the formation of Ethnic Studies programs, and the recruitment of students and faculty of color (Casanova, 2001; Hu-DeHart, 2001). The formation of Ethnic Studies and its programs, such as Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies and Asian American Studies, spread to many California campuses during the 1960s and 1970s. California campuses (Los Angeles State University; University of California, Berkeley; San Francisco State University; and University of California, Santa Barbara) took a leading role in developing and implementing ethnic studies programs (Muñoz, 1989). In addition, these programs were also adopted at community colleges in Los Angeles County. Hu-DeHart (2004), expressed the need and purpose of these programs:

> The purpose of this new academic field is to recover and reconstruct the lived historical experiences and memories of those Americans whom history has neglected, to identify and credit the contributions of these Americans to the making of U.S. society and culture, to chronicle protest and resistance, and, finally, to establish alternative values and visions, institutions, and cultures. (p. 875)

As part of the only College of Ethnic Studies in the nation, the Raza Studies Department at San Francisco State University was established in 1969 in response to the unwavering protests and sit-ins by students, student organizations, faculty and community activists, commonly referred to as the *Third World Strike*. Since this movement, Ethnic Studies programs have been established throughout colleges nationwide.

The benefits of Ethnic Studies programs are multifold; they give students of color an academic space to present their experiences and community needs, educate students on the history of their culture, create a personal connection with the curriculum, and provide greater opportunity for self-determination and cultural preservation (Muñoz,

1989). Yang (2000) concludes that Ethnic Studies is a discipline that values multiple methodologies, including interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and comparative approaches. Proponents state that Ethnic Studies scholarship is founded in traditional scholarship and uses multiple disciplines from the social sciences and humanities. Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field that continues to grow and respond to the U.S. and global sociopolitical climate (Hu-Dehart, 2001).

El Movimiento and Chicano Studies

Many activists-turned-scholars (Acuña, 2004; Haney López, 2003; Martinez, 1991; Muñoz, 1989) say that the birth of Chicano Studies programs arose from the people who experienced many social injustices throughout United States history. *El Movimiento* (the movement) started during a time of global and national unrest in the 1970s. The Vietnam War was becoming increasingly unpopular, leading to protests via labor-strikes, walkouts and sit-ins by frustrated workers and students. People of color united beyond their differences, finding commonalities in their experiences of racism, poverty and social disparities (Acuña, 2004).

The Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s and 1970s was occurring across the nation, from African-Americans in the southern states to Mexican farm workers in California, and bolstered by the feminist movement that was gaining power during that time. The feminist movement for equal rights of women was also a driving force in the Civil Rights Movement. Chicano/Latino leaders were concerned with the global affairs in many Third World Latino countries, and pushed equality for “La Raza” to help combat and solve national and global social injustices. One key national issue was the under-

representation of Chicanos/Latinos in higher education and the lack of support for Chicano/Latino students to succeed in schools.

Chicano Studies was thus born out of a popular grassroots movement comprised of students, faculty, community and other racially diverse activists beginning in the 1960s. Outcomes of the Chicano Movement included both political and social strategies to devise and implement Chicano Studies in higher education, providing more direct avenues for social and political equality. In 1969, a group of students, faculty, and progressive educators gathered in Santa Barbara to formulate a strategic ideology, *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, to confront issues of access, recruitment, admissions, culturally-inclusive curriculum, and political action for Chicanos in academia (Chicano Coordinating Council, 1970). This published doctrine quickly spread among students and activists, and the voice of Chicana/o liberatory thought took effect in the recognition of academia as a "vital institutional instrument of change" (Soldatenko, 1996, p. 3). Scholars believed that constructing methods and institutionalizing the historical and contextual experiences of the Chicana/o in the academy was a way to provide self-determination and legitimacy (Soldatenko, 1996; Duran & Bernard, 1973).

The development of Chicano Studies was a critical component to legitimize the Chicano/Latino experience and to create an infrastructure to provide a direct avenue for social and political equality through self-determination, language, and self-identification. However, Chicano Studies scholarship has been challenged as to its effectiveness for student achievement. Caravantes (2006) claimed, "These Chicano Studies courses add very little to a college student's moral or intellectual development while matriculating through the university" (p. 69). In contrast, Yosso's (2006) study validated how Ethnic

Studies for Latino college students provide a safe haven and serve as a retention tool while navigating and experiencing a racialized campus climate.

Chicano Studies as a field in education gave students the right for sovereignty and ability to name themselves in the vast representation of the hybridity of Chicano/Latinos experiences in and out of the United States (Hurtado & Gurin, 2004). Furthermore, it gave scholars and professors the right to incorporate Spanish language into the curriculum and instruction as an avenue to affirm their dual identity. In order to pursue these goals the curriculum and instruction had not only to give voice to the voiceless, but also to sustain an autonomous scholarly entity in the academy that could produce transformative pedagogical praxis (Chicano Coordinating Council, 1970).

Ethnic Studies: Our Own Space, Our Own Voice

One way that Chicano/Latino college students have been able to congregate and get a reprieve from a racialized campus climate has been through Chicano Studies. Ethnic Studies has given students of color a safe space where they can feel empowered and further their academic success in higher education. Yosso's (2006) participatory study with Chicano undergraduate students from a Midwestern University focused on their experiences within a campus racial climate. One Chicana student spoke of how Chicanos use Ethnic Studies as a way of survival:

> … they [students of color] might double major or pick up a minor in Chicana/o Studies or Black Studies or maybe Women's Studies to try and balance out the negative climate. And even within their more traditional major, they might still try to take electives in Chicana/o Studies… I thought to myself how this class was oxygen for me. (p. 115)

Another way which Chicano Studies can combat racism in the political system is through theories that legitimize the experiences of people of color. Two theories that

address racism are critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical race theory (LatCrit). CRT analyzes the educational system through a counter-hegemonic lens in order to better understand the experiences of students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

One method in CRT research to give voice to marginalized students is counterstorytelling. Counter-storytelling differs from storytelling in that the storyteller is speaking from a marginalized point of view, challenging the mainstream understanding of racial and social justice. Counterstorytelling provides a direct avenue of empowerment for those often oppressed by a racially-segregated society through recounting the experiences of people of color (Yosso, 2006).

The practice of counterstorytelling in education allows students to express their schooling experiences, giving them the ability to identify, analyze and critique their position (Delgado, 1989; Yosso, 2006). For instance, Yosso's (2006) study of Chicana/o college experiences tells a story of their experience dealing with racialized campus climate. As one student expressed,

> There's a lot of ignorance on campus and other students don't necessarily realize it…. They don't realize minor things can be considered racism. A friend of mine introduced me to a group of students. You know, we were doing introductions. And everyone kind of stated their name. And she introduced me, saying, 'This is Lupe, she's Mexican'. You know, I'm not saying that I'm not proud, but it's just not necessarily how I introduce myself….I know she didn't do it on purpose, but it's just this layer of ignorance here that I've noticed. (p. 112)

Another way the students felt comfortable enough to discuss their isolation was through counterstorytelling. In the words of one student, "It's exhausting carrying all that with us all the time. Maybe after so many insults, over time, we might start thinking bad about ourselves. Like 'maybe they're right, maybe this isn't the place for me" (Yosso, 2006, p. 115).

A feeling of not belonging or having to defend your admission to school was an additional counterstory. One student said, “A lot of people make assumptions about our capabilities and whether we deserve to be here, but we’re suppose to assume every White student deserves to be here, just because they’re White” (Yosso, 2006, p. 116). A different student added, “ Our educational opportunities, when we had them, usually came through struggle” (p. 116).

Counterstorytelling gives legitimacy and serves to develop a critical and social consciousness crucial to understanding the racialized systems in the everyday realities of people of color. Thus counterstorytelling can provide avenues for building and strengthening communities. As Yosso (2006) wrote, “Counterstories can nurture community cultural wealth, memory and resistance” (p. 15). Educational institutions continue to use deficit models of Chicano/Latinos’ history and identity from a Eurocentric worldview. Most stories do not touch upon the various identities and the rich diaspora of the Chicana/Latino narrative; counterstorytelling can be critical for sharing our experiences and history (Hernández-Truyol, 1997).

The above-mentioned counterstories of the Chicano college students gave them legitimacy and a community of support in a racialized campus climate. Similarly, Chicano/Latino Studies gives students a sense of community, along with the ability to critically analyze racialized ideologies and voice their experiences. In this way, it can provide a safe environment for educational transformation.

Recent Latino Youth Activism

Youth movements from the early 1990s started a new wave of Chicano/Latino youth activism around the issues of immigration and educational equity (Martínez, 1998;

Seif, 2004). The most recent U.S. mass movements with Chicano/Latino youth took place between March and May, 2006. These movements identified the social injustices of immigration issues and struggles that affected the students' personally as well as the larger Latino community.

Lewis-Charp, Yu and Soukamneuth's (2006) qualitative study examined 11 U.S. civic youth organizations which created for marginalized youth an orientation of social justice in their social and political development. The study presented pedagogies used to cultivate the youths' political awareness and engagement. These pedagogies were: critical education, multicultural counseling, advocacy for marginalized communities, political education, and youth leadership. Identity was a key factor in the development of marginalized youth.

These organizations also emphasized critical education in order to combat issues of prejudice and discrimination, and encourage the student to self-reflect. They found that youth who challenged their own comfort level were able to self-actualize in their political development. As one youth expressed,

> I don't think it's about being comfortable all the time. It's about learning different circumstances that make you uncomfortable, where you have to stand up for what you say, even if it's not the majority opinion. It's about getting over the discomfort you feel. (p. 27)

Lewis-Charp et al's. (2006) findings suggest that identity is an important factor for youth of color in that it allows them to become involved in issues within their community by giving them a sense of connection and relevance. However youth of color are not often seen in political roles. Civic engagement seems out of reach for many disenfranchised youth, supporting the notion of their disengagement. Many adolescents in urban communities face issues of low socioeconomic status, unemployment, gang

violence, and under funded schools, which impede their participation in community service (Chalk & Phillips, 1996; Lewis-Charp, et al., 2006). Chalk and Phillips (1996) and Lewis-Charp et al. (2006) suggested that when students of color became politically engaged, they also reaffirm their connection to their ethnic identity, community and to social issues.

Lewis-Charp et al. (2006) found that youth activism and identity go hand in hand in making the political personal. This personal connection between their struggles and their own communities foster a drive toward social change. Moreover, disenfranchised youth are able to critically analyze and become self-aware of social injustice and eventually move toward political action. This awareness of their own personal struggles and issues of oppression in their larger community is critical for promoting social change. For instance, in California, many Latino students organized various walkouts in protest against the anti-immigration legislation that affected many Latino students and their community.

Flores-González, Rodríguez, and Rodríguez-Muñiz's (2006) participatory study investigated the Batey Urbano organization for Puerto Rican youth in an urban community in the East Coast. They looked at how the organization assists in raising awareness among Latino youth and how these youth become engaged in working for social justice. They also examined how Batey Urbano strengthens the relationships between Latino youth and adults.

Flores-González et al. (2006) found that Batey Urbano provides a safe space where Latino youth can gather, organize, and develop critical awareness. Batey offered a safe environment for the Puerto Rican youth, encouraging self-awareness so they may

survive outside of their own community. One youth indicates, "…So if you take the [Batey] with you wherever you go, then that becomes part of your experience…." (p. 182). A Batey founding member expresses the underlining pedagogy conveyed to their members,

> …we're activists, that's what we do; we actively attack the system from within, and any means that we can use, as far as legally, and as far as what we do, and sometimes, whether it's civil disobedience, whether it's strategies to address policy, or whether it's actually just building with young people and getting to determine itself on every level… (p. 183)

Flores-González et al. (2006) detailed the need for organizations to provide safe spaces for youth to organize politically and develop their self and group identity. Their study found that Batey's organization succeeded at increasing the political and social consciousness in Puerto Rican youth.

In sum, the Latino community is greatly tied into their Latino identity, which can be a source for mobilizing and connecting Latino youth activism and organizing. The success of these organizations for Latino youth is embedded in social justice, identity development, sociopolitical awareness, and action. Civic engagement of Latino youth is imperative not only to produce conscious citizens, but also to develop leaders within policy and judicial arenas in the United States.

Impact of Ethnic Studies Programs

Rodriguez (2000) conducted a study of an Ethnic Studies-based curriculum taught twice a week for 4 to 8 weeks across ethnic groups. The 153 participants were 7th graders in an urban high school in the Pacific Northwest. The students were given a pre-and post-test in order to measure the effects of the Ethnic Studies class on their ethnic identity, attitudes toward other groups, political tolerance, and political efficacy. Rodriguez's

study concluded that Ethnic Studies instruction had a positive effect on students' ethnic identity, but showed no significance for political attitudes.

Lewis-Charp et al. state, " Education about the 'Self' and identity is key to social transformation because it helps individuals identify and articulate what it is that needs to be changed" (p. 23). Ethnic Studies is often incorporated into the pedagogy of youth organizations and their philosophy in teaching the value of ethnic identity through the reconstruction of content often excluded from mainstream curriculum. Ethnic Studies is rooted in promoting both a positive ethnic self- identity and ethnic group identity which result in promoting self-actualization and involvement within communities (Yang, 2000).

Students' positive identity development is a goal undertaken by Ethnic Studies. However the effects of Chicano/Latino Studies on identity have not been researched empirically. Several research studies have factored in multicultural education as one area to be explored, suggesting further research on the development of a positive ethnic identity for youth (Gándara, 2004; Rodriguez, 2000; Vasquez, 2005).

Multicultural pedagogy and curriculum have been used in college-ready outreach programs for Chicano/Latino students, progressive K-12 schools, and higher education curriculum. Gándara's (2004) survey research on the effectiveness of the High School Puente Program, which serves 36 California high schools, found significant results. The four-year research study surveyed 2,000 participants with follow-up of 150 students divided by half into those who had participated in the Puente Program and others who had not. Gándara found that the Puente Program students had higher matriculation into 4-year colleges than did the non-Puente participants. One important aspect of the programs effectiveness was the support for a multicultural approach in instruction and curriculum.

In the Puente Program, teachers are trained in Latino literature, cultural awareness, skills on teaching in a heterogeneous classroom, and portfolio assessment. Latino literature, history and sociology are all central to the curriculum. Gándara (2004) discussed the students' perceptions of the program and the implementation of Latino literature, which showed that reading Latino literature was empowering in confirming their cultural and family experiences. In addition, the curriculum also combined folklore from the community and assignments that involved their family or mentors. This curriculum gave students the opportunity to involve their family in their assignments and to use their experiential knowledge.

