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Educational Issues and Effective Practices for Hispanic Students

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The educational status of Hispanic[1] students in the United States is one of the most challenging educational issues. Although the number of Hispanic students in public schools has increased dramatically in recent decades, Hispanic students as a group have the lowest levels of education and the highest dropout rate. Furthermore, conditions of poverty, health, and other social problems have made it difficult for Hispanics to improve their educational status. This chapter summarizes some of the critical educational problems facing Hispanic students and provides some recommendations to alleviate the problems. The chapter is divided into four major sections. The first section focuses on the educational status of Hispanic students in the United States. The second section discusses factors associated with the underachievement of Hispanic students. This section includes problems associated with: (a) the need for qualified teachers, (b) inappropriate teaching practices, and (c) at-risk school environments. The third section examines factors associated with the success of Hispanic students. It provides a brief summary of instructional strategies, schools, and programs that have been found to significantly improve the academic achievement of Hispanic students. Finally, the chapter addresses some of the recommendations and conclusions from our current knowledge of effective practices and programs for Hispanic students.

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[1] While this chapter specifically focuses on Hispanic students, some of the reports, studies, and articles reviewed use a variety of terms like immigrant students, English language learners (ELLs), language-minority students, and limited English proficient students (LEPs). Similarly, the term "Latino" is often used interchangeably with the term "Hispanic" in the literature. For purposes of this chapter, we have tried to consistently use the term, "Hispanic," but we have carefully tried not to misrepresent the literature cited.

8.1.   The Educational Status of Hispanic Students
in the United States

Over the past 20 years, the enrollment of Hispanics in public elementary schools has dramatically increased (over 150%), compared to 20% for African American students and 10% for White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Recent projections are that the Hispanic population and the numbers of preschool, school-age, and college-age populations will continue to dramatically increase (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004).

The U.S. Hispanic population is quite diverse, representing various countries of origin, levels of primary language proficiency, prior educational experience, and socioeconomic status (García, 2001b). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 59% of Hispanics were of Mexican origin, 10% were of Puerto Rican origin, and 4% were of Cuban origin. The remaining 28% were designated as "other" Hispanics. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of all Hispanics live in central cities of metropolitan areas, compared to non-Hispanic Whites (21%) (USDE, 2000). Hispanics constitute about 75% of all students enrolled in programs for limited English proficient students (LEPs), including bilingual education and English as second language (ESL) programs.

In terms of educational achievement, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores for 17-year-old Hispanic students are well below that of their White peers in mathematics, reading, and science. The dropout rates for Hispanic students are also much higher than other ethnic groups. In 2000, 28% of all Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds were dropouts (1.4 million)–more than double the dropout rate for African Americans (13%) and more than three times the rate for Whites (7%). Some researchers feel the attrition scores for Hispanics still are undercounted and fail to reveal an accurate picture of the problem (Montecel, Cortez, & Cortez , 2004). Montecel et al. (2004) used the U.S. Census Bureau data to determine that 43% of the Hispanic population did not receive a diploma and 26% dropped out before the ninth grade. Additionally, within the Hispanic student population, immigrants have a 44% dropout rate compared to first generation students (USDE, 2000). Only 64% of Hispanic kindergartners graduate from high school. Twenty-two percent enroll in college; of that 22%, only 10% complete 4 years of college (USDE, 2000).

In addition to the problems of underachievement and low educational attainment, many Hispanic students live in households and communities that experience high and sustained poverty. Thirty-four percent of Hispanic children live in single parent or no parent homes (USDE, 2000). Hispanic children are more than three times as likely to experience poverty than white students (Liagas & Snyder, 2003). Hispanic students also attend schools with more than twice as many poor classmates as those attended by White students (46% vs. 19%). Furthermore, Hispanic students primarily reside in urban cities and are immersed in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty where the most serious educational problems exist. Schools with high concentrations of poor students, for example, tend to be poorly maintained, structurally unsound, fiscally under funded, and

staffed with large numbers of uncertified teachers (García, 2001b). Additionally, many Hispanic students are concentrated in campuses where they make up the majority of the student body. In fact, 38% of Hispanic students attend campuses where minority students make up 90% of the student body.

All the above socio-historical factors contribute to the complexity of issues that Hispanic students face in their quest for educational success. These factors also reveal the large achievement gap between White students and the growing and culturally diverse Hispanic student population. In the following section, we discuss critical educational factors related to the underachievement of Hispanic students.

