CHAPTER 6

Transformative Mentoring Relationships: Engaging Student Voices to Create Emancipatory Change in Curriculum

Edgar F. Lopez and Adrian H. Huerta

Introduction

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic has caused many unforeseen circumstances and drastically impacted the higher education field. Faculty and students experienced major disruptions in their instruction, mentoring relationships, and other activities as they were forced to rapidly transition to an online platform (Levine et al., 2021). Additionally, many graduate students have had to navigate the intense political climate and manage financial difficulties, housing insecurity, racial discrimination, and low access to high-quality mental health services, further disrupting their learning across institutions. As such, many graduate students have considered withdrawing from their institutions altogether due to the added strain, stress, and disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color (Hagedorn et al., 2021).

E. F. Lopez (✉) • A. H. Huerta
University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA
e-mail: eflopez@usc.edu; ahhuerta@rossier.usc.edu

K. R. Roth et al. (eds.), *Emancipatory Change in US Higher Education*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11124-2_6

The pandemic exacerbated challenges to financial stability and well-being for students, especially low-income and racially minoritized populations (Reimers, 2022). Now, more than ever, graduate programs and departments need to primarily focus on supporting graduate students of color and provide resources to maneuver through challenges that contribute to their overall low persistence and degree completion (Lopez, 2021; Gardner, 2013). For instance, graduate students of color have suffered heavy financial losses yet are expected to persist with minimal financial support, including underpaid labor and high student debt, which impact their academic persistence (Cadenas et al., 2021). Rosenthal et al. (2021) conducted a survey highlighting how the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted graduate students' mental health. They found the pandemic increased already high levels of stress among students and forced them to create new routines for survival, all while balancing full-time work, family needs, and academic responsibilities. Another factor in the low persistence and degree completion rates for students of color is the quality of mentoring relationships that help students navigate their academic journey (DeAngelo et al., 2021). As colleges and universities transitioned to a virtual learning platform, it transformed and complicated how graduate students could develop or maintain faculty-student mentoring relationships. Overall, circumstances associated with the pandemic have derailed graduate students' daily lives. However, research is yet to explore the level or extent of the impact of these challenges.

Many students have managed numerous demands and obstacles besides their academic responsibilities. Before returning all operations and instruction fully to in-person, graduate programs and departments should understand the challenges these graduate students faced during the global pandemic. This chapter captures the unique challenges graduate students of color encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic and provides several recommendations on ways graduate faculty and departments can implement and refine support systems to meet student needs. Additionally, we highlight the transformative mentoring relationships with faculty that have greatly impacted these graduate students throughout the pandemic and share their experiences as a catalyst to create emancipatory changes in the graduate curriculum. For this chapter, we specifically highlight the experiences of Latina/o/x doctoral students as they are historically underrepresented in academia (Gardner, 2013), contributing to their low representation of faculty roles across institutions (Kamimura-Jimenez & Gonzalez, 2018). The number of full-time Latina/o faculty in

degree-granting postsecondary institutions is less than 5% across institution types (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020; Quezada & Louque, 2004). The underrepresentation of Latina/o/x doctoral students and doctoral recipients will impact the ability of colleges and universities to diversify their faculty to meet the increased demands of diverse undergraduate and graduate students.

Literature Review

According to the Council of Graduate Schools (Zhou & Gao, 2021), in Fall 2020, more than 1.7 million students enrolled in graduate programs across 558 US graduate schools. Each year, nearly 26,000 students earn a Master's or Doctoral degree in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2017, 2018, 2019). However, Latina/o/x students have and continue to be virtually absent in graduate education and underrepresented in degree completion (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). One critical component to explore is whether Latina/o/x graduate students have access to opportunities for faculty-student mentoring relationships. The quality of graduate school preparation and faculty-student mentorship of Latina/o/x graduate students is a growing area of concern for graduate departments and university leadership (Hackmann & Malin, 2019; Brunsma et al., 2017). Additionally, more research is needed to fully understand how the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted graduate education.