An empirical case study by Vasquez (2005) investigated the impact of Chicano/Latino literature on ethnic identity for Chicano/Latino and non Chicano/Latino high school students. She conducted the participant observational research in a senior Chicano/Latino literature seminar at the University of Berkeley, for which 18 student participants volunteered to be interviewed. Vasquez hypothesized, "What is the effect of ethnic literature on personal and ethnic identity formation, for both minority and non-minority readers?" (p. 905). In particular, her findings suggested that Chicano/Latino literature for Chicano/Latino students instills a sense of pride, solidarity and understanding of the racial/ ethnic hardships of similar communities and authenticates their experiential knowledge as "insider" experts.

For non-Chicano/Latino participants, the findings suggested that the curriculum led to a better understanding of the experiences of the Chicano/Latino community and a sense of being open to exploring the experiences of minorities in U.S. society. The

students developed empathy towards other ethnic groups and reevaluated their own prejudicial thoughts and behaviors.

Studies (Rodriguez 2000; Gándara 2004; Vasquez, 2005) on multicultural curriculum for Chicano/Latino students suggest the importance of incorporating Ethnic Studies into the curriculum. In particular, Chicano/Latino students can have the opportunity to be the "owner" or "key player" in their education and create a space for expanding their ethnic consciousness. Vasquez (2005) concluded that multicultural education is a transformative process that changes misconceptions and dissolves the social hierarchy in the classroom.

While the area of Chicano/Latino Studies in higher education has not been fully investigated, these aforementioned studies suggest the importance of multicultural education, Ethnic Studies instruction, and Chicano/Latino literature for academic achievement. According to the *Directory of Chicana/o, Latina/o, and Latin American Studies Programs, Research and Policy Centers,* there are close to 400 Ethnic Studies and Chicano/Latino programs in colleges and universities nationwide (Reyes, 2006). Since the inception of the first Ethnic Studies Department at the California State University in San Francisco in 1969, these programs have increased nationwide by 10 percent every decade. In California, 24 state universities now offer either a M.A, B.A., or minor in Raza Studies or Chicano Studies (Whitson & Kyles, 1999).

Based upon the success of Chicano/Latino Ethnic Studies programs within the university setting, this study focused on the impact of such programs within a high school curriculum. Also, it contributes to the field of Ethnic Studies research, in particular to the

high school setting, since no prior research has been conducted on Ethnic Studies programs in high schools.

Summary

The four main sections of this literature review represent the historical and everyday experiences of the Chicano/Latino population in the United States and the impact on academic achievement in the educational pipeline. Scholars (Darder, Torres, & Gutierrez, 1997; Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004; Kozol, 2005; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999) have discussed the challenges of language, identity, inequality of schooling, cultural disconnect, and Eurocentric curricula that are often debilitating for Chicano/Latino school achievement.

Research on Chicano/Latino miseducation has illuminated various ways in which schools divest one's ethnic and cultural values (Valencia, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). Such non-caring schools perpetuate a racial and economic hierarchy that supports segregation and inequities for low socioeconomic groups and students of color (Kozol, 2005; Oakes, 1985; Pérez & Salazar, 1997; Tejeda & Leonardo, 2000). Furthermore, schools continue to subtract cultural resources from Chicano/Latino students through the Eurocentric curriculum by not supporting diverse hiring practices, de-valuing Chicano/Latinos cultural understanding of *educación* or de-valuing bicultural/bilingual skills (De Jesus & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999).

Parental involvement is known as a direct contributor to children's school success. However for Chicano/Latino parents, many barriers such as language, migrant lifestyles, poor economic conditions and cultural misconceptions, prevent such traditional involvement in their children's schooling (López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001).

Therefore, many teachers have the misconception that Chicano/Latino parents do not care about their children's education. However, Carger's (1997) study revealed a different view of education among the Chicano/Latino families - one that embraces the concept of *bien educado* ("well educated") in a much more holistic way, where a teacher-parent relationship is viewed as a central in this process.

The role of teachers is an important contributor to Chicano/Latino student success. In California the majority of teachers are white, and many tend to teach from their own cultural perspectives. They may not therefore possess the proper understanding of Chicano/Latinos' lived experiences and could possibly reject their students' ethnic and cultural selves (Yosso, 2006; Latham, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela (1999) also concluded that Chicano/Latinos would benefit from having a caring relationship with their teachers, as well as from being instructed with a multi-cultural pedagogy. These factors would help encourage academic commitment from students.

Subtractive schooling for Chicano/Latino students ultimately devalues their cultural and social resources, resulting in youth being vulnerable to academic failure (Valenzuela 1999). Often Chicano students are made to believe their subordinate positioning as played out in the classroom. Further, subtractive assimilation is also a way of subtracting one's resources through Eurocentric curriculum and de-ethnicization, leaving Chicano/Latino youth to become disengaged in their schooling.

Research literature on Chicano/Latino youth helps explain the prevailing disconnect between the school system and students' ethnic identity, which can result in low educational achievement. Ethnic identity is salient for Chicanos/Latinos and how they understand their social and ethnic selves (Hurtado & Gurin, 2004; Keefe & Padilla

1987). Where the school system and ethnic identity meet, the students find it necessary to negotiate their own identity. These two different perceptions come together and create the phenomenon known as "*el choque*" (Anzaldúa, 1999). Ethnic and school identity are interrelated and influence one's perceptions of school achievement and peer relationships (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001; Bejarano, 2005). According to Fránquiz and Salazar's (2004) ethnographic study, developing a humanizing pedagogy promotes Chicano/Latino values and morals, leading to a transformation of students' academic identities.

Re-education of Chicanos/Latinos started with the groundbreaking development of Ethnic Studies in higher education and its various programs (Muñoz, 1998). Chicano Studies provided Chicano students with a safe space that legitimized their experiences and a way to express their own counterstory (Hurtado & Gurin, 2004; Yosso, 2006). Critical race counterstorytelling is an important method used by people of color to reaffirm and recount their experiences of racial and social marginalization and perspectives on these issues (Yosso, 2006).

Chicano/Latino youth have become more conscious of their communities and how they are portrayed in the media and other social political realms. This realization has given rise to youth empowerment movements which have forged new hope and agency for change (Martínez, 1998). Recent Latino youth activism has centered on immigration and educational equality through K-12 protests and walkouts. Lewis-Charp et al. (2006) and Flores-González et al. (2006) identified Latino youth organizations that fostered political engagement for at risk Latino youth. These authors found that ethnic identity and political awareness go hand in hand, emphasizing how supportive environments can encourage young people to engage in activism.

This literature review has addressed the issues of miseducation, subtractive schooling experiences, youth identity and re-education of Chicano/Latino students. While several studies (Rodriguez, 2000; Gándara, 2004; Vasquez, 2005) have been dedicated to Ethnic Studies for college and junior high school students, little research exists on the impact of Ethnic Studies on high school students.

To address this gap, this study concentrated on the impact of Chicano/Latin American Studies for Chicano/Latino high school students. Research on a high school course dedicated solely to the philosophy and pedagogy of Ethnic Studies had not been previously implemented nor analyzed. The effects on students' ethnic identity, critical consciousness, and educational aspirations have not been researched until this dissertation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The researcher examined the effects of a Chicano/Latin American Studies course on high school students' ethnic identity, critical consciousness, and perceptions of higher education. Data collection entailed a pre-post-test, interviews, and observations. Eight students selected through a lottery process were chosen as volunteers for the interviews. The curriculum and teaching pedagogy were also examined.

Research Design

This study was a mixed methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data within an eight-month time frame in Fall 2006-Spring 2007. Data was collected sequentially. In the first phase, spanning the month of September, the researcher collected the student demographics and the pre-test data. Between September and December of 2006, I attended 60-minute classroom observations, twice a month, taking detailed notes and collecting student assignments. During the second phase, over the last four months of instruction from February through May 2007, I conducted the post-test and eight interviews as well as continued the bi-monthly 60-minute classroom observations. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, and Romero's (1999) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was used as a pre- and post-test to investigate the effects of a two semester Chicano/Latin American Studies course on the students' ethnic identity. The MEIM and a demographic background sheet were given to each student at the beginning of the course in September 2006. In May 2007 the MEIM was used as a measurement at the end of the course to measure the variable of ethnic identity.

The researcher made pre-arranged classroom observations twice a month throughout the first semester of the academic year, from August to December 2006, and three times a month from January to May 2007, to acquire insights into the pedagogy and classroom dynamics of the course. I conducted interviews with eight students and a one-time focus group, as well as interviewed the teacher. The intentions of the questions and dialogue were used to explore the scope of their Chicano/Latino consciousness and perceptions of higher education. The interviews gave the researcher and students the opportunity to have an open dialogical, critical, and reflective discussion in order to empower them in their educational endeavors.

Research Setting

Demographics

The high school where I conducted the study is the only public high school in the town of Reedley, California, in Fresno County. In 2006, the total student enrollment was 2,035. The ethnic breakdown for student enrollment [7] was 74 percent Latino, 21 percent White (non-Hispanic), 2 percent Asian, 1 percent Native American, 1 percent Filipino, and 1 percent other (California Department of Education Educational Demographics Unit, 2006). In addition 79 percent of the student population was on free or reduced lunch (California Department of Education, 2006).

In the year 2000 the City of Reedley's total population was 20,526 (Bureau, 2000). The ethnic breakdown of the city was 51.76% White, 67.59% Hispanic or Latino of any race, 0.43% African American, 1.21% Native American, 4.37% Asian, 0.07%

[7] The percentages may not sum 100 due to responses of: other, multiple, decline to state, or non-response.

Pacific Islander, 37.72% of other races, and 4.44% from two or more races[8]. The majority of the households had children living with them under the age of 18 and parents that were married[9]. The median income for a family was $37,027. The median age was 29 years with a per capita income of $12,096. Per capita income for White was $15,074, African American is $4,806, Native American $15,457, Asian $21,081 and Latino $8,041 (Epodunk, 2006b). 23.8% of Reedley's overall population and 18.5% of families were below the poverty line (Epodunk, 2006a). Yet, the medium house value for the year 2000 was $104,200.

In the 1900's, Thomas L. Reed donated the property, which established the town of Reedley. Located about 25 miles south east of the city of Fresno, California, Reedley is also known as the world's "fruit basket" because of the predominately agricultural industry (City of Reedley, California, 2006). Farmers, packinghouses, and fields of citrus surround the town. Due to the large amount of agricultural work many field workers are needed. Therefore, the town comprises a vast amount of 1st generation Latinos and many immigrants to work in the fields.

The Kings River runs through the town, which generates tourism during the summer. Various tourists from the San Joaquin Valley, northern and southern California come to enjoy the river for boating, floating, and camping. Reedley is also situated near the foothills of the Sequoia National Parks. There is one main street in Reedley that still has an old feel with many small businesses and restaurants. The town is also very family oriented and partakes in many hometown parades, high school sports, and school fundraisers. The community also boasts about and attends events at the community

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[8] Total can be greater than 100% because Hispanics could be counted in other races
[9] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reedley, California

college. Reedley Community College is also a main attraction to the town and its growing development.

Chicano/Latin American Studies High School Course

This Chicano/Latin American Studies course involved a curriculum that fostered a non-Eurocentric view of history, culture, critical reflection, politics, and social justice (Chabram-Dernersesian, 2006). More specifically, this course included the influences of Latin America, Latino and Chicano contributions in the U.S. from past to the present. Pedagogy of this course aimed to develop critical consciousness and a holistic view of Chicano/Latino ethnic identity through the lens of past and present Raza history.

Course readings varied from the main textbook, *Mexican American Heritage* by Carlos Jimenez (1994), to supplemental readings, such as the *Mexican Americans, American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos,* by Meier and Ribera (1993). The well-known Raza electronic editorial, *Column of the Americas,* by Gonzales and Rodriguez (2008), and contemporary periodicals were also used for highlighting sociopolitical events that related to the Raza community. Issues of immigration, National American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), U.S. and Latin America's elections were also integral to the curriculum. Motion picture films such as *1492 Conquest of Paradise* (1992), *The Mission* (1986), *Romero* (1989), *Zoot Suit* (1981), as well as educational videos like *Viva La Causa: 500 Years of Chicano History* (1995), *Mexico-American War* (2006) from the History Channel, and the series *Chicano*! (1996) were viewed as course material.

The Classroom

The overall classroom environment included posters of Aztec symbols, South American ruins, Latino historical figures, and photos of their high school soccer team. Round tables with four chairs were placed around the room. The classroom teacher assigned each student a seat at one of the tables. Every month the seating was rotated according to the teacher's instructions.

All students had to self-select to be enrolled in this class, which recruited students through word of mouth and teacher outreach. All students had to be either junior or senior status to be allowed to take the class. The teacher was also trained in Advance Via Individual Determination (A.V.I.D.) methods of class instruction, which assists underachieving middle and high school students in college preparation.

Participants

Students

The population was 21 high school students, representing 11th and 12th grades students that enrolled in the Chicano/Latin American Studies course. Only one course was offered, which was not a typical course supported by the administration and school counselors. The instructor had to advertise this as a college preparatory course, and students had to self-select for enrollment. The researcher selected the participants for interviews on a volunteer basis. All the respondents to the interview request were divided evenly by gender and asked to put their names in one of two hats. The researcher then randomly drew four names from each hat to arrive at the final pool of eight participants. I then interviewed these eight students regarding their perceptions of Chicano/Latino critical consciousness and higher education.

Participants included both males and females under the age of 18 years. All participants represented ethnic and racial backgrounds from Mexico.

Protection of Human Subjects

Student participants were enrolled in the Chicano/Latin American Studies course. They needed to complete the yearlong course, due to the pre-and post measurement. Initially they were given a consent form for their records, as well as a parent consent form to be signed. I presented the study and gave them assurance that their participation would have no bearing on their grade or completion of the course. The participants were told that there was no physical risk; however, the researcher addressed the potential for emotional effects. If they were feeling emotional effects from the interviews, they had the right to stop the interview process at any time.

An informed consent form and a Research Subject's Bill of Rights were given to each participant. Procedures and parent consent forms were mailed to the student participants and their families. The parent consent form was written in English and Spanish. The researcher discussed the student consent forms with the students and signed all copies on August 11, 2006. The students were given the consent form to review with their parents as well as for all signatures.