8.2. Educational Factors Impacting the Underachievement of Hispanic Students

Although some educators have argued that the most serious concerns for Hispanic students are basic funding for programs that address their educational needs and political opposition to programs that focus on linguistically diverse students (Melendez, 1993), there are several "alterable factors" that have been found to contribute to the underachievement of Hispanic students. This section discusses three critical factors that have been related to the underachievement of Hispanic students, including: (a) the need for qualified teachers, (b) inappropriate instructional practices, and (c) at-risk school environments.

8.2.1. Need for Qualified Teachers

One of the most serious problems associated with the educational failure of Hispanic students involves the shortage of adequately qualified teachers and the lack of appropriate preparation of credentialed teachers (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Téllez & Waxman, 2006). Teachers of Hispanic ELLs, for example, have to address the "double demands" of acquiring a second language while learning traditional academic content (Gersten & Jiménez, 1998). Estimates have indicated that nearly half of the teachers assigned to teach Hispanic ELLs have not received any preparation specific to the education of ELLs. Presently, about 42% of all public school teachers in the US have at least one ELL student in their class, but less than 3% of these teachers are certified ESL or bilingual teachers (NCES, 2003). In other words, the number of teachers prepared to teach Hispanic ELLs falls far short of the tremendous need for such teachers.

There also have been a number of recent studies that have documented shortcomings in professional development opportunities targeted for teachers of Hispanic ELLs. In a profile showing the quality of our nation's teachers, for example, the National Center for Education Statistics found that most teachers of ELLs or other culturally diverse students did not feel that they were well prepared to meet the needs of their students (Lewis et al., 1999). In another national survey

of classroom teachers, 57% of all teachers responded that they either "very much needed" or "somewhat needed" more information on helping students with limited English proficiency achieve to high standards (Alexander, Heaviside, & Farris, 1999). In a large-scale study of over 5,000 teachers in California, Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) found that teachers had few professional development opportunities targeted to help them work effectively with ELLs. They also found that many teachers faced barriers communicating with their students and students' parents and there was a lack of appropriate materials and resources to meet their students' needs.

8.2.2.   Inappropriate Teaching Practices

Another critical problem related to the underachievement of Hispanic students has to do with current teaching practices. The most common instructional approach found in schools that serve Hispanic students is the direct instructional model, where teachers typically teach to the whole class at the same time and control all of the classroom discussion and decision-making (Waxman & Padrón, 2002). This teacher-directed instructional model emphasizes lecture, drill and practice, remediation, and student seatwork, consisting mainly of worksheet. These instructional practices constitute a "pedagogy of poverty" because they focus on low-level skills and passive instruction (Haberman, 1991; Waxman, Padrón, & Arnold, 2001).

Several studies have examined classroom instruction for Hispanic students and found that this "pedagogy of poverty" orientation exists in many classrooms with Hispanics, ELLs, and other minority students (Padrón & Waxman, 1993; Waxman, Huang, & Padrón, 1995). In a large-scale study examining the classroom instruction of 90 teachers from 16 inner-city middle schools serving predominantly Hispanic students, Waxman et al. (1995) found that students were typically involved in whole-class instruction (not interacting with either their teacher or other students). About two-thirds of the time, for example, students were not involved in verbal interaction with either their teacher or other students. There were very few small group activities and very few interactions with other students. Students rarely selected their own instructional activities, and were generally very passive in the classroom, often just watching or listening to the teacher, even though they were found to be on task about 94% of the time.

In another study examining mathematics and science instruction in inner-city middle-school classrooms serving Hispanic students, Padrón and Waxman (1993) found that science teachers participated in whole-class instruction about 93% of the time, while mathematics teachers participated in whole-class instruction about 55% of the time. Students in mathematics classes worked independently about 45% of the time, while there was no independent work observed in science classes. In the mathematics classes, there was no small group work observed, and students only worked in small groups in science classes about 7% of the time. Questions about complex issues were not raised by any of the mathematics

or science teachers. Furthermore, teachers seldom (4% of the time) posed open-ended questions for students in science classes; they never posed these questions in the mathematics classes.

