Cultural Responsiveness for School Counselors who work with Spanish-Speaking Parents and Students

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TOPICS

- Spanish-speaking parents and students in the school setting.
- Understanding the culture from which Spanish-speaking students and parents come.
- Ways in which to involve and engage Spanish-speaking parents in the child’s educational experience.
Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the population and at 50.5 million inhabitants account for 16% of the United States total population.

About one-in-five students in the United States is Hispanic and represent 60% of the total growth in public schools from 1990 to 2006.

With regard to language skills, nearly half (44%) of first-generation students speak English with difficulty, compared with 20% of second-generation students, and 5% of the third and higher generations.
## 2010-2011 Student Enrollment in Texas: Statewide Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>STUDENT COUNT</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>637,722</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>23,602</td>
<td>.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>169,338</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,480,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.3%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific</td>
<td>6,127</td>
<td>.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>78,419</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,538,409</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,933,617</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Texas Education Agency (2012)
2010-2011 Student Enrollment in Texas: Statewide Totals

- Hispanics had the largest numerical increase in enrollment between 2009-10 and 2010-11, rising by 81,316 students.

- In 2010-11, Hispanic students accounted for the largest percentage of total enrollment (50.3%), followed by White students (31.2%) and African American students (12.9%).
What do you know about Spanish-Speaking Parents and Students in the School Setting?
Challenges for Spanish-speaking students in U.S. schools: English-language difficulties and acculturation.

Villalba (2007).
English Language Difficulties

- Spanish-speaking students and their families often are not aware or properly informed of school policies.

- The resulting lack of communication between the school and Latino students and families creates frustration on the behalf of school staff and students alike, creating tension and strain in these relationships.

Villalba (2007).
Language Acquisition

- Research suggests that English learners generally require at least 5 to 7 years to achieve academic fluency, whereas social English can be attained in as few as 2 years.

- BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills.
  - Social English is an individual's ability to engage in informal conversation, usually conceptualized as face-to-face/peer-to-peer communication.

- CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.
  - Academic English requires a more comprehensive and analytic level of understanding, typically required for tasks such as math word problems and technical writing.

Acculturation

- Historically, U.S. immigrants have been sent the clear message that acculturation to the American way of life is required to survive, oftentimes by sacrificing aspects of their culture and identity.

- With the accumulation of negative experiences in the U.S. public schools, many Latino students grow increasingly doubtful, losing confidence in their ability to achieve academically and experiencing diminished academic self-efficacy.

Villalba (2007).
School Counselors

- Schools counselors are in a unique position to assist Latino students and help their families feel more comfortable as they navigate the educational environment.

- School counselors are well positioned to assist them with their needs and concerns.

Smith-Adcock et al. (2006).
Immigrant Parents

- The dream of Latino immigrant parents is to educate their children and thus provide a way out of poverty.
- Many immigrant parents feel lost and intimidated by the school system.
- Latino immigrant parents may be unsure of the best way to support and encourage their children in this unfamiliar environment.

Falicov (1998)
Immigrant Parents

- Immigrant parents may feel inadequate when dealing with the school, and justifiably fear prejudice.

- In addition to their genuine lack of understanding of language and institutional procedures, anxieties about detection of undocumented status and subsequent threat of deportation also contribute to the guardedness observed by well-meaning but frustrated teachers and principals.

Falicov (1998)
Cultural Competence

- Incompatibilities between home and school in primary languages, cognitive and relational styles, and values may cause confusion and conflict for Latino children who live with two sets of cultural codes.

- School counselors need to explore possible misunderstandings between the family and the school and to be aware that underachieving children may be experiencing confusion and dissonance in language and cultural codes.

Falicov (1998)
What do you know about the culture from which Spanish-speaking students and parents come?
Spanish-speaking parents and students may come from…

- Mexico
- Puerto Rico
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Central America
- South America

Santiago-Rivera et al. (2002)
Family-centered values and systems for Spanish-speaking individuals

Santiago-Rivera et al. (2002)
Familismo

- Latinos have a strong familistic orientation in that they value close relationships, and stress interdependence, cohesiveness, and cooperation among family members.
- Preference for maintaining a close connection to family.
- Encompasses meanings about inclusiveness and participation in large family networks.
- The basic social unit of Latino culture is the extended family.
- Suggests collectivism or interdependence.

Personalismo

- High importance is given to the qualities of positive interpersonal and social skills.

- The valuing of warm, friendly, and personal relationships has important implications for how Latinos perceive and respond to environments (e.g., hospitals, mental health agencies) that are quite often impersonal and formal.