All data collected in the study remained confidential and kept in a locked box. Pseudonyms have been used to identify all individuals. Thus all student identities have remained confidential. The names of participants have not been used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

The initial application was submitted to the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) on July 12,

2006. Consent from the research school site and the approval of the study from the Institutional Review Board of the University of San Francisco was granted on August 3, 2006.

Potential Benefits to Participants

While there may have been no direct benefit to participants, the anticipated benefit of this study was that students would gain a better understanding of their cultural, political and ethnic history and a sense of importance in the context of their experiences in the United States. A random drawing at the end of the research project included two iPod giveaways for the participants.

Data Collection

The data collection took place on the premises of the participants' high school. The research setting entailed the Chicano/Latin American Studies classroom and other facilities on the school campus. The researcher stressed the importance that the interviewee had the right to be in a safe environment where he/she was able to freely express his/her opinions on various topics of the research questions. To provide a safe environment, I interviewed the participants in a room outside of the classroom. The researcher also checked in with the classroom teacher to make sure the participants' interactions with the researcher in no way hindered their participation in other classes or assignments. Once I asked for participant volunteers, the teacher took the opportunity to address the students' concerns regarding their participation and stressed that in no way would their grades be affected if they did or did not participate.

Background and Demographics Questionnaire

The background and demographics questionnaire consisted of a confidentiality statement, introduction to the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) and 10 fill in questions. The questions inquired about the family's ethnicity, student grade level, student's individual characteristics, how he/she found out about the course, and why he/she enrolled in this particular course.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was first developed by Phinney in 1992 in order to measure ethnic identity across all racial groups. The MEIM is comprised of 20 items to assess five facets of ethnic identity. The five consisted of: ethnic self-identity, ethnic behaviors, and practices, affirmation and belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and other group orientation. The 20 Lickert-scaled items were downscaled by Roberts et al. (1999) to a 12-item measurement. The revision of the MEIM by Roberts et al. measures ethnic identity using 5 items, and affirming/belonging/commitment to 7 items. The participants respond to the 12 items by rating their feelings on each question. The four point scale rates from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The scores are collected, summed and calculated for the mean. A low score shows a low ethnic identity, and a high score shows a high ethnic identity.

Interviews with Students

I interviewed eight students that were randomly selected. I asked for volunteers and reiterated that for their participation they would be entered in a raffle for an iPod at the end of the semester. The researcher had the students who volunteered to participate in the study, put their names in a hat for random selection. This resulted in four males

and four females for the final cohort of eight. At the end of the study there was a random draw for the iPod and Josefina was the winner. I followed a guideline of questions that I asked each student participant. The themes entailed their perceptions of higher education, the effects of the Chicano/Latino course and their understanding of critical consciousness. Critical consciousness was measured to the degree of ethnic pride, understanding of oppression, and educational achievement and aspirations. The following are questions that I asked to guide the interviews:

Introductory Questions

- Can you tell me a little about your background?
- How did you hear about this class?
- Why did you decide to take this class?

1. How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected ethnic identity among high school students?
    - How would you describe yourself before the course?
    - How do you feel this course has changed the way you think about your ethnic background?
    - How has this course affected the way you feel about Raza in general?
    - How has this class changed your relationships with other Raza students?
2. How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected students' critical consciousness?
    - Before you took this course were you interested in politics and issues that involved the Raza community?
    - Did you partake in the walkouts or protests last year? If yes why? Or why not?

- How has participation in this class allowed you to become involved in social movements or educating others about current events?
- Are you involved with any student organizations on campus? Before or after taking the course?
- Before the course were you aware of the concept of oppression and its impact on communities?
- How has this class opened your views on oppression?
- Can you give an example of how you would take action in an oppressive situation?

3. How has participation in this course changed Chicano/Latino students' academic achievement and aspirations?
    - What are your current educational goals?
    - Has this course changed the way you feel about your educational goals?
    - How has this course changed your overall grades in your other classes?
    - Are you going to college? If so, have you applied and which one?
    - Did this course change your views on going to college?

Focus Group

I conducted a one-time focus group on May 25, 2007, with 13 students that were present in class that day. They were reminded that their identities would be anonymous and their participation would not affect their grades. The focus group allowed the students to hear each other and their reactions to the dialogue questions. The focus group took place in their classroom. I explained the purpose of the focus group and the process of open dialogue and critical reflection. The questions to guide the focus group were

developed after the individual interviews with the students in order to take account of their earlier dialogues.

Interview with the Teacher

The researcher also conducted an interview with the teacher to inquire on the background, motives to becoming a teacher, struggles, course goals, objectives, teaching methods, and pedagogy. Confidentiality and a pseudonym were discussed with the teacher. I hoped to get insight into the teachers' perceptions of the effects of the Chicano/Latin American Studies course, insights into the workings of Reedley High School, and the students. Following are questions that I asked to guide the interview.

Introductory Questions

- How would you describe your students' perceptions on their *Mexicanismo or Latinismo* before taking this course and after?
- How do they perceive themselves and their *Mexicanismo* or *Latinismo* after the course?
- What type of changes in their thinking do you see at the end of course?
- What would you describe how Chicano Latin/American Studies changes their awareness of oppression?

1. How has participation in this course changed Chicano/Latino students' academic achievement and aspirations?
    - Do you see students increase their perception of higher education and its importance for the Raza community?
    - Do you see them have a solid sense of school identity as the course progress and how?
    - Have you seen a change in their grades as the course progresses and why?
    - How has your teaching or curriculum changed their academic achievement and aspirations?
    - Would you believe that if someone else taught this course that it would have the same effect on the students?

Limitations of the Study

In analyzing the research findings, I ultimately found two data sources to be not particularly helpful. First, the one-time interview with the teacher was not useful because the original questions focused too much on his own background rather on his perceptions of the students. Therefore, I could not use his responses to help triangulate my data on the students.

Secondly, the focus group held at the conclusion of the study provided data that I could use only in a limited way. One reason was that this focus group included all the members of the class, not just the cohort. Another issue was that two members of the cohort, Mariano and Xochitli were not present that day. In addition, only three members of the cohort actually spoke up during the discussion. Consequently, I ended up using the

focus group data selectively in that I included solely the responses of those three cohort members to enrich the analysis of the findings.

Another limitation was that this study cannot be generalized to other Ethnic Studies high school courses because only one Chicano/Latin American Studies course was offered at Reedley High School. Furthermore, due to the location of the study the results cannot be generalized to other Ethnic Studies programs/courses in other geographic locations. Also, only Chicanos/Latinos were enrolled in this class, not indicative of other Chicano/Latin American courses that the teacher had taught in the past. My study's population included only Chicano/Latinos, either U.S. born or immigrants.

Researcher bias presented another limitation. In this case, I had a positive view of Chicano/Latino Studies. Moreover, the researcher's ethnic and cultural background represented the same ethnic group and cultural experiences as the cohort. In addition, I am an alumnus of Reedley High School and the teacher of this course was my high school peer. We did not keep in contact until I visited his classroom in spring of 2006 to propose his class as my research site. Also, due to limited literature on the student impact of Ethnic Studies courses, only limited references to comparable studies can therefore be made.

Background of the Researcher

My educational journey as a first generation college student has always been a struggle. Coming from a family with a long lineage of fieldwork instead of schoolwork influenced my drive to change that tradition not only for myself but also for future generations. However, it did not come easy. A small agricultural town in the San

Joaquin Valley, surrounded by groves of trees and familiar faces working the land, is what I called home. Little did my parents know that working for pennies was going to get their daughter the worst education imaginable. Due to our demographics, our community was seen as a third-class town, filled with immigrants and children who were just going to end up in the fields. In spite of my situation, I did not give up.

My motivation to fight for my education ignited when I was a junior in high school. I was in my classroom when counselors were pulling students out of class. As one of the few students that were left in class, I got paranoid. I asked the teacher why I wasn't being called in and she stated, "Because you are not going to college." This hit me like a ton of bricks. I feared I was going to end up like my friends or work in the fields. This awareness angered me. "Why was I not college material? Why was it that I had no teachers supporting me? Why was it that I had no friends who are going to college?" These experiences finally made me ask important questions about my education. Asking these questions encouraged a sense of determination in me and brought me a higher level of awareness that I deserved to be educated and looked to as a potential Chicana scholar in order to make change.

Navigating and struggling through this educational labyrinth and working in higher education have given me keen insight on how policies can either assist or hinder students. In order to make institutional changes, one must not only have the awareness of the various issues and needs of the community, but the scholarship tools as well. As a Chicana I understand that the few people of color, or more specifically Latinos, that enter into levels of higher education have more responsibility to the community and academia.

I believe that my area of studies will not only impact Latinos in education, but will further influence education policy to assist the needs of under represented groups. My research in the Ethnic Studies programs for K-12 students will not only affect students, teachers, and administrations, but also will hopefully increase community service and, ultimately, social justice.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a Chicano/Latin American Studies course on high school students' ethnic identity, critical consciousness, academic achievement, and aspirations. This chapter presents the results of the mixed-methods research design. Before I present the results, first I provide profiles of the teacher and next profiles of the eight student participants. Following the profiles, the first section of the findings contains the quantitative results of the pre-and post-test that measured ethnic identity. The second section includes the content analysis of the qualitative data. The findings, presented in the order of each research question, are as follows:

Research Question 1: How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected ethnic identity among high school students?

Research Question 2: How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected students' critical consciousness?

Research Question 3: How has the participation in this course changed Chicano/Latino students' academic achievement and aspirations?

Lastly, all data collected were triangulated and analyzed for further discussion. The themes and inconsistencies are interpreted and reported by the researcher.

Profiles of Participants

Teacher Profile

This profile of the teacher helps to provide the context of the class and his purpose for teaching it. Murrieta grew up in a *bracero* [farm worker] family that migrated

to the United States from Guanajato, Mexico. His family still had relatives in Mexico, so they decided to send their son back for schooling there. Many of Murrieta's uncles and aunts were teachers in their hometown in Mexico. They valued education and tried to instill its importance throughout his schooling. Because of this, Murrieta always knew he was going to attend college. Murrieta attended school in Guanajato from third grade to his sophomore year in high school. He was going to apply upon graduation to the University of Guanajato, but regional political instability compelled his parents to send him to the United States to attend high school in Reedley, California, for his remaining two years.

During his time at Reedley High School, a guidance counselor who mentored Murrieta, urged him to apply to college. He explained, "I applied just to get him off my back. And I ended up getting accepted to besides Davis, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Fresno State." During his time at U.C. Davis, Murrieta went through culture shock, realizing that for most of his life he had lived in a small rural town where one's consciousness revolved around the sleepy town attitude. He stated,

> I felt a little bit isolated, I didn't feel comfortable. Up until I joined that organization that promoted Latino Mexican American identity, tried to help out the community and opened up my eyes, hey, not everybody is fortunate and noting the numbers and the statistics. That, I guess, that opened me up more. It opened my mind to go back to my community to try make a difference.

Murrieta's philosophy of teaching combines the value of education in Mexico and various international pedagogical theories of education. He posited, "My educational philosophy, I guess, comes from a Mexican philosophy of trying to educate to better the country, and to live in a better, more democratic and socially conscious country."

Murrieta fell in love with his junior high school history teacher's passion and teaching methods, and since that moment he knew he found his vocation.

Becoming involved with Chicano Studies in college opened his eyes on sociopolitical oppression. "I was thinking it was the individual I never looked at the barriers. The social economic, ethnic barriers, the covert racism that exist in schools, or the perceptions that people have of our community - I never really looked at that until I got into Davis," he further stated. Following his new-found consciousness led Murrieta to the realization that teaching Chicano Studies in high schools was an important step in empowering Chicano/Latino youth. This step would, in turn, lead to higher Chicano/Latino matriculation to college. Murrieta stated,

> I thought, well, they have some sort of connection to their background, maybe this would be a motivating part for it. I know it was for me. I mean, knowing my background fully and studying it I think going back to how quiet I was opened, got me out of my shell. Is being empowered knowing who I was. Knowing where I came from. And just because who I am, where I came from doesn't mean I cannot succeed.

After relentlessly writing the proposal for this class, he was finally given the opportunity to teach Chicano/Latin American Studies class in Reedley High School. He has taught this course continuously since the year 2000. The teacher was also trained in Advance Via Individual Determination (A.V.I.D.) methods of class instruction. The AVID program seeks to assist underachieving middle and high school students to help them prepare for college.

Cohort Profile

This study involved one high school course that initially comprised 20 junior and senior class students but ended up with a total of 19 students. (One student was not doing well after the first term and decided to change classes.) A cohort of eight (four males and

four females) was randomly selected to participate in individual interviews. The participants were asked to choose pseudonyms to ensure their confidentiality. By the end of the study only one male student turned 18 years of age and asked that his real first name be used in this study. All students were of the same Mexican ethnic background, but with varying generational, language and personal experiences. For example, some students were born in Mexico and maintained close ties through relatives still residing in their homeland.

The cohort of eight key participants was a mix of three juniors and five senior students. Most of them enrolled in the class to learn more about their ethnic and cultural history. All students were from working class backgrounds and had siblings. Six out of the eight students were fully Spanish-English bilingual. Only one did not understand any Spanish, but he strongly connected to his passion for Latino *futbol* (soccer). Another male student had a one-year old daughter and was working 20 to 30 hours in the evening. Two of the four females and one of the four males were athletes. The following page shows a snapshot of their profiles.

Table 2. Profile of cohort

Name	Immigrant Status	How Recruited	Rationale	Class Standing
Ameríca	Native of Mexico	Teacher	Increase knowledge of Latino history	Senior
Andrew	3rd generation	Academic Counselor	Improve transcript	Senior
Che	1st generation	Sibling	Increase knowledge of culture	Junior
Josefina	1st generation	Sibling	Increase understanding of ethnic self	Senior
Kim	1st generation `	Teacher	Increase knowledge of culture history	Junior
Mariano	Native of Mexico	Teacher	Increase knowledge of Chicano history	Senior
Pablo	Native of Mexico	Academic Counselor	Increase knowledge of culture	Senior
Xochitili	1st generation	Friend	Increase knowledge of cultural history	Junior

Ameríca

Ameríca, born in Mexico, migrated to the U.S. with her family in 2001. She still has close relationships with her family in Mexico. She has eight siblings who are all married. She is going to be the second in her family to go to college. She wants to pursue

law enforcement and Chicano Studies in college. Ameríca previously had Murrieta for another history course and was recruited in her class. During the winter break she went to visit her family in Mexico City. She is very comfortable speaking Spanish in class and often talks about her trips to Mexico. Since her trip to Mexico, her style turned to Mexico punk rock hairstyle and clothing, which set her apart from other female students in the class. Ameríca shows her *feminista* attitude when gender differences come up in class. For example, she does not hesitate and is very vocal in the class if someone makes a chauvinistic remark, quickly arguing with her teacher and classmates. She is not shy, often participating in class discussions and having side conversations with other female students in class, mostly in Spanish.