The results of these and other studies have illustrated that classroom instruction in schools serving predominantly Hispanic students often tends to be whole-class instruction with students working in teacher-assigned and generated activities, generally in a passive manner (i.e., watching or listening). In these class-rooms, teachers also spend more time explaining things to students rather than questioning, cueing, or prompting students to respond. Teachers were not frequently observed encouraging extended student responses or encour-aging students to help themselves or help each other. In summary, research has suggested that instructional inadequacies or "pedagogically induced" learning problems may account for many Hispanic students' poor academic achievement and low motivation (Fletcher & Cardona-Morales, 1990; García, 2001a).

8.2.3. At-Risk School Environments

García & Guerra (2004) argue that many efforts at reform fail because educators do not assume responsibility for students' failure. Many educators still have negative expectations or "deficit views" that place the blame for academic failure on the Hispanic student because they lack the necessary knowledge and/or language skills or they blame their parents who they believe does not care or support their child's education (García & Guerra, 2004; Valencia et al., 2001). While these negative expectations may be one of the fundamental explanations for the underachievement of Hispanic students, several researchers also have found that there are a number of organizational and institutional features of the school and classroom learning environment that are alienating and consequently drive students out of school rather than keep them in (García & Guerra, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

The term "at-risk school environment" describes these phenomena and suggests that the school rather than the individual student should be considered at risk. Waxman (1992) identified several characteristics of an "at risk environment" that includes: (a) alienation experienced by students and teachers, (b) low standards and low quality of education, (c) low expectations for students, (d) high noncompletion rates for students, (e) classroom practices that are unresponsive to students, (f) high truancy and disciplinary problems, and (g) inadequate prepa-ration of students for the future. Valenzuela (1999), for example, found that many Hispanic students go through a subtractive schooling process that takes away their cultural identity and self-worth. For Hispanic students, these condi-tions as well as attending poorly maintained schools and having under-qualified teachers places them in an at-risk school environment. Hispanic students who attend these at-risk school environments merit our special attention because if we can alter their learning environment, we may be able to improve both their education and their overall chances for success in society.

This section acknowledges that the educational factors associated with under-achievement are malleable, and it posits that the slightest positive changes in these areas may significantly improve teaching and learning conditions for Hispanic students. The following section summarizes some of the factors associated with the educational improvement for Hispanic students.

8.3.   Factors Associated with the Educational Success of Hispanic Students

Educators concerned with the schooling of Hispanic students have generally focused on the development of language skills. Recently, however, researchers have begun to investigate other critical issues, such as improving classroom instruction (Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Tharp et al., 2000), focusing on effective schools, and developing effective programs in schools serving predominantly Hispanic students (Slavin & Calderón, 2001; Slavin & Madden, 2001). This section examines effective (a) teaching practices, (b) school factors, and (c) community, language, and school-based intervention programs for Hispanic students.

8.3.1.   Effective Teaching Practices for Hispanic Students

Many educators have maintained that the best way to improve the education of Hispanic students is to provide them with better teachers and classroom instruction (Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Tharp et al., 2000). In order to determine which practices are most effective, educators need to focus on research-based instructional practices that have been found to be effective for Hispanic students. Teaching practices need to specifically address the concerns of Hispanic students who come from different cultures and speak different languages.

There have been several recent reviews that have synthesized research studies that have examined effective instructional practices for Hispanic students (Padrón & Waxman, 1999; Waxman & Padrón, 2002; Waxman, Padrón, & Arnold, 2001; Waxman & Téllez, 2002). These syntheses have identified a number of effective instructional strategies for teaching Hispanic students, including (a) culturally responsive teaching, (b) cooperative learning, (c) instructional conversation, and (d) cognitively guided instruction, and (e) technology-enriched instruction. The consensus across these reviews has been that education needs to be meaningful and responsive to students needs, as well as linguistically and culturally appropriate (Tharp et al., 2000). The following sections discuss each of the teaching practices.

Culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching emphasizes the everyday concerns of students, such as critical family and community issues, and tries to incorporate these concerns into the curriculum. Culturally responsive instruction helps students prepare themselves for meaningful social roles in their community and larger society by emphasizing both social and

academic responsibility. Furthermore, it addresses the promotion of racial, ethnic, and linguistic equality as well as the appreciation of diversity (Boyer, 1993). Culturally responsive instruction: (a) improves the acquisition and retention of new knowledge by working from students' existing knowledge base, (b) improves self-confidence and self-esteem by emphasizing existing knowledge, (c) increases the transfer of school-taught knowledge to real-life situations, and (d) exposes students to knowledge about other individuals or cultural groups (Rivera & Zehler, 1991). When teachers develop learning activities based on familiar concepts, they help facilitate literacy and content learning and help Hispanic students feel more comfortable and confident with their work (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000).