Defining Mentoring

Mentoring is one critical component of socialization within graduate programs (Bagaka's et al., 2015). Numerous scholars have defined mentoring and its significance for students in academic spaces. Hackmann and Malin (2019) define mentorship as an interpersonal relationship with a more experienced person who guides and supports a less experienced person through a developmental process. Hayes (2005) explains mentoring as an intense relationship between novice and expert that promotes a newcomer's socialization and self-efficacy through teaching, socializing, coaching, protecting, challenging, and role modeling. The mentoring relationship aims to guide the novice individual to eventually become a fully participating member of an organization or profession (Hayes, 2005). Lambie et al. (2014) define research mentoring as the process of a more research-experienced individual facilitating research training, modeling appropriate

research behaviors, and supporting the student in developing research skills. Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) define mentoring as a critical process whereby an individual facilitates personal, educational, and professional development through mutual respect and trust. Mentoring can significantly enhance and increase student outcomes, including their sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy, compared to students who are unmentored (Holloway-Friesen, 2021). Mentoring can make students feel they *matter* and are worth investing in, improving their academic motivation and self-esteem (Huerta & Fishman, 2014, 2019). Thus, mentors become understanding of cultural diversity and assist in the retention of graduate students to their degree completion.

Importance of Graduate Faculty Mentors

Variations across graduate fields matter and especially for students in the science fields who primarily are located in research labs or off-site field labs, whereas students in humanities and social sciences focus on independent research projects or advance scholarship with faculty mentors (Calarco, 2020; Ramirez, 2017; Gardner, 2010). As graduate students persist in their academic field toward degree completion, faculty can facilitate supportive mentoring relationships and help students broadly understand the field, nuances of the sub-fields, and the social norms of academic performance and expectations (Thomas et al., 2007). Graduate faculty are considered gatekeepers as they hold significant power in creating or withholding opportunities for students to succeed in graduate education and the professional opportunities that follow (Posselt et al., 2020; McCoy et al., 2015; Griffin, 2012; Noonan et al., 2007). They have access to supportive networks or resources that can advance graduate students' academic abilities for success (McCoy et al., 2015). However, when faculty actively withhold opportunities or disinvest from their mentoring relationships with students of color, it can lead to students being under-prepared or discouraged from pursuing career pathways, including faculty roles (Posselt et al., 2020).

Graduate faculty can and should promote a supportive learning environment as they are vital influencers and role models in promoting student retention in graduate programs (Christe, 2013). Faculty-student mentoring relationships are critical in promoting graduate student socialization, preparing disciplinary scholarship engagement, conducting research, and developing faculty career pathways (Felder, 2010).

Additionally, these relationships can help increase cross-cultural competency (Thomas et al., 2007), enhance emotional commitment and investment in success (Baker & Griffin, 2010), and provide structured mentoring training to prepare for future careers (Griffin, 2012). Due to the nature of graduate education, faculty members play a significant role in their students' socialization. Acevedo-Gil and Madrigal-Garcia (2018) define socialization as the process of gaining the knowledge, skills, and values needed for career prospects. Perez et al. (2019) define socialization as how individuals acquire support to become members of at least one social group and understand the complex standards and rules. Mentors are crucial to supporting students in the graduate education socialization process by first introducing them to the norms, values, and beliefs necessary for success within their respective fields of study (Lunsford et al., 2013). Although graduate mentoring relationships have proven to show beneficial outcomes, research has noted the difficulties that graduate students of color encounter in finding and maintaining supportive mentoring relationships with faculty.