Andrew

Andrew is a 3rd generation Mexican-American and a senior in high school. His mother is the only one in the family that speaks Spanish, but Andrew was not taught to speak Spanish at home. On his mother's side, he has Yaqui ancestry. He has two siblings, one brother and one sister. His parents both work outside of Reedley and consider themselves in the middle class. He is the only student in the class that is on the high school's soccer team and was told about this class through his academic counselor. He always comes to class well groomed and participates in class discussions. He wants to continue his soccer career in college. He is self-motivated and has applied to a private college in Fresno, California.

Che

Che was born in the United States, as was his mother. His mother's side is from Mexico and Texas. His father was born in Michoacan, Mexico, and migrated to the

United States. His parents separated and divorced when Che was very young. He has an older sister and brother. His brother's experience taking the Chicano/Latin American Studies class influenced his decision to enroll. He is considered the "class clown." He always participates in class discussions and is very talkative in class. He is also a football player and a junior. He wishes to attend a vocational school for automotive technology.

Josefina

Josefina was born in the United States. Her mother was born and raised in Mexico, and her father was born in the United States. She was first raised speaking Spanish until she moved away from her grandmother's care. Josefina is a softball athlete who wants to continue in college. She is a senior and applied to private college in Northern California as well as to CSU Fresno. She wants to study in the field of Human Services to become a social worker and specialize in youth groups. She heard about this class through Mr. Murrieta, who was her AVID teacher. She is always vocal in class and participates in class discussions. She has a feisty demeanor and is quick to respond to her instructor's remarks on political or gender issues.

Kim

Kim's family migrated from San Luis Potosí, Mexico, in 1989 when her mother was pregnant. Her mother attended college in Mexico and learned English, and her father has limited English-speaking skills. Kim speaks both fluent English and Spanish. Both of her parents work full time. Kim is also a softball player and a cheerleader. She wants to attend California State University, Fresno, and major in Spanish. Ultimately, she wants to be a Spanish high school teacher. She had a prior class with Mr. Murrieta, and ended up in his Chicano/Latin American Studies class.

Mariano

Mariano is a Mexican-born young man that migrated in the year 2000 with his family to join his father in Reedley, California. His family is originally from Michoacan, Mexico. His father is a truck driver and often leaves the family for weeks on end. Mariano has a younger brother and an older sister. Both his parents had experience as migrant workers and travel to Mexico to visit family. Mariano is a senior and took this course because he wanted to know more about Chicano history. Although unmarried, he is a father of a two and a half month old daughter. His daughter's mother just finished high school early in the spring semester. Mariano also wants to attend a vocational school for automotive technology. However he also needs full time employment to support his new family.

Pablo

Pablo was born in Mexico and migrated with his family to California in 1995. He started elementary school in the United States. He is the middle child of seven male siblings. Pablo is fluent in both English and Spanish and often speaks both to classmates during class discussions. He is mostly quiet and observant in class. He does participate in class discussions, but is also timid. Even though he is shy, he does participate in the class by talking to other students and asking questions during class presentations. He first heard about this class from his academic counselor. Pablo wanted to take this class because of his interest in Chicano history and is interested in attending Reedley College next year.

Xochitli

Xochitli is first generation Mexican-American. Her father grew up speaking Spanish and Nahuatl. Her mother and father migrated from Hildago, Mexico, in 1989 in order to work in the United States in the agricultural business. She often travels with her family to Mexico to visit family and friends. Her guidance counselor asked if she liked her Latino literature class. Because she responded "yes," he referred her to take the Chicano/Latin American course. She has a quiet demeanor, but participates in class discussions. She wants to attend Reedley College and transfer later to San Jose State University. Xochitli is interested in Chicano Studies, culinary arts and the study of languages.

Research Question 1

How Has the Chicano/Latin American Studies Course Affected Ethnic Identity Among High School Students?

Quantitative Analysis

The investigation of Research Question 1 was two-fold and consisted of a pre-and post-test, as well as an interview, given to the students by the researcher. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was used in order to measure the students' ethnic identity before and after taking the course. The revision of the MEIM by Roberts et al. (1999) measures ethnic identity by using two factors that consist of items, affirming/belonging/commitment group and ethnic identity search that make up the second factor.

The participants (n=15) responded to the 12-item likert scale by rating their feelings on each question. The raw scores were collected, summed and calculated for the

mean. A low score shows a low ethnic identity, and a high score, a high ethnic identity. The pre- and post-test scores were inputted and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 15 with an alpha set at .05. A paired sample t-test was computed to understand the differences between the pre and post means. The pre and post ethnic identity label was tallied by percentages.

Self-Identified Ethnic Label

Students were questioned about how they ethnically self-identified before and after taking the course. Students were provided the following choices to report how they identify: Chicano, Mexican-American, Latino, Hispanic, Central American, and Mexican. Pre-test results are illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page.

In contrast to the pre-test results, Figure 2 indicates that there was a change in ethnic self-identification by students. Figure 2 shows a 20% decrease in use of the term "Hispanic" as an ethnic label. Moreover, there was a 52% increase in the use of "Mexican" as an ethnic label as shown on the following page.

Figure 1. Pre-self identified ethnic label

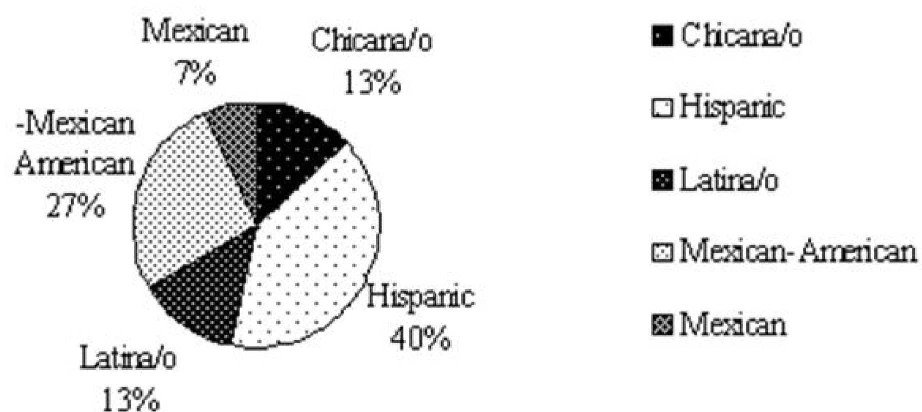
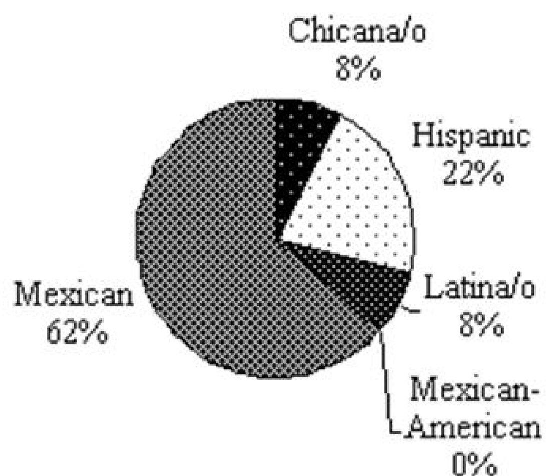


Figure 2. Post-self identified ethic label



MEIM Results

The first analysis of the MEIM scores was an overall comparison of the 12 items and the differences in the means for all students that took the pre and post-test (n=15). Of the 15 students the overall pre-and post-MEIM means indicated there was a change in the total means scores. The total change ranged from -0.18 to 0.91. There were only two scores that showed a decrease in the post-mean score. The other 13 scores had a positive change in the total mean scores. Therefore, there was an increase in their ethnic identity among the 13 students.

Table 3 shows the overall summary of the MEIM means and differences.

Table 3. Analysis summary of MEIM scores and differences

Student #	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Change in means	Percentages of different
1*	2.64	3.18	0.55	13.64%
2	3.45	3.73	0.27	6.82%
3*	2.82	3.09	0.27	0.18%
4*	3.00	3.18	0.18	4.55%
5	3.18	3.00	-0.18	-4.55%
6	3.09	3.55	0.45	11.36%
7	3.00	3.36	0.36	9.09%
8*	3.27	3.55	0.27	6.82%
9	3.27	3.73	0.45	11.36%
10*	2.82	3.00	0.18	4.55%
11	2.64	3.36	0.73	18.18%
12*	3.09	4.00	0.91	22.73%
13	2.91	3.82	0.91	22.73%
14*	3.27	3.18	-0.09	-2.27%
15	2.64	3.00	0.36	9.09%

Note: * Student Cohort

Among the 15 students that took the pre and post-test, only 6 out of the 8-cohort completed both a pre-and post-test. The other nine students were not part of the cohort that was interviewed, but participated in the pre-and post-test. Two students in the cohort, Mariano and Xochitli, were not present during the post-test due to absences. Due to the pressures of teenage father, Mariano was failing school and not going to graduate. Therefore, he was not present during our last session. Xochitli left school a week early for summer vacation. I was unable to contact her before she left. Within the cohort, only Che had a negative change in the pre-and post-total score of -.09. Table 4 shows the pre- and post-MEIM means, differences in the means and the difference in percentages.

Table 4. Summary of cohort of overall MEIM means and differences

Student name	Pre MEIM mean	Post MEIM mean	Difference mean	Differences percentage
Ameríca	3.27	3.55	.27	6.82%
Andrew	2.63	3.18	.55	13.62%
Che	3.27	3.18	-.09	-2.27%
Josefina	3.09	4.00	.91	22.73%
Kim	2.82	3.00	.18	4.55%
Pablo	2.82	3.09	.27	6.82%

$p < .01$
Note: Six out of the eight cohort completed both pre-and post-test.

Comparison of Results

Pre-and Post-Ethnic Identity Self-Identification

The observed results showed a decrease in the self-label of "Hispanic" and an increase in the label "Mexican." With an n=15, the observed differences were not

determined as statistically significant. With a larger population, it is possible that the differences would have been statistically significant. The increase of the ethnic term "Mexican" can be interpreted as feeling more proud of being from Mexico and/or an increased understanding of their ethnic identities. This can also be seen through the curriculum that represented a stronger emphasis of Latin American and Mexican history.

Another factor that influenced students to identify as Mexican opposed to Chicano was the teacher's strong Mexican ethnic identity. Through my observations the instructor would draw upon his own personal experiences being raised in Mexico and U.S. Furthermore, strong transnational ties to Mexico enabled many of the students to draw on their family's experience of traveling to and from Mexico to visit extended family members.

Pre-and Post-MEIM Scores

A paired sample t-test was used in order to determine an observed difference between a pre-and a post-test score of the level of ethnic identity from one group. Each question on the MEIM was paired and compared with the post answer. When the total means of the pre-test and post-test were calculated the t value is 4.56 with a *df* of 14 and $p = .001$. Significance at the .01 level 2 tailed. The results indicate a significant change between the pre-test compared to the post-test. The findings suggest that the Chicano/ Latin American Studies course made a significant difference in the students' ethnic identity. Furthermore, the two factors of the MEIM, ethnic identity search (EIS) and affirmation, belonging, and commitment (ABC), also showed a significant difference between the pre-and post-test scores.

Interview Results for Research Question 1

Each student participant was asked interview questions related to their experience in the Chicano/Latin American Studies course. The questions asked the students to describe themselves before the Chicano/Latin American Studies course, any changes in their ethnic identity, their feelings about the Raza community, and their relationships with other Raza students after taking the class.

Regional/National Identity

All of the eight students commented that this class had provided a space and curriculum to feel pride in their own Mexican cultural background. Furthermore, when asked to describe their background, they all stated their ethnic group as the first response to the question. For example, Mariano asserted, “I am more proud…I am not embarrassed of being Mexican. I’m proud of being Mexican.” Often times Mariano would mention in class regarding importance of having ties to Mexico and would often speak Spanish in class to his classmates. Six students answered by naming what region they were from in Mexico. Kim noted that her family was from San Luis Potosí, Mexico, while Ameríca’s family was from León, Guanajuato, and Xochitli’s family from Hildago near Veracruz. The other two, Andrew and Josefina, did not specify exactly where in Mexico they were from, but both had one parent born in the United States. During the group interview, Josefina revisited the importance of this class to identity by stating, “You learn about who you are.”

Reclaiming the Ancestral Language and History

Language was another aspect of how students talked about their ethnic identity. Xochitli described how her father had grown up speaking the indigenous language,

Nahuatl. Andrew also stated his parents had Yaqui ancestry. All but Andrew stated that Spanish was their first language. Three of the students commented that they now believed Spanish was important and worthy of pride. Kim said, “I am proud of who I am. I appreciate it more because Spanish was my first language so I didn’t like talking it. I wanted to talk more English. But, now I believe Spanish helps you more.”

Josefina commented that she previously did not value the Spanish language even though it was her first language. She was very embarrassed speaking Spanish in elementary school because Spanish-speaking children were grouped together in ESL classes and were viewed as less capable by their teacher. Later she became less embarrassed to study Spanish and grew to appreciate being bilingual in order to help the Raza community. In contrast, Xochitli at a very young age had to translate for her Spanish-speaking parents and understood the many barriers they had to overcome. She came to believe in the importance of learning more than one language. This was also due to her comfort ability to speak Spanish in class and to have a bilingual instructor.

The majority of the students in the class were bilingual and the teacher would switch from Spanish to English to stress a point or provide the students with another explanation. Moreover, when the students were quiet during lecture and to incite discussion he would switch from speaking English to Spanish. Murrieta would also wake up the students by teasing them in Spanish or playing the devil’s advocate for class discussion.

Prior to this class, half of the students had a naïve understanding of their cultural history and sociopolitical struggles. The researcher also found that in the beginning of the course the students were very surprised and upset to hear about their history.

Murrieta would explain to class how important it is to know your history and the correct history. Josefina explained, "I just kind of ignored [Latino history]. It wasn't a big thing to me. I didn't think much about it." She further added, "But now I have the knowledge to be proud and understand the race I come from …I am just proud that my race has kept fighting all the hardships." Josefina was never timid about asking questions or making comments in class. One particular moment in class, Josefina was so eager to answer questions from the instructor for extra credit that the instructor comically expressed, "anyone else but Josefina."