Cooperative learning. McLaughlin and McLeod (1996) described cooperative learning as an effective instructional approach that stimulates learning and helps students come to complex understandings by discussing and defending their ideas with others. One commonly accepted definition of cooperative learning is "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, p. 292). Instead of lecturing and transmitting material, teachers facilitate the learning process by encouraging cooperation among students (Bejarano, 1987). This teaching practice is student-centered and creates interdependence among students and the teacher (Rivera & Zehler, 1991).

As an instructional practice, cooperative grouping impacts Hispanic students in several different ways. Cooperative grouping: (a) provides opportunities for students to communicate with each other, (b) enhances instructional conversations, (c) decreases anxiety, (d) develops social, academic, and communication skills, (e) enhances self-confidence and self-esteem through individual contributions and achievement of group goals, (f) improves individual and group relations by learning to clarify, assist, and challenge each other's ideas, and (g) develops proficiency in English by providing students with rich language experiences that integrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Calderón, 1991; Christian, 1995; Rivera & Zehler, 1991). Furthermore, cooperative learning activities provide Hispanic students with "the skills that are necessary to function in real-life situations, such as the utilization of context for meaning, the seeking of support from others, and the comparing of nonverbal and verbal cues" (Alcala, 2000, p. 4).

Instructional conversation. Instructional conversation is a teaching practice that provides students with opportunities for extended dialogue in areas that have educational value as well as relevance for students (August & Hakuta, 1998). The instructional conversation is an extended discourse between the teacher and students. It should be initiated by students in order to develop their language and complex thinking skills, and to guide them in their learning process (Tharp, 1995).

August and Hakuta's (1998) comprehensive review of research found that effective teachers of Hispanic students provide students with opportunities for extended dialogue. Rather than avoiding discussion during instruction because students may not have the appropriate language proficiency skills,

instructional conversations emphasize dialogue with teachers and classmates (Durán, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997). Thus, one of the major benefits of the use of instructional conversation for students who are learning English is to provide them with the opportunity for extended discourse, an important activity of second language learning (Christian, 1995).

Cognitively guided instruction. Cognitively guided instruction emphasizes the development of learning strategies that foster students' metacognitive development by the direct teaching and modeling of cognitive learning strategies. In addition, it teaches techniques and approaches that foster students' metacognition and cognitive monitoring of their own learning (Padrón & Knight, 1989; Waxman, Padrón, & Knight, 1991). From an instructional perspective, this approach emphasizes the need for teachers to focus on students' psychological processing as well as what is taught and how it is presented. This instructional approach can be very beneficial for Hispanic students who are not doing well in school because the effectively use of cognitive strategies may help to eliminate individual barriers to academic success.

One example of cognitively guided instruction is reciprocal teaching, a procedure where students are instructed in four specific comprehension-monitoring strategies: (a) summarizing, (b) self-questioning, (c) clarifying, and (d) predicting. Studies on reciprocal teaching have found that these cognitive strategies can successfully be taught to Hispanic students and that the use of these strategies increases reading achievement (Padrón, 1992, 1993). Another example of cognitively guided instruction is Chamot and O'Malley's (1987) instructional program for LEP students that focuses specifically on strategy instruction. They found that when cognitive learning strategies are modeled for the student and opportunities to practice the strategy presented, learning outcomes improved.

Technology-enriched instruction. Several studies and reviews of research have found that technology-based instruction is effective for Hispanic students (Cummins & Sayers 1990; Padrón & Waxman, 1996). Web-based picture libraries, for example, can promote Hispanic students' comprehension in content-area classrooms (e.g., science and mathematics) (Smolkin, 2000). Digitized books are now available and allow Hispanic students to request pronunciations of unknown words, request translations of sections, and ask questions (Jiménez & Barrera, 2000). Furthermore, some types of technology (e.g., multimedia) are effective for Hispanic students because they help students connect learning in the classroom to real-life situations, thereby creating a meaningful context for teaching and learning (Means & Olson, 1994). In addition, multimedia technology can be especially helpful for Hispanic students because it can facilitate auditory skill development by integrating visual presentations with sound and animation (Bermúdez & Palumbo, 1994).