Challenges in Finding and Maintaining Supportive Graduate Mentorship

Graduate students of color in academia have historically encountered a series of challenges such as few or limited opportunities to interact with faculty members of color, a sense of isolation and loneliness, racial vulnerability, and (un)intentional acts of intolerance (Smith et al., 2016; Gay, 2004; Brown II et al., 1999; Bonilla et al., 1994). Unfortunately, there are multiple instances in the popular press and empirical scholarship of faculty members behaving poorly toward graduate students of color (Williams et al., 2018; Espino, 2014; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; González, 2007; Solórzano, 1993). One remedy to counter toxic and hostile spaces for higher education institutions is to help Latina/o/x graduate students develop positive mentorship relationships with faculty. In a recent study on mentorship among Latina/o doctoral students, Acevedo-Gil and Madrigal-Garcia (2018) found Latina/o faculty members can act as validating role models to mentor doctoral students and build on their aspirations, especially those who aspire and envision themselves in a tenure-track faculty position.

The high student attrition rates are often attributed to structural barriers that impede students of color from advancing, such as solely navigating

adverse campus climates within hostile or unsupportive academic departments (Griffin et al., 2010). Graduate students of color often experience difficulties finding suitable and sustainable faculty mentors, especially in predominantly white institutions, who may not have multicultural competencies or training (Felder, 2010; Thomas et al., 2007). Additionally, these graduate students struggle to find faculty members who are capable of and willing to provide the scaffolding needed for scholarship and navigating alienating graduate-level spaces (Slay et al., 2019). Scholars have argued that same-ethnic faculty mentors paired with students can improve adjustment, program satisfaction, and supportiveness in personal and career development (Santos & Reigadas, 2002). However, there are simply not enough faculty mentors of color in higher education institutions across the US.

Latina/o/x Graduate Students

Latina/o/x graduate students are severely underrepresented in graduate education (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). For instance, they represent nearly 6% of the student population in doctoral programs (Acevedo-Gil & Madrigal-Garcia, 2018). Despite multiple federal and institutional efforts to increase graduate student diversity, the result is little change in degree attainment and degree completion. Nearly half of entering Latina/o/x doctoral students withdraw and do not complete their programs (Bagaka's et al., 2015; Espino, 2014). In 2019, only 2.5% of Latino men and 2.8% of Latinas earned a doctoral degree out of the total reported recipients, respectively (United States Census Bureau, 2019). However, with the COVID-19 global pandemic constraining educational opportunities and exacerbating numerous challenges (Reimers, 2022), more research is needed to explore in-depth the experiences and repercussions that Latina/o/x graduate students have encountered and their efforts to navigate to degree completion.

Latina/o students across these graduate fields often experience inadequate scholarly socialization and faculty mentorship (Ramirez, 2017). These efforts matter how students develop professional skills and learn their respective disciplines' norms and values (Lechuga, 2011). They require more individualized support to understand their graduate programs holistically to learn how to navigate and optimize their professional outcomes. Many Latina/o/x doctoral students experience racial and ethnic marginalization and negative interactions with faculty, hindering their

socialization processes (Acevedo-Gil & Madrigal-Garcia, 2018). Additionally, they struggle to find individualized support or even opportunities to engage with quality faculty mentors to elevate their socialization into the academic realm (McCoy et al., 2015). Latina/o/x doctoral students often experience cultural isolation, feelings of disrespect, and a need to constantly prove their worth as they encounter racism, institutional inequities, and negative socialization experiences (Acevedo-Gil & Madrigal-Garcia, 2018; Gardner, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Laura Rendón (1994) developed validation theory as a lens to provide researchers with a more in-depth understanding of low-income and first-generation undergraduate students in higher education. Validation theory argues university personnel must take proactive steps in fostering diverse students' academic and social development through intentional support. These institutional agents must build relationships with students to observe and understand how students encounter complex issues (Rendón, 1994). These validating relationships are crucial to acknowledging students as valuable members of college communities (Rendón, 1994).