Pablo also described himself before the class as indifferent about his history saying, "Now I think more about my history and what I can make different. Like right now with all the political power. I see how Mexican Americans struggled before me." Pablo was very shy in the beginning, but became more vocal in the latter half of the course. With all the students Murrieta facilitated active participation in class. He made sure the students interacted with each other was to have the students change seats every month. Therefore, each student gained an opportunity to be seated with new peers in class. Murrieta felt this was important for creating classroom community.

Improving Raza and Non-Raza Relationships

The students felt that the class changed in a positive way their feelings towards the Raza community and relationships with their peers. Andrew commented, "I feel that [being Mexican is] something that is better about me. I can just go up to another person and go talk with them because we have something in common." Kim also mentioned that she stopped judging Raza and non-Raza peers and became more open to making new friends.

Josefina felt that this class improved her relationships with other Raza students. In the beginning of the class Josefina was embarrassed by her limited Spanish speaking skills. Because she did not speak fluent Spanish, she believed that she was seen as a “coconut.” “Coconut” is a derogatory term used by members of the Raza community for Latinos who have no understanding of their ethnic identity. But Josefina’s self-consciousness was not atypical. As their teacher, Murrieta, had explained at the beginning of the class, “Sometimes students that don’t speak Spanish might get intimidated when a lot of students in class speak Spanish. And that is why in the beginning of the year I break it down” (Murrieta, personal communication, January 13, 2007). Thus the class gave her a safe space to be herself, and the opportunity to be accepted, without judgment, as a Chicana

The increase in students’ positive ethnic identity, and the ability to understand the cultural variation in the Raza community, created room for exploring peer relationships outside their own ethnic group. For instance, Xochitli explained that being more centered on her own identity made her feel closer to Americans. She said, “They could be my far away cousins or something. So I am trying to be open to all [races].”

In contrast, Ameríca was aware that her relationships with other Raza students were unaffected. Because of her growing understanding of her own identity, she gained a new appreciation for the different backgrounds and histories of her non-Latino peers. Mariano also felt that his relationships with other students were not changed, but he adopted his Chicano/Latin American Studies teacher’s stance that everyone is equal and should be treated that way.

El Choque

Four students commented on the difficulties of finding their identities due to their position between the two worlds of Mexican and American culture. Both Josefina and Xochitli were first generation immigrants with differing levels of Spanish comprehension and connection to Mexico. Yet both discussed the hardships they face being Mexican-American. Xochitli talked about embracing different identities and the struggle of *el choque*. She explained:

> 'cause when I am here all my friends are from Mexico so they are like gringa and when I'm in Mexico they call me no se que pocha. No, I'm both. They don't understand that. Its hard to make them understand. Sometimes I am not Mexican enough or American enough.

Josefina also felt self-conscious about her lack of facility in Spanish. She felt people would judge her, claiming that she was trying to be white. Andrew, on the other hand, was not bilingual. However, his ethnic identification strongly correlated with his love for Latino *futbol;* he tried learning Spanish during his time with his Mexican soccer teammates.

Summary

In summary, Research Question 1 addressed the students' ethnic identity in conjunction with experiences, before and after taking the Chicano/Latin American Studies course. Through the student interviews on their ethnic identity, various themes emerged. The first theme involved the students' pride in their ethnic and regional identity. When asked about their ethnic identity, immediately the students responded with their original region of Mexico. The second theme was reclaiming the ancestral language and history. The majority of the students grew to understand the importance of

being bilingual and knowing about their culture and history. Through this increase in ethnic pride, they presented evidence of improved relationships with their Raza and non-Raza peers. While they recognized the importance of integrating their ethnic selves and building peer relationships, they also mentioned the complexities of understanding their dual identities. Four students directly remarked on their experience of *el choque* as a result of internalized conflicts from being of two different worlds.

Research Question 2

How Has the Chicano/Latin American Studies Course Affected Students' Critical Consciousness?

Research Question 2 investigated how students had changed and developed a greater sense of critical consciousness within the framework of the Chicano/Latin American Studies course. The dialogue centered on the following subquestions: the students' individual political development within the Raza community context, their participation in social movements and student organizations, and, finally, their understanding of the concepts of oppression and its impact on communities. The students spoke of their newfound interest in politics, participation in the first mass student walkout on their campus, understanding oppression, and the importance of an inclusive and liberatory curriculum.

Becoming Politically Aware

All students commented that previously they were uninterested in and unaware of politics in general and of how the Raza community was affected. During the interview, with Murrieta, he described how this class changed the students' tendency to accept the positions of the mainstream media uncritically. "I realize they are more willing not to be

so complacent. Some of them are willing to look for the [correct] information," he said (Murrieta, personal communication, January 13, 2007). Kim acknowledged, "No. I didn't really pay attention to any of that stuff. I catch myself watching the news. I never used to do that." Josefina felt she was too young to care about politics. She said, "I didn't pay attention...I would just say I'm too young to think about it. But, now…I think how these things will affect me."

Che in particular began to develop an interest in politics due to this class and specifically learning about United States and Mexico's political relationship. Che added, "I didn't know really anything about [politics] or took interest in it. I listen to the news now…and know more about [politics]." Pablo and Che both felt they had a new critique of the media, while the other seven students felt they were more interested in politics and the media overall. Many times Murrieta would explain to the class how important it was to not take information - even information in his class - for face value. The students would also question and ask his opinion on controversial topics; however Murrieta would respond that it wasn't about his opinion but that they had to think for themselves.

The topic of social movements was another area that all students addressed. They all discussed their participation (or lack of) in their high school's student walkout. On March 27, 2006, students from Reedley High School and other Fresno County high schools demonstrated and protested against the proposed immigration law H.R. 4437. An estimated 350 students from Reedley High School walked out and took to the streets of Reedley in protest, which was the first student walkout since Reedley High School's founding in 1898.

At the time, all eight students had mixed feelings about the walkouts and reflected later on their understanding of the significance of the student-led protest. Ameríca, Che, Josefina, Pablo and Xochitli participated in the 2006 student walkouts. Ameríca went to the walkouts on the second day because she was late to school during the first day of protesting. She went with her friends; however she was cautious and inquired about the repercussions. In contrast, Che had strong feelings about his participation in the walkouts. He stated,

> I was mad and happy, because some of the kids really were out there for the reason they should have been. A lot of just went out there to be out of class. I was so happy to know that we were actually trying to do something for our own people.

Pablo focused on the meaning behind his participation. He explained his perspective saying, "They have to understand that everyone is an immigrant, and that some have it harder to be citizens than others." Josefina felt this walkout could show adults that young people do care about social disparities. She explained, "Numbers speak out and maybe it wasn't going to change it, but could encourage older adults that we do care and are serious about it. Also [we could] inspire others to come out and possibly contribute to a big outcome."

Xochitli also participated in the walkouts, but stoically she had to go alone. None of her friends participated, but she felt she had to attend to represent her immigrant experience. She expressed the importance in sharing her experience with her family and to engage them politically.

Those who did not attend explained why. Kim was out ill the day of the walkouts, but recognized that she was naïve about the importance of the walkouts. After taking the course she reflected differently, stating "Now, I know what to say and what I stand for. If

I did it back then I wouldn't have known what I was doing." Mariano said that he had an exam during the time of the protest.

Unlike Kim, Andrew had decided not to attend because he felt it did not pertain to his own experience and was irrelevant. Andrew explained, "I didn't really know what was going on. I came to school and I saw a bunch of people outside. I didn't know what was really going on so I didn't partake in it."

All students reflected on and shared their increased sociopolitical awareness since experiencing the 2006 student walkouts and viewing historical footage of the 1960 strikes shown in class. They all articulated the importance of the walkouts, claiming in the future they would investigate further before deciding to participate in social movements.

Student Activities/Clubs

Despite all the students recognizing the importance of participating in social movements and learning about Chicano student groups, only three students actually belonged to a student organization. Josefina was actively involved with multiple student organizations such as the Spanish club, AVID, grammar club and played for the high school's softball and golf team. Kim was a member of the Spanish club, cheerleading and softball. Ameríca was the only student involved in a student organization centered on community service, and one of their projects was to design a community mural.

When asked about participating in student groups on campus, the remaining five commented that they were aware of the groups but not involved. Che stated that he never thought about joining a club. Andrew said he was occupied with soccer. Mariano was too busy working and supporting his new child, while Pablo and Xochitli were also not involved.

Understanding Oppression

All students felt they had an understanding of oppression by reflecting on what they learned in class and their own experiences with subtractive schooling. All students commented on feeling personally discriminated against in their school experiences. However, after this class, they reflected on how they had gained an increased tolerance of racial attitudes and a heightened desire to educate their peers on the concept of oppression.

Regarding oppression and inequality, the students expressed differing views. Andrew felt that educational inequity existed at Reedley High School, but was covert compared to the struggles during the Chicano Movement. Ameríca also shared her experiences of discriminatory remarks from her teachers. Mariano felt teachers and students expressed overt behaviors of racism in school. Nonetheless, he felt this class taught him to treat everyone equally. On the contrary to Mariano's feelings, Xochitli recalled her experience of having to translate for her family as a young girl and understanding how her parents' limited English skills were seen as shameful. She also talked about the ways in which this class could help prevent discrimination and ignorance about Latinos culture and history. She conveyed, "Why are they being this way? It is unfair. What did we do to them? We are just wanting better life."

Another point that the students in the group agreed upon was the disparity in school curriculum. Che pointed out in the group interview,

> Just like foreign language too. Everyone is taking German or French. Not a lot of people here [Reedley] speak German. How is that going to help you getting a step higher to get a job. Why not Spanish? You need it here is a lot of Mexican Americans here. You would think they would pick a smart[er] choice there is no point in taking it. It isn't going to help you a lot.

Pablo felt that he gained a new stance and view on oppression. He expressed,

> It opened my eyes because I see the news, but try and research on my own to see what really happened. Some news don't tell you the real truth. I try and look for what really happened and other people views.

Andrew noted the power and racial dynamics of immigration and the job market. He stated in the group interview, "The white people are so used to being on top that they are threatened that they are going to lose everything. They have to work hard like everybody else." He further expressed his feelings on white privilege with his peers in the group interview,

> I think it goes back to the idea that everything in Europe is better that is where the light skin comes from [power and privileged]. Goes back to that point I think if we had Ethnic Studies [in every race] I think they [majority of the students] would choose European Studies better.

Thus, during the group interview, the students connected white privilege with overt and covert racism, and they came to understand how the school environment encourages assimilation.

Responsibility To Be Critical and Teach Others

Even though each student had his or her own distinct experience with racism, they all stated that this class gave them a heightened sense of responsibility to share their new outlook on discrimination and racism. They felt compelled to inform their Latino peers of what they learned in class as well as a deeper political understanding of racist attitudes. Josefina explained her views on oppression saying, "I feel just because I am able to think critically and observe and understand why things have gone that way, it makes you want to change it. It makes you want to help others especially in your community." She added, "In order to understand yourself you need to understand where you come from and who you are gong to be around." Josefina also reiterates her point of building a sense

of community inside and outside of the classroom during the group interview. She explained,

> …respect everyone. We are all the same. All differences go out the door. It's easier to interact with other people now. I never talked with a lot of people in here at all. I was like whatever if I saw them. I'm more comfortable to talk to people that I am not use to talking to.

Americа commented that she had changed the way she used to judge other students. She believed this class taught her about internalized oppression, discrimination, and prejudice and how disempowering they are for all communities. Now she felt, "I don't care *que me toque*." As Murrieta said, "you can't fight racism with racism," and her participation in his class led her to a deeper understanding of the value of his assertion.

Che also touched upon the issues of internalized oppression. He stated that before the class he knew how racism and oppression affected the African American community, but was not taught specifically about Latino history. He believed that this class raised his awareness of oppression and racism within the Raza community. He became more aware of his peers' racial comments and made a point to take action. He illustrated his point by stating the following,

> Usually in school there's people who put down the Latino way in order to take away the pain of themselves I guess. Like the pisca vans they usually make fun of that. I'm like what is wrong with that. There is nothing wrong with that. Why are you making fun of it. Oh well I'm just making fun of it. Well I'm like what's the point. You are just making fun of your own parents. Because they have a pisca van. Why would you want to do that? Its actually pretty good work and good pay too.

Che further concluded, "I usually do that a lot [I] defend it now. Before I used to laugh and now I defend it." He also commented on how people view his newfound

consciousness, “People are more like what’s wrong with you? You used to be different. Well, I don’t know. I just don’t like the way [the friends] are talking now.”

In response to Research Question 2, the majority of students made connection to their new critical awareness of the media and reflected on their participation (or lack of) in Raza affairs. Moreover, the students all expressed their opinion of the student walkouts in Reedley High School. Since this class, they felt they would more fully investigate the meaning behind a social movement before taking political action. The students that did not participate in the walkout regretted that decision and now felt that they were more inclined to participate in social movements in the future.

A finding that surprised me about their critical consciousness was the nature of their participation in student groups/activities. Only three out of the eight students participated in student organizations, and only one of these organizations involved the community. I had expected that an outcome of the class would have been more active political participation rather than membership in social clubs. In addition, if the students were involved in student groups, they usually belonged to more than one group at a time. Thus the students did not appear to understand the value of belonging to political organizations and the use of organizational possibilities toward achieving definite political goals. Such an understanding is one of the chief components of critical consciousness. Instead most of the students saw membership in such organizations as social rather than political; this was largely a consequence of their developmental stage as adolescent youth.

Oppression was another key issue that surfaced prominently during the interviews, since all students felt that they experienced it both in and out of school.

Because of their newfound understanding of oppression and inequality, the students felt obliged to share their new consciousness with their peers. When the opportunity would arise, they claimed they would teach others what they had learned in the class.

Research Question 3

How Has Participation in This Course Changed Chicano/Latino Students' Academic Achievement and Aspirations?

Ethnic Studies programs aim to retain students in education as well as give them the opportunity to be key players in their own educational process. Therefore, in answer to Research Question 3, the following guidelines directed the dialogue: changes in students' educational goals and the course's influence on overall grades. The dialogues concluded with the students' feelings about their academic achievement, educational aspirations for higher education and overall thoughts and experiences in their class.

Increased Academic Achievement

Six students commented on their new perceptions of the importance of their education. Six of the eight students felt that this class helped to improve their Grade Point Average (G.P.A). For instance, Pablo stated that his overall grades increased to a B average and that he would recommend this class to other students, especially Raza students, so they could learn about their past. Josefina said,

> I think [this class] definitely changed my grades. It makes me want to strive for success more. It makes me want to not be any kind of any percentage to lower the percentage of Latinos in general to go to college. Now it makes me strive to be better. Now my G.P.A. is 4.0.