In summary, all of these teaching practices incorporate more active student learning and change the teachers' role. Instead of delivering knowledge, the teacher's role is to facilitate learning (Padrón & Waxman, 1999). Glickman (1998) refers to this approach as "democratic pedagogy," describing it as instruction that "respects the students' own desire to know, to discuss, to problem solve,

and to explore individually and with others, rather than learning that is dictated, determined, and answered by the teacher" (p. 52). These student-centered instructional practices represent a model of classroom instruction that has not been very common for Hispanic students and/or Hispanic ELLs.

8.3.2. *Effective School Factors for Hispanic Students*

There have been a number of studies and reviews of the research that have examined effective school factors for Hispanic students. One recent synthesis (Waxman, Price, & Téllez, 2004), however, incorporated the findings from both, the studies and reviews, to examine school factors that influence the academic outcomes of Hispanic students. The results of this synthesis indicate that there are seven characteristics of effective schools for Hispanic students. These characteristics are: (a) valuing student's needs and culture, (b) effective instructional practices, (c) faculty professional development, (d) parental and community involvement, (e) continuous student assessment, (f) school leadership, and (g) school culture and expectations. The following sections summarize some of the key aspects of each characteristic or factor.

Valuing Student's Needs and Culture. Many of the studies on effective schools serving predominantly Hispanic students recognize that their students have unique needs that require more personal attention from teachers. Consequently, schools developed clusters of teachers that work with a particular group of students who are at risk of academic failure (Ancess, 2003; Minicucci et al., 1995). Making home visits, providing parent education, and distributing free school supplies are some of the ways that schools pay personal attention to students. Effective schools serving predominantly Hispanic students also value the students' culture, include it in the academic curriculum, and allow students to develop their own ethnic identity.

Effective Instructional Practices. Another important characteristic found in effective schools serving predominantly Hispanic students is that they provide a number of different instructional practices. A number of effective schools studies have found that the most productive instructional strategy is providing language support in the students' first language (L1) (Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, & Tinajero, 2001; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1997; Mora, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2001). According to Thomas and Collier (2001), the academic achievement gap can almost be completely eliminated with instruction in both L1 and L2. English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional programs were also found to be somewhat effective in improving the academic performance of Hispanic ELLs (Miramontes et al., 1997; Thomas & Collier, 2001). Other instructional practices prevalent in effective schools were the use of collaboration, student-centered instruction, incorporating individual learning styles, providing more teacher support and classroom order, and having more instructional interactions with students.

Teachers' professional development. One very important component of effective schools is a collaborative relationship between teachers (Ancess, 2003;

Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Short, 1994). The teachers in effective schools have been found to work together on curriculum, teaching practices, and other aspects of the school's functioning (Ancess, 2003; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Mora, 2000). An important feature of this professional development is that it is ongoing, as well as focused on students' learning (Ancess, 2003; Mora, 2000). Not only does the professional development focus on students' learning needs, but it also emphasizes the teaching skills and practices that serve the students (August & Hakuta, 1998; Lucas, et al., 1990; Mora, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Waxman & Huang, 1994). Many teachers report that they need long-term professional development in order to: (a) use new methods of classroom instruction (e.g., cooperative grouping), (b) integrate educational technology in the subject they teach, and (c) address the needs of ELLs and other students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lewis et al., 1999). Classroom teachers desire more: (a) information related to the teaching of Hispanic students, (b) time for training and planning, and (c) opportunities to collaborate and learn from other teachers (Téllez & Waxman, 2006).

Parent and community involvement. Parent and community involvement has been found to be an important component in numerous studies of effective schools for Hispanic students. The effective schools in these studies found ways to actively involve parents in their children's schooling. Furthermore, parent participation was found to be facilitated by empowering parents and other community members to get involved and to be actively engaged in student learning.

Student assessment. The student assessment component of research on effective schools for Hispanic students has two areas of use, (a) program and (b) student. At the program level, effective schools routinely use academic assessments of their students to measure improvements in students' learning as a means for program evaluation. This program level evaluation is then directly linked to teaching practice and professional development (August & Hakuta, 1998). At the student level, assessment is used to monitor individual student progress; however, all three of these studies have different points to make about individual student assessment. Miramontes et al. (1997), for example, found that assessments provide valuable information on students' language proficiency as well as development in L1 and/or L2 in conjunction with academic progress. Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner (1999) found that effective schools serving predominantly Hispanic students used assessment as a way to motivate students to succeed as well as a way to map out individualized learning procedures for students.

