Abstract

Education has long been considered to be the primary enabler of social mobility and personal fulfillment. According to the Pew Research Center, currently one in four students enrolled in public education are Hispanic, and the Hispanic and Latino populations are the largest ethnic minority in the United States. Generally stated, the purpose of this research is to review the Latino experience within American public schools. This study will specifically address factors influencing Latino Education in America while examining the current status quo of US Latino demographics. It will also examine US Latino literature such as *Almost a Woman* by Esmeralda Santiago; *Bodega’s Dream* by Ernesto Quinonez; and Luis J. Rodriguez’s work, *Always Running*. By looking to Latino literature as well as other sources of information, this study hopes to understand the cultural impacts of America’s current educational systems on Latinos in the United States today.

Factors Influencing Latino Education

**Economics**

“IT is documented that Latino girls are more likely than Latino boys to have better grades, graduate from high school, and go to college”

-Going to School

**Gender**

“I get paid whether you learn or not,” they would tell us.

-Bodega’s Dream

**Teacher Apathy**

“Students’ investigation revealed a rigid tracking system at their high school, with Latino students significantly overrepresented in the lowest, least academically rigorous tracks.”

-“What Latino Students Want from School”

**Curriculum Tracking**

“Latinos are the largest minority group of students in the United States.”

-U.S. Department of Education, 2014

**Drop Out Factories**

“The name that Dr. John Balfanz, from Johns Hopkins University, calls schools where over 40% of the students don’t graduate on time. He’s found more than 2,000 in the United States.”

**Deficit Theorizing**

“The notion that poor student achievement is unrelated to schooling.”

-Funds of Knowledge.

**The Family and the Individual**

“Hispanics rated education above health care and immigration in importance.”

-Pew Research Center

Approximately 13 percent of all U.S. Latinos between the ages of 16 and 24 don’t have a high school diploma or the equivalent. That rate is four times higher than it is for whites and almost twice that of blacks.

-U.S. Department of Education, 2014

**The Family and the Individual**

“Measures commonly practiced to increase safety in schools, such as surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and, in some cases, gaming guards and police officers, actually perpetuate violence by creating schools that closely resemble prisons.”

-Youth, Social Justice, and Communities: Toward a Theory of Urban Youth Policy, 2005