In addition, Che improved his overall G.P.A. to a high B average. He believed that this class showed him the importance of education. It changed his views on the educational

system as well as his personal educational goals. He expressed a wish that he had taken this class earlier since it gained him a new sense of purpose in education. He stated,

> I think more of it being important. Before I used to slack off a lot. I pay more attention in class to try and get a higher GPA and to better myself. I used to have a 1 point something. Now I have a 2.8 [G.P.A].

In the group interview, Che noted that teachers have an integral role in the learning process. He stated,

> They need to put the right teachers. Like Murrieta, he teaches you and then he gives you more explanations until you understand it. Most teachers just tell you and they expect you to understand it. They leave you behind all the time, so it would have to be on the teachers.

During the same interview, Andrew corroborated Che's remarks, "He [Murrieta] actually told us at the beginning of the year not to get angry after you leave this class. You guys can get mad, but leave it in the class don't take it out there." Murrieta's insight toward students' reactions regarding the curriculum and rediscovering their history provided the students with a safe space to react, dialogue, set boundaries, and reflect on constructive behavior with their newly acquired critical lens.

Understanding the complexity and history of unequal education for Chicanos had a positive impact on students' academic achievement and aspirations. Kim, an academically successful student overall, felt this class helped her improve in her Latino literature class. Americа and Xochitli both commented that this class empowered them to perform better in other classes and to pursue attending college. During the group interview, Josefina expressed her own feelings of empowerment.

> Other classes they tell you something and you're supposed to memorize it for the test, and when you learn something in here you memorize it, but you remember it for yourself not just a fact for a test next week. Its something you carry on [with you].

The increased sense of educational empowerment and the acknowledgment of the importance of education were the main goals of the class. As Murrieta explained, " For me the goal is to get an education. 'Not to be a negative statistic. To not be a part of the problem [but] to be a part of the solution.'"

Pablo discussed how this class changed his attitude towards education saying, "It changed my view because now I actually try harder in school because I see how it was harder for other Mexican Americans before me." Learning about the educational inequities made Pablo more determined to succeed in the educational arena. He now had the drive to study and the incentive to envision higher education as a possibility. He felt that attending college could open new avenues of personal and professional development for him and other Chicano/Latino students. At the end of this study Pablo was determined to get ahead and work harder in classes, while planning to attend Reedley College or Fresno State. Similarly Josefina expressed,

> After taking this course I want to receive a better education. This course taught me how people [from] my race or from the same culture didn't always have all the educational advantages that we have. It makes me want to take advantage and get as much as I can. It makes me want to tell others to appreciate what you have because not that long ago other students didn't have those rights and they had to fight for them.

One other student, Andrew, expressed disappointment with his academic progress. He stated that this class was very important to him, yet he was absent throughout the semester and his grades plunged from an A to B average. Mariano, however, did not have good grades. His grades were suffering greatly, and his teacher expressed concern that he was not going to graduate. Due to being a teenage father, Mariano felt that working was his first priority. He wanted to move with his new family to Chicago so he could work with relatives. When asked about his future in education, he

said that he may attend a vocational school so he would be able pursue an automotive technology career. Many students in his class did not know he was a young father, but they were all concerned why he did not come to the last day of class.

Sí Se Puede

The majority of students viewed their academic aspirations to go to college as personal and social statements. Ameríca stated that she gained a desire to attend college not only to show her family but all Raza. She shared that her older sister had no faith in her academic performance. She had told Ameríca that she expected her to get pregnant as a teenager and drop out of school. Despite facing this stereotypical negativity towards the achievements of Chicano/Latino adolescents, Ameríca became determined to graduate and attend college. She felt that education was the only way to succeed in life.

Josefina also developed plans to attend college. She commented on how the Chicano/Latin American Studies class gave her a sense of self-determination to make it. She stated, "After taking this class I really, really, really, wanted to prove to society that our race, our culture can go to college and can be smart and not just one of those statistics that brings our culture down." She also understood that both covert and overt racism prevails throughout the educational system.

She added,

> After taking this class hearing these ignorant comments… I take it easier now. The only way I can make a difference and stop those comments is by getting a better education and doing something with my life. It's not a discouragement but a sense of motivation. I get to prove them wrong instead of telling them things.

Because of this class, Xochitli found that she now considered education as more important than previously. She stated,

> To tell you the truth I thought I was just going to go to Reedley College and that is it. But, I look at what is happening. We have to start getting into college and getting involved into community and politics. Yeah, I want to go to college now and get a really good education. Par que no sientes oh Latinos no son lazy. Yo quiero enseñar that we can do stuff and go get a degree.

Andrew commented that what he learned in the class showed him the academic leap between high school and college. He stated, "It's hard to make that jump from high school to college. You have to be prepared. He further added, "This class taught me all the things that have happened and how people couldn't go to college and if they did go to college they didn't make it because they didn't have the knowledge."

When Che was asked about what in particular made him change his perspective on the importance of education, he replied that it was understanding what past generations of Latinos went through for equal education. This idea forged his commitment to pursue higher education by researching nearby colleges and vocational programs. He found himself advocating for other Latinos' education and future. He began to constantly support and convey the idea of the value of education to other students, encouraging them not to give up.

Kim also found that knowing the history of educational inequality for Chicano/Latinos made her appreciate education. She referred to her mother's own experience of being physically punished by school officials. Pablo as well felt that education was more important to him because of what he learned regarding the inequitable experiences of past generations. However, Pablo was concerned that he was not entirely prepared for college. Mariano made the connection of how the class changed his views on the importance of education, but he did not elaborate on his plans for attending college.

When asked why they changed their views on going to college, seven students made the connection to family, personal ambitions, and the betterment of the Raza community. This transformative educational experience influenced seven out of the eight students to pursue higher education. Understandably, Mariano was the only one more concerned with his immediate financial obligations to his child. The theme of *sí se puede* prevailed among these students for whom achievement was not only a tool for self-empowerment but also for uplifting the Raza community.

In summary, for Research Question 3, the students' academic and educational aspirations increased through understanding the historical schooling experiences of the Raza community. They were now able to perceive inequalities in their own schooling. Through this connection between the past and the present, along with the open dialogue in class, all students felt more inclined to pursue higher education. This motivation to succeed carried over to their other classes.

Summary

The interviews yielded a portrait of many realities of Chicano youth in the rural parts of the San Joaquin Valley. The dialogues spoke to the outcomes and potential of Ethnic Studies programs for youth of color. More specifically, they addressed the issues of identity formation of Chicano youth in a small rural town with two major ethnic groups - brown and white.

There was a positive change in the students' understanding of ethnic identity and how they labeled themselves at the end of the class. Reclaiming their cultural history and language was key to the students' development of their ethnic identity. Becoming aware

of their cultural history and diverse ethnic background led them to be more grounded in their identity, providing room to establish relationships with Raza and non-Raza peers.

During the dialogues on critical consciousness, students were able to reflect on their subtractive schooling experiences, issues of oppression, and their own empowering experiences in and out the classroom. They all reflected that their own experiences in understanding oppression and discrimination compelled them to educate their peers on these issues. Critical reflection on their own participation in the 2006 student walkouts also enabled them to feel more empowered. They learned tools to analyze social movements, which would help them in the future. However, only a few students participated in student organizations/activities.

The students overall commented that they viewed their class as a community without borders. They all felt this class motivated them to improve their overall grades and academic aspirations of attending college. This new sense of *sí se puede* empowered them to pursue higher education, not only to better themselves and the Raza community, but also to proclaim to the nation that Raza can make it to college.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter provides a summary of the research findings, a discussion of the themes findings, and final recommendations. The summary concerns my findings on the effects of a Chicano/Latin American Studies course on high school students' ethnic identity, critical consciousness, educational achievement, and aspirations. The discussion compares research results to the literature. Finally, I offer recommendations for future research and practice.

Summary of the Findings

As supported by quantitative and qualitative measures, the student participants in the study demonstrated increased development of pride in their ethnic identity. The qualitative results also indicated increased pride in their ethnic identity, critical consciousness, academic aspirations, and achievement. The analysis of the pre-and post-test MEIM mean scores were computed in SPSS and resulted in a significant increase in all the students' overall ethnic identity mean. Despite the observed difference, conclusions for the pre-and post-ethnic identity labels were not statistically significant due to the small sample size.

Furthermore, the qualitative results presented themes pertinent to the study's research questions. For Research Question 1 on ethnic identity, a dominant theme in the interviews with the cohort of eight students reflected an increase in their sense of ethnic pride. The students felt that the Chicano/Latin American Studies class strengthened their sense of ethnic pride and helped them reconnect to their regional identity. The students stressed the importance of reclaiming their native language and historical roots as integral

to cultivating ethnic and regional pride. The improvement in their own sense of ethnic pride positively affected the students' relationships with both Raza and non-Raza peers. A better understanding of themselves, as well as others from various backgrounds, gave them the ability to dialogue on their different identities. In particular, they revealed the phenomenon called *el choque*.

For Research Question 2, all students discussed how they had a new interest in politics and the effect of the media on the Raza community. As one student stated, "I didn't pay attention…I would just say I'm too young to think about it. But, now…I think how these things affect me." Another issue that emerged among the majority of students was a critical sense of participation in social movements. All of the students developed a newfound understanding of the value of participation in social movements. One example of action based upon Freire's (1973) definition of critical consciousness was the students' intention to educate others on how to overcome racist attitudes.

Lastly, the study revealed a change in the students' academic achievement and aspirations. The majority of students commented on the class curriculum and how it changed their views on education. Not only did they feel this class motivated them to improve their overall grades, but they also stated that college was now a more important and attainable goal. Their newfound aspirations of higher education were not only personal choices but also social statements. This feeling of *sí se puede* inspired a new sense of hope for their academic endeavors.

Discussion

The following section includes the themes that surfaced in the analysis of the data. The researcher compares the findings from this study with those from the scholarship included in the review of the literature.

Increased Development of Ethnic Identity

The students' pre-and post-ethnic identity label results indicated a 20% decrease of the use of the term "Hispanic" and a 52% increase of the ethnic identity label "Mexican." This change in ethnic label implied that instead of using the generic term "Hispanic" to represent ethnic identity, the students focused on their Mexican nationality. In the course, the students learned the history of the term "Hispanic" and its varying meanings over time. The term was then compared with other designation of ethnicity, and the students could then understand the distinctions implicit in the various labels. The term "Hispanic" is considered a generic label that is more mainstream, suggesting a link to European ancestry. The labels, "Mexican," "Chicano" or "Mexican-American" are related to ethnic pride and a reclaiming of nationality or bi-nationality.

Another reason in the increase in the term Mexican may be that their instructor self identified as Mexican, drawing upon his own transnational experiences of dual citizenship. Also, all the students in the class were from a Mexican background. Three in fact were born in Mexico and three were first generation immigrants with close ties to Mexico. Identifying as Mexican opposed to Hispanic was more accurate. The students gravitated towards self-identifying with their regional roots. As the students claimed their distinct "Mexican" label, they had the power to voice their self-identity (Ruiz, 1997).

However, in this study there was a decrease in the term “Chicano” and “Mexican-American” possibly due to the curriculum, which was heavily tied to Latin American and Mexican history. Furthermore, this class did not focus on ethnic identification or ethnic labeling. For example, claiming “Chicano” as an ethnic label represents a critical awareness of one’s indigenous historical roots, the sociopolitical context of being *mestizo,* and acknowledging experiences in the United States as an “other”.

The students in this study related what they learned in their Chicano/Latin American Studies course to the importance of understanding one’s cultural heritage. Most students chose to narrow their ethnic term to “Mexican” as opposed to “Hispanic,” demonstrating the desire to highlight their pride in their family’s regional roots. The researcher found that all the student participants also had an increase in political awareness.

Findings on students’ ethnic identity concurred with a study by Rodriguez (2000), which reported that an eight-week Ethnic Studies curriculum indicated a statistically significant increase in seventh graders’ ethnic identity. Similarly, Rodriguez used the MEIM as a pre-and post-test to measure ethnic identity and found an increase in students’ ethnic identity.

However, there were many differences between the current study and Rodriguez’s (2000) study. Even though both studies found positive results using the MEIM, the student populations, course curriculum, and timeframe of the treatment (Ethnic Studies) were different. Rodriguez’s study focused on seventh graders from various ethnic backgrounds. The Ethnic Studies course was broad in scope and instruction and was four

to eight weeks in length. Even though Rodriguez found that Ethnic Studies instruction had a positive effect on students' ethnic identity, his study did not focus on students' critical consciousness or academic achievement. Instead Rodriguez was concerned with the students' identity development and whether or not students would change their political attitudes.

Increased Relationships with Both Raza and Non-Raza Peers

An important theme of the current study was improved relationships with both Raza and non-Raza peers. As the student participants developed a more positive sense of their ethnic identity, they became more open to relationships outside their immediate circle of friends. In contrast, Bejarano's (2005) study found the pervasive tensions between Mexicano and Chicano students in their high schooling experiences. This strife between Mexicano and Chicano students further divided relationships within the Raza youth because of their varying differences within their culture and experiences.

Bejarano's (2005) study illuminated the various divisions between Raza youth in regards to language barriers, citizenship, social hierarchies, stereotypes, and internalized oppression. However, in the present study, the students felt more comfortable engaging with other Latinos with differing immigration status. Thus they gained social capital through their new relationships with U.S. born and immigrant youth in and outside their class.

As with Valenzuela's (1999) study, I found that the more students learned about their diverse cultural heritage, the more they increased social networking among their classmates. The Chicano/Latin American Studies course created a community within the classroom that provided them a space to discuss ethnic conflict and identify with various

generational experiences. Due to the fact that their teacher provided stories of his transnational experiences and dual citizenship, the students would also comment on their personal experiences and ties to Mexico. While a few students commented that they did not have strong ties to Mexico, their teacher would comment about the varying experiences in one's *Mexicanidad.* They were also validated in their *Mexicanidad* regardless of their Spanish speaking skills or ties to Mexico. This fact increased their social capital within and outside the borders of their classroom.

Reclaiming Ancestral Language and Heritage

Reclaiming ancestral language is a salient component of ethnic identity for Latinos. This theme emerged in my study as well as in Valenzuela's (1999). Both studies found that students connected the Spanish language to their own *Mexicanidad.* A few of her students expressed painful experiences of being considered within their own peer group as *pocho*[10] for not speaking Spanish fully or not understanding the language at all. This sense of shame led to not wanting to speak Spanish at school.