School Leadership. Effective school leadership for schools serving predominantly Hispanic students typically includes a self or shared governance structure (Ancess, 2003; Minicucci et al., 1995; Reyes et al., 1999). These studies found that the school community, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders have decision-making responsibility and this shared-decision making process is linked to the common goal of student success.

The role of the principal in the governance of these effective schools is really that of a supporter (August & Hakuta, 1998; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Maden, 2001; Reyes et al., 1999). Ancess (2003) explains that the principal acts as a guide to the school through changes and is a stabilizing force for the school community so that there is a certain amount of safety in taking risks for school improvement. Gonzalez et al., (2001) describes that the principal plays a pivotal role in student success by focusing on continuous improvement. According to August and Hakuta (1998), not only do these principals support the common vision and shared governance structures, but more specifically they support Hispanic students. Also, Maden (2001) found that a fundamental aspect of school leadership is the hiring, developing, supporting and maintaining of teachers.

School culture and expectations. This final characteristic of effective schools for Hispanic students, school culture and expectations, encompasses three aspects: (a) a caring school climate, (b) a focus on learning, and (c) high expectations. Many studies found that effective schools having caring relationships that are a pervasive part of the school culture (Ancess, 2003; Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Maden, 2001; Waxman & Huang, 1997). The next factor for success in the school culture is the focus on learning. Carter and Chatfield (1986), for example, found that effective schools honored the right to learn through a safe and orderly learning environment. Other studies found that the school faculty and staff held beliefs that education is empowering and thus they were dedicated to empowering Hispanic student through academic achievement (Lucas, et al., 1990). The final aspect of school culture and expectations is high expectations. Several studies have found that teachers, administrators, and parents need to set high expectations for academic learning and personal student development. (McKissack, 1999; Minicucci et al., 1995).

The findings from the present synthesis are important because they suggest that there are several alterable school factors that relate to improved academic achievement for Hispanic students. The seven characteristics of effective schools serving predominantly Hispanic ELLs also are quite similar to prior syntheses of effective schools research (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000), with the exception of valuing students' needs and culture. This characteristic appears to be especially important because it highlights the need for schools serving predominantly Hispanics to be sensitive to students' primary language and culture.

8.3.3.   Language and School-Based Intervention Programs for Hispanic Students

8.3.3.1.   Language Programs

Special language programs (e.g., bilingual education) have traditionally been implemented to address Hispanic ELLs educational concerns, but recently many of these programs have been eliminated because of political ideologies rather than research-based decisions. Although there are a number of language programs

that have been found to be effective in educating Hispanic ELLs, one of the most researched and controversial language program for Hispanic students is bilingual education. A recent review by Téllez, Flinspach, & Waxman (2005) summarizes the findings as well as focuses on the controversy. They examined three of the most recent research syntheses and reviews of the literature on bilingual education: Greene (1998), Rossell and Baker (1996), and Slavin and Cheung (2003, 2004).

Greene's (1998) review of the effects of bilingual education is a meta-analysis. It reviews many studies, calculating an "effect size" from each and then combining these values to determine an overall measure of success. Meta-analysis has become an important method for examining the effectiveness of programs and for exploring program effects across a wide range of students and contexts. Greene's study addresses a concern common to many meta-analyses, that a large number of the studies and evaluations are so flawed in their methods and designs that they cannot be included in the overall sample to be synthesized. After rejecting many studies for the meta-analysis, Greene calculated an overall effect size of .26. This value suggests that students who participate in bilingual education programs outscored their English-immersion counterparts by approximately 15 percentile points.

In contrast, Rossell and Baker (1996), using a very similar set of studies, concluded that bilingual education is no better than an English-only approach. The discrepant finding is partially due to the fact that Rossell and Baker use a vote-counting method, rather than meta-analytic techniques, to assess results across studies. They counted the studies in the review as favoring either bilingual instruction or English immersion and, based on the final vote count, argued that bilingual instruction was not better than English immersion. Hedges and Olkin (1980) discuss the problems with vote counting, including its uniform treatment of vastly different studies and its insensitivity to the degree of program effectiveness in each study. Disagreements about the appropriateness of the methods of research synthesis affect the interpretations of bilingual education research (Salazar, 1998).

In one of the most recent reviews of effective reading programs for English Language Learners (ELLs), Slavin and Cheung (2003) found that among 17 studies that met the scientifically-based research standards of the review, most of the studies found significant positive effects of bilingual reading performance and others found no difference. Nine of these studies were longitudinal and of those, five favored bilingual education, and four found no difference. There were no studies that found that an English-only favored ELLs.