Validation theory consists of six elements (Rendón, 1994). The first element places the onus on institutional agents to actively reach out to students to initiate an enabling and supportive environment to foster their academic and interpersonal development. In the second element, students build on their self-worth and empower themselves to persist in their learning when institutional agents recognize their knowledge, assets, and potential to succeed. Without this validation, students may feel deprived, discouraged, and disconnected from the college environment. The third element depicts validation as a critical component for student development. When validation is constantly present, students feel more confident about themselves and their capabilities. This validation empowers them to participate in college life. The fourth element highlights validation can occur anywhere, as institutional agents can come from various roles. It can range from in-class agents such as faculty and teaching assistants to out-of-class people such as significant others, family members, friends, and other campus staff members. Regardless of the position, these validating agents can actively support students throughout their higher education journey. The fifth element posits validation as a developmental process without a specific ending. Early exposure and frequently receiving validation can

contribute to students' richer academic and interpersonal experiences at their college campuses. Similarly, the sixth element asserts validation is most impactful to students when they receive it as early as the first few weeks of entering college. More specifically, these validating moments can significantly benefit nontraditional students (e.g., first-generation college students) who may feel lost in navigating campus resources and college life.

Building on Rendón's work, this study highlights how institutional agents facilitate students' goals and shift the onus of responsibility from students to institutional agents to ensure they succeed in higher education. Institutional agents can include admissions representatives, academic advisors, teaching assistants, and faculty members. Thus, graduate faculty members can play a crucial role in supporting Latina/o/x doctoral students as they navigate academic and social infrastructures. Using validation theory can help understand how graduate faculty can actively engage with doctoral students and provide ongoing structural support in learning how to navigate graduate education programs. It is important to determine what graduate faculty can do to support a new model of student learning and development that is more appropriate for the rapidly changing racial and ethnic composition of graduate students entering the academy. This chapter elevates previous scholarship that used validation theory, as most prior studies focused on institutional agents and undergraduate students (Dodson et al., 2009; Gloria et al., 2005; Huerta, 2022; Jehangir, 2009) or community college students (Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Bragg, 2001).

Methodology

We conducted a qualitative narrative research study to explore the in-depth experiences of Latina/o/x graduate students, from navigating their doctoral programs to the unique challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bruce et al., 2016). We used purposeful sampling to recruit 40 participants based on the following criteria: (1) self-identify as a Hispanic or Latina/o/x, (2) currently enrolled in a doctoral research program in a social science discipline (e.g., sociology, education, psychology), and (3) have completed at least one year of their doctoral program. The first author shared a recruitment flyer with numerous graduate program coordinators and social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). All 40 participants came from five different doctoral-granting research-intensive (R-1) universities on the West Coast. Eighteen participants self-identified

as men and 22 as women. We assigned each participant a pseudonym to protect their anonymity in the study. Before the interview, participants completed a demographic questionnaire that asked about their race, ethnicity, gender, and educational background.

The authors used thick description, researcher reflexivity, adequate engagement in data collection, and member checks to ensure trustworthiness (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thick descriptions help describe participants' experiences, which may often provide an opportunity for readers to relate or empathize with their experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Researcher reflexivity helped us become aware of any potential beliefs and biases, which led us to peer debrief on multiple occasions for the purpose of exploring implicit aspects of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The first author conducted two in-depth interviews with the same participants, using adequate engagement in the data collection as a strategy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We transcribed the interviews, followed by writing analytical memos. The purpose of the analytical memos was twofold: (1) to help process our framework around mentorship and the nuances of mentoring relationships for Latina/o/x doctoral students and (2) to organize our peer debriefing conversations on the logistics of the study. We also kept audit trails to organize all the protocols and procedures of the research design to illustrate how findings were based on participants' narratives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This trustworthiness method helps clarify to readers the rationale behind every decision and shows a logical path of analysis. To ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings, the first author shared the transcribed transcripts with participants when requested. Additionally, the first author shared data points with participants to confirm results. The authors bridged and connected the data from interviews and online questionnaires to ensure triangulation of data sources.

Findings

Based on the narratives of our graduate student participants, we uncovered two major themes in our findings: (1) prioritizing health and wellness and (2) advocating for students remotely.