In addition, Bejarano's (2005) and Valenzuela's (1999) as well as my study found the school administration did not support the students *Mexicanidad.* Bejarano claimed, "Their spaces are infiltrated by hegemonic rhetoric on assimilation and speaking English" (p.153). In my study, the majority of the students felt that Spanish was not considered an important language by their high school administration. They expressed the sentiment that their *Mexicanidad* was often not supported, and that their high school was encouraging subtractive assimilation practices. For instance, Valenzuela stated that her

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[10] *Pocho* is defined as a person of Mexican descent that does not speak Spanish or a Mexican person that has lost their Mexicanness. It is used a derogatory term to refer to a Mexican person trying to act as a white person.

school used such practices by dismissing definitions of education embedded in Mexican culture. Furthermore, Yosso's (2006) study found that Chicano/Latino students have linguistic capital. She also posited that schools do not support bilingualism and recognize its value for building communication and social skills. During my study, the school administration did not support or promote the Chicano/Latin American Studies class. Although this class was a pre-collegiate course, the administration did not publicize this fact nor offer similar courses appropriate for the school, even with a population that is 74 percent Latino.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Yosso (2006) claimed that secondary school textbooks and curricula generally do not represent the contributions of Chicano communities in the nation and worldwide. However, in this class, the course was designed with Chicano/Latin American literature and history, which led to an increase in the development of the students' ethnic identity. In my observations, students were more fully engaged with the various videos, speakers, and culturally relevant supplemental readings. Many students also talked about how much they valued the importance of learning through Chicano/Latino literature, periodicals, and documentaries about the Raza community. They mentioned how educational experience connected them to their sociopolitical and historical heritage. One student commented that this class was never boring because the instructor used engaging teaching approaches such, as speakers, group activities, student presentations, AVID note taking, and the use of films.

Vasquez's (2005) qualitative study on the effects of a Chicano literature class for Latino and non-Latino college students affirmed my study's conclusions on the increased

development of ethnic identity. Comparably, finding was how the students were able to relate their own life experiences to Chicano literature. They discovered how Chicano literature could offer cultural validation and provide insights into their family dynamics. Thus, the value of a culturally relevant curriculum for ethnic validation of Latino students was apparent in both studies.

Another similar finding to Vasquez (2005) was how the Chicano texts provided the students with a sense of camaraderie amongst themselves. Much like my study, Vasquez (2005) described that the students discovered they were not alone in their lived experiences and hardships. In both cases we found that ethnic based curricula provided concrete examples of personal struggles as well as cultural nuances in their own community.

One difference with Vasquez's (2005) study was that it centered on Latino and non-Latino college students in a Chicano literature class. Vasquez was also concerned with the effect of the Chicano literature class on non-Latino students, who increased their empathy for various ethnic groups. In my study, this was not a concern because the students were all Latino.

El Choque

While the students in my study felt more empowered in their sense of ethnic identity, they also spoke of the multiple identities they carried, such as Mexican-American and Mexican. They painfully articulated their identity struggles and the impact on their peer relationships, connecting to the phenomenon of *el choque*. These contradictions coincided with Bejarano's (2005) findings on the impact of identity-making experiences on immigrant and U.S. born Latino youth. Bejarano suggested that

the use of various ethnic labels enabled students to navigate through the conflicts in their various social worlds. Bejarano investigated Latino students' ethnic conflicts, but did not focus on the Ethnic Studies curriculum, critical consciousness or academic achievement as I did in my study.

Redefining Critical Consciousness

In this study evidence of critical consciousness was seen in the students' counterstories of oppression, expression of growing political awareness, and their own obligations to teach others. But this awareness did not necessarily translate into political involvement in student organizations as the researcher had originally presumed. The findings did reveal themes of critical consciousness such as political awareness, reflection on student walkouts, and a critical perspective of the media's views on Raza. The majority of students felt that their increase in political awareness could be attributed to this class.

While the researcher used Freire's (1973) definition of critical consciousness to include authentic dialogue, reflection and action, the students did not necessarily define critical consciousness in these terms. This could be attributed to the fact that the researcher did not give her definition of critical consciousness to the students during the interviews. For example, the students did reflect on their newfound awareness of oppression in their schooling, but did not take it a step further to strategize how they could use student organizations to promote their political agendas.

Understanding Oppression

The students began to dialogue about internalized racism and oppression, yet they did not specifically reflect upon specific steps to take action on problem-posing solutions.

For example, Mariano indicated that he knew that he had experienced oppressive situations in his classes, but did not talk further about how he could act upon the situation. He felt he was powerless against his other teachers. Similarly, Kim expressed that she knew what oppression was and witnessed racist remarks but could not elaborate how she would act upon a situation other than to ignore it. However, they also understood how the media and societal views promoted negative stereotypes of the Raza community. Yosso (2006) stated, "Negative societal views of Chicanas/os, seen often through racialized media lenses, subtly justify the maintenance of low expectations for Chicana/o students" (p. 59).

During the focus group, students were able to share their counterstories with their fellow peers about how they were discriminated against by their other teachers. For instance Americа stated, "I remember when one of my teachers said I wasn't going to make it in her class because of my English [skills]. I left her class right then and signed up for Mr. Murrieta's class." Students compared how the Chicano/Latin American Studies class was different than all their other classes. Furthermore, they felt that the other teachers had lower expectations because of their ethnic background and considerably lower when the student was seen as an immigrant. As the students were presenting their counterstories, they did not provide ideas to promote action on the discrimination schooling practices. For example, the class discussed why the Chicano/Latin American Studies class was important for every student, but when asked what steps they could take as students to promote the class they were silent. I believe the students, even though aware of their own oppressive schooling experiences, were unprepared to build upon specific steps of Freire's critical consciousness. The

components of action in the concept of critical consciousness were redefined by the students as becoming politically aware, to be critical, and to teach others in and out of the classroom on their newfound knowledge.

Becoming Politically Involved

Unlike the study by Lewis-Charp et al. (2006), the results in this study indicated that a curriculum that supported their identity cultivated political awareness and engagement. Their findings suggested that civic groups that promoted critical education and positive identity fostered lifelong activism. The current study also found that the fostering of identity in the Chicano/Latin American Studies course provided the students an opportunity to reflect upon and became inspired to partake in activism. Even though the majority of the students did not necessarily join student political organizations, they did gain new insights into movement participation. The students' interpretation of action as a component of critical consciousness emerged when speaking of the 2006 student walkout. All the students reflected on their participation (or lack thereof), and then critically reanalyzed the problem and identified what they would have done differently.

Responsibility To Be Critical and Teach Others

Another outcome of the Chicano/Latin American Studies class was that the students gained motivation to teach others about their newfound knowledge of their sociocultural history. Their renewed ethnic pride led the students to take their culture and traditions seriously, and to instruct their fellow students, as well as to lead by example. Such exemplification was also confirmed in Fránquiz and Salazar's (2004) five-year ethnographic research study on Chicano/Mexicano high schools students. Their investigation resulted in a model for school success based upon culturally relevant

Chicano/Mexicano values and morals. One aspect of their model was the concept of *buen ejemplos.* This meant that all students were good role models for each other, leading to improved interpersonal skills. Likewise, students in my study often commented that they would model their new behavior and attitudes their peers and/or family members.

Concluding Thoughts

The researcher had prior expectations that the curriculum would raise one's critical consciousness to a degree that would lead to action. Also she anticipated that the instructor would focus on Freirian or social justice pedagogy. However, observations and dialogue with the teacher showed that his class centered more on the study of history. The main focus of his pedagogy was to use the Chicano/Latin American Studies to develop a positive sense of ethnic identity, increase students' interest in higher education, and deepen their understanding of their cultural and sociopolitical history. For example, when the students learned about the Chicano Movement, they gained an increased awareness of inequities in the Raza community; however the instructor did not take moments to reflect on current educational inequities in their own schooling.

Academic Achievement and Educational Aspirations

Seven of the eight students mentioned that learning about the Chicano Movement in the late 1960's gave them inspiration and determination toward their own academic progress. A few students also said that they were upset to know the true history of educational inequality for the Raza community and expressed a greater sense of responsibility to make the most of their education. Six out of the eight students improved

their grades, and all of the students discovered the importance of pursing higher education.

Such positive academic achievement and aspirations were also apparent in Gándara's (2004) longitudinal study on the effectiveness of a high school Puente program. Gandara examined high school students' academic aspirations, attitudes toward school, and preparation for college. Her study focused on high school Chicano/Latinos involved in a two-year Puente program geared toward academic rigor, counseling services, Latino literature, and cultural awareness. Gándara found that 43 percent of Puente students attended a four-year college after high school graduation as opposed to 24 percent of the non-Puente students.

Valenzuela's (1999) study also described how social capital contributes to academic achievement for students. She found that Latino immigrants had greater social capital with regard to scholastic support compared to U.S. born Latino youth. For example, Valenzuela posited that immigrant youth usually have a positive outlook on education due to their schooling experiences in Mexico. In contrast, where the classroom in my study consisted of both U.S. born and immigrant youth, the immigrant youth did not appear to have an advantage in terms of their social capital. Despite the fact that Mariano, Pablo, and Ameríca were immigrant youth, they did not appear to have any advantage in terms of greater financial resources, tighter social networks, or more academic support. Nor did they exhibit any special solidarity even though they shared a common immigrant experience.

In summary, the sense of *sí se puede* motivated the students to prove to themselves that they were ready for college and to increase their commitment to the Raza

community. These factors could improve Latino representation in the educational pipeline.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings of this study, the following are recommendations for future research:

1. The MEIM demonstrated statistically significant results in this study for measuring ethnic identity for high school students. However, using more than one cohort from the Chicano/Latin American Studies course would give more breadth to the study and be helpful for future research.

2. In this study, the curriculum of the Chicano/Latin Studies course-not the teacher's instruction- was the focal point. To broaden the scope of Ethnic Studies instruction, it would be important to include the teacher's instructional practices as part of the research.

3. Further investigation into the effect of courses other than Chicano/Latin Studies, such as Asian-American Studies, American Indian Studies, and Black Studies, would be warranted.

4. This single case study took place in a rural town in the San Joaquin Valley of California with a majority white and Latino population. I would recommend expanding this study to an urban setting with a more diverse population.

Implications for Educational Practice

Ethnic Studies programs and departments are facing criticism that questions their importance in education (Caravantes, 2006; Hanson, 2003; Hu-DeHart, 1995). For

example, opponents of Ethnic Studies programs and student organizations in Arizona school districts accused such programs and organizations of promoting anti-American ideology. Consequently, they claim that these organizations do not deserve funding at the K-12 level or in colleges and universities. A K-12 Raza Studies program in Tucson, Arizona, and various ethnic based college student organizations (i.e. MEChA, Black Business Students Association and Native Americans United) have been attacked by politicians, such as, Senator Jack Harper, in his Senate Bill 1108 (2008). The proposed bill declares that,

> (1) A primary purpose of public education is to inculcate values of American citizenship, (2) Public tax dollars used in public schools should not be used to denigrate American values and the teachings of western civilization, (3) Public tax dollars should not be used to promote political, religious, ideological or cultural beliefs or values as truth when such values are in conflict with the values of American citizenship and the teachings of western civilization. (Homeland Security Advisory Councils; Membership, 2008, Declaration of policy ¶ 1)

Senator Harper claims that Ethnic Studies programs foster anti-American sentiment and thus should not be publicly funded (Forde, 2008).

However, my study shows that Ethnic Studies programs in general, and Chicano/Latin Studies in particular, do have value in secondary education. This research study is the first to identify the effects of a Chicano/Latin American Studies course on high school students.

Recommendations for Educational Practice

In the United States, we face an urgent need to combat high secondary school drop out rates and low college matriculation rates among Chicano/Latino youth. Ethnic Studies programs or courses have shown to contribute positively to student success. School districts must take into account the alarming educational disparities, as shown in

the systemic ineffectiveness and failed school practices for Chicano/Latino youth. By supporting Ethnic Studies programs for youth of color, all students could be afforded the opportunity to learn from a culturally empowering curriculum, develop a positive sense of self, and increase reflection and critical dialogue. In this way, all youth could experience academic achievement.

The Chicano/Latin American Studies course researched in this study demonstrated effectiveness in raising the participants' critical consciousness, educational aspirations and achievement. Furthermore, it empowered the students to have their own voice within the school community. Thus Chicano/Latin American Studies benefit from greater support, including more resources for Chicano/Latino texts, social justice-oriented field trips, and increased course offerings.

School districts would also benefit from offering Ethnic Studies courses that highlight their students' ethnic representation. Counselors should showcase the benefits of this class at all levels. The school administration also needs to support teachers who are interested in developing pedagogy and curriculum which reflect an Ethnic Studies perspective and orientation.

Finally, building collaborations with K-12 and community colleges is also very important for the matriculation of Chicano/Latino students into higher education. Having community colleges offer Ethnic Studies courses to high school students on high school campuses for college credit will assist with the transition to higher education.

Researcher's Reflections

Through this study, I have learned many important aspects about myself as a Chicana scholar. I had the opportunity to give back to my community and to the field of

Ethnic Studies. My education has come full circle in that I was able to conduct my research in my alma mater, in which unintentionally I re-experienced the many issues that youth continue to face in Reedley High School. Even though this was painful at times, I was able to reclaim my own school identity. Dialoguing with the student participants, I was able to relate to their personal and schooling experiences. Moreover, through my classroom observations, I witnessed how Ethnic Studies can be transformative for youth. However, even though an Ethnic Studies curriculum in itself is powerful, it becomes even more so with an authentic and caring instructor. This classroom became a community where the students were able to openly express their lived experiences whether painful or positive. They used each other as *buen ejemplos* and shared what they learned in class to share with their peers. Due to the respect they had for the teacher and their motivation to begin challenging their subtractive schooling experiences, the theme of *educación* was the overall sentiment of the class.

Focusing on Ethnic Studies programs for secondary education has gained legitimacy in this class and validation of the importance of Ethnic Studies in the school district. I now have a stronger responsibility to empower other innovative teachers and students who want to promote and develop Ethnic Studies in their school's curriculum.

Using the student participants' voices, I feel that I have achieved two fundamental goals of Ethnic Studies - to assist and empower communities in need and to re-engage students in their own academics. Witnessing how Ethnic Studies can engage students has served to motivate me to support collaborations between secondary schools and higher education institutions for pre-collegiate opportunities in Ethnic Studies.