Other recent meta-analyses of bilingual education also support the program's effectiveness. Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass (2005), for example, examined evaluation studies in Arizona and found that they were overall positive effects for bilingual education on students' English outcomes and very large effects for outcomes in students' native language. Overall, while there have been some concerns about bilingual education, the research evidence clearly suggests that

bilingual education is an effective language program. The next section describes some effective school-based programs for Hispanic students.

8.3.3.2. School-based Programs

In recent years, a number of school-based prevention and intervention programs have been found to be effective for Hispanic students. One critical component of most of these programs is the involvement of the community. Teachers and schools who effectively educate Hispanic students pool community resources in order to bridge the gap between them and the community.

Schools have incorporated intervention programs to address the educational needs of Hispanic students. Though some of the strategies vary due to the grade levels and purpose of the intervention programs, many still have similar characteristics. The programs find alternative ways to create successful results for the student, parents, and teachers. The programs all seek the introduction of community resources to assist students and families. Additionally, the programs have reorganized the type of instruction for students by providing an effective instruction and curriculum. Some of the programs include the following:

Coca Cola Valued Youth Program. This program was created in 1984 and has focused on working with students at risk of dropping out of middle and high school. The program works with over 250 schools in 25 cities. The purpose of the program is to provide elementary students with middle school or high school tutors. The tutors are paid a wage for their work with the elementary students. The program provides positive outcomes for both the tutor and the tutee. The program was considered an exemplary program by Department of Education for its effectiveness working with students (Montecel et al., 2004).

Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success (ALAS). The ALAS program was created to address the middle school students with low academic achievement, poor school attendance, and discipline problems. The program focused on providing these students intervention strategies directed at working with the student, the school, the family, and the community. The program had an intervention team consisting of teachers, counselors, social workers, and policemen/women ready to work with the students. Additionally, the program also incorporated the use of university faculty in order to reorganize curriculum and instruction for the students. The instructors worked with the teachers as a collaborative team addressing issues at home and school. An evaluation of the program revealed several positive findings. The evaluation focused on 50 ALAS students matched with 50 non-ALAS students. By the end of ninth grade, the ALAS students had more students enrolled, more students on track to graduate, better attendance and grades than the non-ALAS students (García, 2001a).

Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA). The MESA program is considered one of the older intervention programs created in 1970. The program focuses on producing trained scientific professionals in the workforce. These students pursue careers in computer science, math, and engineering. Additionally, the program serves low-academically performing students and provides various strategies for working with students such as providing career

study, peer learning groups, parental involvement, and other services. MESA is located in elementary schools through colleges and universities throughout California. The programs effectiveness has been measured through a 90% student graduation rate, which went on to enroll in a college or university in 1996–1997 (Montecel et al., 2004).

Upward Bound. This program focuses on low socioeconomic teenage students who have the potential to become a first-generation college student. The program is administered by the Department of Education. The program works with the students by providing instructional assistance with their coursework after-school. Additionally, students are provided with personal counseling and college guidance. Assessments of the program indicate that students involved in the program are more likely to stay in school and had a greater chance of attending college than the comparison group (Montecel et al., 2004).

Success for All (SFA). SFA is one of the largest comprehensive reform programs for elementary schools serving students at risk of academic failure. The program's philosophy is that children must succeed academically and that it is possible to provide school personnel with the skills and strategies that they need to ensure academic success for students. A key goal of the program is that students must be able to read at grade level by the end of third grade. Therefore, SFA is an intervention that begins early in the student's academic life. It utilizes a great deal of tutoring. Tutoring takes place for 20-minute blocks and is done by certified teachers. Student progress is monitored on an ongoing basis. The program also includes a reading component for students whose native language is Spanish. Evaluations of SFA have indicated that the program has demonstrated consistent positive results for Hispanic students (Lockwood, 2001; Slavin & Madden, 2001)

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). The AVID program (Mehan et al., 1996) is another successful program for older (Grade 6–12) Hispanic students. AVID places low-achieving students believed to have college potential in the same college preparatory courses as high-achieving students. AVID students receive special counseling, tutoring, and other academic support such as instruction in study skills, writing, and test-taking strategies. A comprehensive team of administrators, counselors, AVID teachers, and regular content-area teachers who work with AVID students also receive 1 week of training in the summer and monthly follow-up training during the school year on teaching practices (e.g., cooperative learning and inquiry-based practices) that are highlighted in the program. AVID has been successful in empowering students by reconnecting them to school. College enrollment rates and graduation rates for AVID students have dramatically increased as a result of the program.