Santiago-Rivera et al. (2002)
Interpersonal Etiquette

- Respeto
- Simpatía
- Confianza
- Cariño

Santiago-Rivera et al. (2002)
Respeto

- Sensitivity to the individuals position and creates a boundary within which conversation should be contained to avoid conflict.

- Formal and Informal systems of communication.
  - *Usted* = Formal
  - *Tú* = Informal

Santiago-Rivera et al. (2002)
Simpatía

- What many call *buena gente* (the plural form of a nice person).
- Easy-going, friendly, and fun to be with.
Confianza

- The development of trust, intimacy, informality, familiarity and ease of interpersonal comfort in a relationship.

- An individual may be allowed to witness an act or the stating of a personal comment because he or she *es de confianza* (can be trusted).
Cariño

- Demonstration of endearment in verbal and nonverbal communication.

- The Spanish language allows for a suffix to be added to nouns (i.e., *ito* or *ita*).
What ways have you used to respectfully address cultural differences in the school setting?
ASCA National Model

- Guidance Curriculum
- Individual Planning
- Responsive Services
- System Support

Guidance Curriculum

- According to ASCA, the guidance curriculum also may include parent and teacher workshops and informational sessions.
- School counselors can organize parent workshops for Latino families in which they offer:
  - School and community resources.
  - Student transition information
  - Post-high school options including college and career opportunities.
  - Parents with an opportunity to share their experiences and backgrounds with the school counselor and related school staff.

Individual Planning

- In line with ASCA recommendations, individual student planning can take place on a one-on-one basis or with groups of students, and it may include student assessment and advisement.
- While it is important to consider all students as individuals first, school counselors should work to eliminate systemic, scholastic, and social obstacles that interfere with student goal-setting.
- Also, school counselors can promote Latino students' participation in extracurricular activities by creating activities of cultural interest (e.g., cultural dances, soccer, Spanish club).

Responsive Services

- Individual counseling is one way of providing responsive services to Latino students.
- School counselors must inform and educate Latino students and parents about their role and services they provide, including the nature of counseling, resources available through the school counseling office, student and counselor expectations, and confidentiality and its limits.

System Support

- The ASCA National Model (2005) considers professional development and collaboration with school personnel as integral facets of a school counseling program's delivery system.
- The notion of collaborating and consulting with school personnel is particularly relevant when working with Latino students and families.
- Latino students may be unfamiliar with or hesitant to seek out counseling services.

Culturally Responsive Counseling for Spanish-Speaking Parents and Students

- First, to effectively assist students and parents, schools must set as a priority reaching out to Latino families and communities.

- Second, schools must be prepared to communicate effectively with Latino students and parents who do not communicate comfortably in the English language.

Smith-Adcock et al. (2006).
Barriers to Successful Parental Involvement:

- Logistical barriers include time, money, and child care concerns.
- Attitudinal barriers include uncertainty about roles, anxiety about how others perceive them, dissatisfaction with own home involvement, and communication problems.

Casa, Furlong, & Ruiz (2003).
Programs for Spanish-Speaking Parents and Children

- School counselors are natural leaders in the school setting who can advocate for an increase in parent participation and facilitate the empowerment of Latino parents.

- Latino parents readily cooperate with special interventions that can enhance their children’s chances of school success.

- No “magic bullet” to increase the participation of Hispanic parents.
  - Key: Do whatever is necessary to get the parents involved.

Programs for Spanish-Speaking Parents and Children

- Fotonovelas to improve Hispanic participation.
- Parent Institute for Quality Education
- Parent Leadership Program
- Parent Empowerment Program

Casa, Furlong, & Ruiz (2003).
Creating a vision of Latino parental participation:

- Step 1: Identify and recruit all key school and community personnel.
- Step 2: Assess and develop the climate for parent participation.
- Step 3: Dispel existing beliefs that work against parent involvement.
- Step 4: Address parental participation within existing school improvement efforts.
- Step 5: Collect data and analyze.
- Step 6: Develop a plan – set priorities.
- Step 7: Select and implement activities to increase parent participation.
- Step 8: Evaluate the plan to increase parent participation.

Casa, Furlong, & Ruiz (2003).
Promoting Latino Culture

- Ensuring that Latino cultures and countries of origin embodied in the student body are represented through:
  - Pep rallies.
  - Talent shows.
  - Cultural fairs during which a variety of student groups may perform or share their talents.

- Include academic and school-related efforts of all students in school-wide newsletters, bulletin boards, and announcements.

Villalba (2007).
References


References