In retrospect, being the first in my family to graduate from high school and now completing my doctorate was never fathomed. There were many times when I felt this process would never be completed and I wanted to give up. But the support of the student participants and my family provided me the strength to persevere. Finally, without the love and support from the Great Spirit, faculty, friends, and colleagues I would not have completed this dissertation process. I would like to end with this…*Viva La Raza*!!!

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Appendix A

Recruitment Letter and Consent Form

Sophia S. Ramirez

San Francisco, CA 94115
Phone (415
Fax (415)
ssramirez@usfca.edu

August 11, 2006

Esteemed Student,

My name is Sophia Ramirez and I am a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco's International Multicultural Education Program. The focus of my study of focus is to explore the effects of Chicano/Latin Studies for students in high schools. I have always wanted to give back to my community by focusing my research on the successes as well as the issues that effect Chicano/Latino students. I am very interested in using your experiences and insights for my study.

Therefore, I am requesting your participation. As a researcher I will be making bi-weekly classroom observations throughout the fall and spring semester. I will also be conducting a pre and post-test that will take 15 minutes to fill out in August and again in May 2007. I will also ask for volunteers for interviews. Please make note that your participation is not needed for a course grade or credit and only voluntarily.

As a benefit to you for your time and support, I am more than happy to share the results as well as provide a copy of my dissertation abstract on my personal website at www.sfsu.edu/~sramirez. I also hope to have a free drawing for an ipod shuffle (MP3 Player) at the end of the semester.

In conclusion, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me via email at ssramirez@usfca.edu or my doctoral advisor, Dr. Susan Roberta Katz at katz@usfca.edu. Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Sophia S. Ramirez, M.S.
USF Doctoral Student

Enclosures: Bill of Rights, Consent Form (English and Spanish)

STUDENT CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CONSENT FOR STUDENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

My name is Sophia S. Ramirez and I am a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco. I plan to implement a study on "Raising Critical Consciousness in Raza High School Students" at your child's high school. The focus on my study will involve only students that are enrolled in the high school's Chicano/Latin American Studies course. I will conduct a 25 minute pre- and post test, classroom observations and group interviews. The purpose of the study is to assess the effects of the Chicano/Latin American Studies course on their ethnic identity, Chicano/Latino critical consciousness, and perceptions of higher education.

This study is focused on the course curriculum, teacher pedagogy and student pre and post student perceptions. This Consent Form is a request for permission to include your child in the study. Your child's participation is not required and her/his participation will not affect her/his grade in the class. It is planned that this study will be part of your child's regular school curriculum and provided in cooperation with their teacher Mr. .

Mr. and the school principal, Mr. , have learned about and approved the study. All data collected in the study will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to identify all individuals and thus all student identities will remain confidential. The names of participants will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

PROCEDURE
Data will be collected via pre and post-test, classroom observations, and pre and post interviews. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) will be used as pre and post-test in order to measure the salience of ethnicity and psychological well-being. This measurement is a short 15 question and answer test. It has been validated and used across ethnic adolescent groups. The interviews will either be video or audio taped. Your consent for your student to participate in the study also includes permission for your child to be interviewed. Your child's teacher, Mr. , will be present at all times during the study.

RISKS AND/OR DISCOMFORTS
There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study.

BENEFITS
While there may be no direct benefit to participants, the anticipated benefit of this study is that students will have a better understanding of their cultural, political and ethnic history and importance in the context of their experiences in the United States.

COSTS/FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation in this study. However, I hope to have a random drawing, an ipod, for all participants who complete the course.

QUESTIONS

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study before participating or during the study. I would be more than happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed, you may contact me at (415) [redacted]. If you have further questions about the study, you may contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

You can also contact Dr. Susan Katz at the University of San Francisco at (415) 422-2209 or via email at katz@usfca.edu or by writing her at The School of Education, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

CONSENT

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

I understand that student participation will always be voluntary. I understand that I am free to withdraw my child at anytime without affecting my child's grade or experience in Mr[redacted] class or Reedley High School.

My signature below indicates that I give my consent for my child to participate in activities associated with the study, including being audio or video taped.

Student Name ___________________________________

Parent Name ____________________________________

Parent Signature ________________________________ Date__________

Name of Person Obtaining Consent _Sophia S. Ramirez.

________________________ Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date__________

PARENT CONSENT FORM

(SPANISH)

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO

UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN FRANCISCO

PERMISO DE PARTICIPACIÓN DEL ESTUDIANTE

INTRODUCCIÓN Y PROPÓSITO

Mi nombre es Sophia S. Ramirez y soy estudiante en el programa de doctorado en la Universidad de San Francisco. Yo planeo realizar una investigación en la escuela elemental de su hijo(a) e implementare un plan de estudio que promueva “Elevar la conciencia critica en estudiantes de secundaria Latinos ”. El foco de mi estudio envuelve solamente a estudiantes que están matriculados en el curso de la escuela secundaria “Chicano/Latin American Studies”. Realizare exámenes antes y después del estudio, observaciones en el salón de clases y entrevistas en grupos. El propósito del estudio es valorar el resultado del curso Chicano/Latin American Studies en sus identidades étnicas, en sus conocimientos críticos de Chicano/Latinos y sus percepciones de la educación superior.
El ensayo esta enfocado en el plan de estudio del curso, la pedagogía del profesor y las percepciones de los estudiantes antes y después. Esta solicitud de permiso es una petición de autorización para incluir a su hijo en el estudio. No es mandatorio que su hijo/a participe en el estudio y la participación de el / ella no perjudicara la calificación de la clase. Esta proyectado que este estudio será parte del plan regular de estudio de la escuela de su hijo y será proveído con la cooperación del profesor de ellos Mr. Pizano.
Mr. Pizano director de la escuela conocen del estudio y lo han aprobado. Toda la información recaudada en el estudio se mantendrá confidencial. Se usaran seudónimos para identificar a todos los individuos, por esa razón, la identidad de todos los estudiantes se mantendrá confidencial

PROCEDIMIENTO
Se recoleccionaran datos de las entrevistas personales y de los exámenes hechos antes y después del estudio y de las observaciones hechas en el salón de clases. Usaremos The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) para medir los exámenes de antes y después del estudio en el aspecto mas notable del bienestar étnico y psicológico. Esta medida es un pequeño examen de 15 preguntas y respuestas. Las entrevistas serán grabadas en video o en audio. El permiso para que el estudiante participe en el estudio incluye también el permiso para que su hijo sea también entrevistado. Mr. Pizano estará presente todo el tiempo en todos los aspectos del estudio.

Los datos serán coleccionados por encuestas dadas antes y después del programa, observación, y colección de trabajo estudiantil (Reflejando en mi Educación y Conociendo a mi Familia). Adicionalmente, algunos estudiantes serán invitados a participar en entrevistas después del programa. Estas entrevistas serán grabadas por video o audio. Su consentimiento en la participación de su hijo(a) en el programa Camino a la Universidad también incluye su consentimiento para que su hijo(a) participe en una entrevista.

Todas las actividades estudiantiles tomarán lugar en la escuela de su hijo(a). La maestra Escobedo estará presente en todas las actividades de padres y estudiantiles.

RIESGOS O INCOMODIDADES

No reconocemos ningún riesgo o incomodidades asociados con la investigación.

BENEFICIOS

Aunque no habrá ningún beneficio directo para los participantes, el anticipado beneficio de la investigación es que su hijo(a) tendrá mejor entendimiento sobre los pasos que tendrán que tomar para asistir a la universidad.

CONSIDERACIONES FINANCIEROS

Su participación en la investigación es gratis, usted no recibirá compensación financiera por su participación.

PREGUNTAS

Si tiene preguntas, no dude en hacerlas antes que inicie su participación en el programa o durante la investigación. Sería un placer informales sobre los descubrimientos cuando la investigación termine, puede comunicarse conmigo llamando (415)[redacted]. Si tienes más preguntas sobre la investigación, puede comunicarse con la oficina IRBPHS en la Universidad de San Francisco, que se interesa en proteger voluntarios de programas de investigación. Puede comunicarse con la oficina de IRBPHS al llamar (415) 422-6091 y dejando un mensaje, al escribir un correo electrónico al IRBPHS@usfca.edu, o al escribir una carta a IRBPHS, Departamento de Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

También puede comunicarse con el Dr. Susan Roberta Katz en la Universidad de San Francisco al llamar (415) 422-2209 o por correo electrónico al katz@usfca.edu o al escribir una carta a, The School of Education, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

CONSENTIMIENTO

E recibido una copia de "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" (derechos de participantes de investigaciones) y una copia de este formulario.

Entiendo que la participación de mi hijo(a) es voluntaria. Entiendo que en cualquier momento puedo terminar la participación de mi hijo(a) sin afectar su calificación en el salón de la Srta. Escobedo o la escuela Tyrrell Elementary School.

Mi firma indica que doy mi consentimiento para que mi hijo(a) participe en las actividades asociadas con la investigación, incluyendo el consentimiento que sea grabado por video o audio.

Nombre de Estudiante ____

Nombre de Padre ____ Fecha____________

Firma del Padre ____ Fecha ____________

Nombre de Persona Obteniendo Consentimiento Sophia Santana Ramirez

Firma de Persona Obteniendo Consentimiento

____ Fecha ____________

Appendix B

Demographics and Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

Background and Demographics

Confidentiality Pledge

Your participation and time in this survey are very appreciated. Please, be sure that confidentiality is vital to effective and ethnic research methods. It should take no more than 25 minutes to complete. Your postal address, e-mail, identity, and the responses will be held in confidence.

Introduction

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or <u>ethnic groups</u> that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Chicano, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Information about you

Please fill in your parent's ethnicity: Mother_______________ Father_______________

Write in what ethnic group you identify yourself as (i.e., Chicano, Mexican-American, Latino, Hispanic):
____

Age_______________ Male or Female____________________

What class level are you (Please check mark 3yes or no):
Freshmen_________Sophmore___________Junior_____________Senior____________

Were you born in the United States (Please check mark 3yes or no): YES____ NO_____

Were your parents born in the United States (Please check mark 3yes or no): YES____ NO_____

How did you find out about this class? (Please describe below)

____

____

What were the reasons why you enrolled in this class? (Please describe below)

____

____

____

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be ____________________

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement and circle which one reflects your feelings.

1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. *(Please circle only one response)*

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

13- My ethnicity is

(1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
(2) Black or African American
(3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
(4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
(5) American Indian/Native American
(6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
(7) Other (write in): ________________________________

14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)

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[11] The MEIM was originally published in the following article:

Phinney, J. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with adolescents and young adults from diverse groups. Journal of Adolescent Research, 7, 156-176.

Apendex C
Interview Questions

Interviews with Students

Introductory Questions

- Can you tell me a little about your background?
- How did you hear about this class?
- Why did you decide to take this class?

4. How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected ethnic identity among high school students?
   - How would you describe yourself before the course?
   - How do you feel this course has changed the way you think about your ethnic background?
   - How has this course affected the way you feel about Raza in general?
   - How has this class changed your relationships with other Raza students?
5. How has the Chicano/Latin American Studies course affected students' critical consciousness?
   - Before you took this course were you interested in politics and issues that involved the Raza community?
   - Did you partake in the walkouts or protests last year? If yes why? Or why not?
   - How has participation in this class allowed you to become involved in social movements or educating others about current events?
   - Are you involved with any student organizations on campus? Before or after taking the course?
   - Before the course were you aware of the concept of oppression and its impact on communities?

- How has this class opened your views on oppression?
- Can you give an example of how you would take action in an oppressive situation?

6. How has participation in this course changed Chicano/Latino students' academic achievement and aspirations?
    - What are your current educational goals?
    - Has this course changed the way you feel about your educational goals?
    - How has this course changed your overall grades in your other classes?
    - Are you going to college? If so, have you applied and which one?
    - Did this course change your views on going to college?

Interview with the Teacher

Introductory Questions

- How would you describe your students' perceptions on their *Mexicanismo or Latinismo* before taking this course and after?
- How do they perceive themselves and their *Mexicanismo* or *Latinismo* after the course?
- What type of changes in their thinking do you see at the end of course?

Interview Questions

- What would you describe how Chicano Latin/American Studies changes their awareness of oppression?
- How has participation in this course changed Chicano/Latino students' academic achievement and aspirations?
- Do you see students increase their perception of higher education and its importance for the Raza community?
- Do you see them have a solid sense of school identity as the course progress and how?
- Have you seen a change in their grades as the course progresses and why?
- How has your teaching or curriculum changed their academic achievement and aspirations?
- Would you believe that if someone else taught this course that it would have the same effect on the students?

Apendex D

Syllabus of Chicano/Latin American Studies Course

MR. PIZANO

SS3

COURSE TITLE: CHICANO/LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Chicano/Latin American Studies is an upper division course that will focus on the historical life and accomplishments of Chicanos and Latinos in the United States. Students will have the opportunity to undertand literature by having a historical background; as well as to comprehend history by means of literature analysis and dramatization. The course will be dvided into two semester blocks. The first semester will begin with the pre-Hispanic civilizations (specifically the Aztec, Maya, Inca, and Southwest Native American Tribes), proceeding to the Spanish conquest, the Colonial Era, Independence and post-independence, ending with the year 1848. The second semester will begin with a recap of the years prior to 1848, and continue with the formation of the Southwestern United States. Historical aspects of Central and South America wil be covered, specifically the countries of Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Puerto Rico and Cuba; which have the biggest impact on Chicano/Latino politics, economics, and social identity in the United States. The impact of the Mexican Revolution, the Great Depression and W.W.II., will also be analyzed as they related to the people of Chicano/Latino descent at that time. The course will end by covering and analyzing the 1960's to the present in great detail as they relate to the Chicano/Latino society in the U.S.; as well as discuss events that correlate during this time in Latin America, and their impacts on the American society. Students enrolled in this class will have the opportunity to be more enriched culturally, and to

comprehend and understand the Chicano/Latino experience in the formation of the United States, thus breaking the barriers of misconceptions and stereotypes.

GRADING

1. 25% FINAL
2. 20% MIDTERM &TESTS
3. 15% JOURNAL AND PARTICIPATION
4. 25% HOMEWORK
5. 15% PROJECTS

There will be many opportunities to obtain extra credit, such as: Presentation on news articles that deal with the course, read books related to the subject, artistic projects, creation and performance of skits and/or dramatizations.

** The class is conducted as it were a college course. Students must be perpared to discuss and to do all the readings.