Syntheses of research on effective school-based programs for Hispanic students have found that there are several common characteristics common to successful programs (Fashola et al., 2001; Lockwood, 2001). Effective programs typically: (a) have well-specified goals, (b) provide ample opportunity for teacher professional development, (c) begin early and are maintained throughout the schooling experience, (d) include ongoing assessment and feedback,

(e) incorporate the use of tutors and other support staff, and (f) focus on the quality of implementation. These programs focus on multiple variables when addressing the needs of Hispanic students within and outside campuses. Working to foster a positive relationship between the home and school also must take into consideration the students' culture and experiences within instructional practices (García, 2001a).

8.4.   Implications for Research on Effective Practices

One major limitation of the research on Hispanic students is that the majority of the studies are descriptive studies. There have been few experimental studies that have investigated the impact of effective educational practices on Hispanic students' educational outcomes. Future research needs to specifically design experimental studies that explicitly test interventions that promote effective outcomes for Hispanic students. Furthermore, there have been very few naturalistic, longitudinal studies conducted that have examined the success of effective practices on Hispanic students' long-term academic achievement and educational success. Mixed methods approaches also are needed to examine the effects of educational practices. Teacher self-report data, along with teacher, administrator, and student interview data could all be used to help supplement the survey data and systematic classroom observation data that are generally used in school and instructional effectiveness research. Such data could help us understand, from different perspectives, the complexity of issues surrounding the educational improvement of Hispanic students. More ethnographic studies also are needed in order to help us uncover "grounded theoretical" explanations of factors that impact schools for Hispanic students.

   More systematic, long-term reviews of the research also are needed. These syntheses will contribute to our knowledge base and promote the use of procedural knowledge in policy and practice. It also will help us create a system of research-based educational reform to bring "what works" knowledge to scale. The educational problems faced by Hispanic students highlight the need for synthesizing existing research and suggest ways to improve their academic achievement.

8.5.   Conclusion and Recommendations

The research cited in the previous sections indicates that there are several educational practices and programs that significantly improve the academic success of Hispanic students. Many of these programs are supported by systematic, long-term studies and reviews of research. It is important to note that even if only a few factors associated with students' educational success are present, the programs seem to have a positive effect on student achievement and persistence in school. Changes in school practices, however, need to be accompanied by

changes in policy that reflect the current diversity in classroom settings, and the best scientific evidence available. The following recommendations emerge from our review of the research:

- Some of the effective teaching practices for Hispanic students are: culturally responsive instruction, cooperative learning, instructional conversation, cognitively guided instruction, and technology-enhanced instruction.
- Some of the effective school factors for Hispanic students are: valuing student's needs and culture, effective instructional practices, teachers' professional development, parent and community involvement, student assessment, school leadership, and school culture and expectations.
- One of the most effective language programs for Hispanic students is bilingual education.
- Some of the effective school-based programs for Hispanic students are: Coca Cola Valued Youth Program, Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success (ALAS), Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MSEA), Upward Bound, Success for All (SFA), and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

This chapter described some of the research-based educational practices that have been found to be successful in improving the education of Hispanic students. Several key elements or components that have been successful in many different settings are discussed, but these are only suggestions, not "recipes" for improving schools. No program, however well implemented, will prove a panacea for all the educational problems of Hispanic students. For the most part, each school must concern itself with the resolution of its own specific problems (Schubert, 1980). In that sense, every school should be considered unique, and educators should choose among research-based practices and programs according to the needs of the Hispanic students that they serve. Furthermore, critical out-of-school factors that affect the outcomes of schooling for Hispanic students must also be addressed. If we only focus on school factors and ignore the importance of family and community influences on the education of Hispanic students, we will clearly fail in our endeavors.

The serious educational problems of Hispanic students highlight the need for schools to begin using scientific evidence to determine educational programs and practices. There is a critical need to develop a solid knowledge base on effective practices, leadership, and policy for Hispanic students that focuses on alterable practices that improve students' academic achievement. Strengthening links between evidence-based research and educational practices can benefit the growing population of Hispanic students in American schools and those who share responsibility for educating them. With greater understanding and support of the needs of Hispanic students and their teachers, schools can improve the quality of educational practices and ensure that no child, teacher, or school—is left behind.

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