Prioritizing Health and Wellness

Due to the global pandemic, many graduate students reported experiencing heavy losses or personal burdens that impacted their academic performance and well-being. Victor, a third-year Latino doctoral student attending a public university, shared numerous moments where his mental health and well-being were compromised by his institutions' failure to provide resources, validation, or support to aid him. As a first-generation and low-income graduate student, he experienced multiple forms of racism and discrimination from peers, faculty, and staff that made him consider leaving his doctoral program. During the pandemic, he and his colleagues experienced numerous personal challenges, and they reached out to their graduate program for support and resources. However, weeks went by without any response.

> All these challenges have been big enough to the point that one of my peers that I came in the same year… they committed suicide because of the lack of resources that the university has failed to provide… my friend sent a lot of emails asking administration to do something to help them out, and those emails went unanswered to the point that it took a toll on their mental health and they ended up taking their life.

Unfortunately, the situation eventually took a turn for the worse as one of his cohort members committed suicide. This recent tragic experience impacted Victor's well-being and mental capacity. Victor's graduate program did not immediately acknowledge the tragic situation until the following month and failed to provide any form of counseling or therapeutic support to him or any other affected graduate student in the program. Instead, his program expected him to fulfill his responsibility in entering and completing his qualifying exams without any accommodations or interruptions. Victor felt frustrated his program and faculty did not provide opportunities to check-in or a reliable outlet to communicate his needs, primarily to support mental health and wellness.

Like Victor, other graduate students reported moments when their graduate program failed to understand the overwhelming pressure of managing their academic responsibilities while fearing for their lives in the pandemic. Many participants shared they had family members and close friends who tested positive for COVID-19, and a few had lost their lives. Luis, a third-year Latino male doctoral student attending a private university, shared this experience with mental health issues that disrupted his

concentration throughout the pandemic. The one component where he felt his graduate program stepped up was providing free temporary access to therapy and counseling sessions.

> I mean, the faculty checks in when you're taking classes but other than that …. I didn't see much else. I mean, I was already doing therapy. So, I've been dealing with my therapist and well, I gotta say though that [my institution] includes health insurance in your plan, like in your funding package, when this whole pandemic started, at least [my student health insurance provider] waved all co-pays on mental health assistance. So that was nice because I enjoyed a couple of good months of free therapy.

At his institution, graduate students were mandated to get tested and complete other requirements weekly. Before the pandemic, Luis had enrolled in therapy sessions though he still had a co-pay. Once the pandemic started, his graduate program and student health insurance provider collaborated to secure free services related to mental health for a semester. He said he felt these free services should have been placed and available a long time ago though he was relieved his institution made this major decision to prioritize mental health services, which was uncommon at other institutions.

As previously mentioned, many graduate students have experienced tragic moments from the pandemic, making it much harder to maintain their academic momentum or even concentrate, understandably. Mary, a fifth-year Latina doctoral student attending a private university, shared the loss of her grandfather due to COVID-19 and how it triggered fear for her own well-being, and that of her immediate and extended family.

> My grandpa died of COVID complications in November, and then my dad, who was his son, got COVID … and then he had to go to the hospital the same day he buried his own dad. My dad was in the ICU for too long … and we didn't know if he was going to die or not. I watched the news a lot, so I hear all these stories. And I felt like, because he had diabetes, he had heart problems, that he wouldn't make it. So yeah, from December to February, it was really hard to do work [for my graduate studies].

During our interview, Mary had an emotional breakdown as she shared her fear and anger toward meeting academic obligations, yet feared another family member could pass away from the illness. She also shared her frustration with the underpaid labor as a researcher. With her father in

the hospital, she had to support her family as another source of income though she was barely paid enough to survive herself. She was forced to pick up another job to meet her family's needs. Overall, these severe conditions impacted her mental health, finances, and academic expectations.

Advocating for Students Remotely

Many faculty members are accustomed to checking in with students via in-person interaction, including during office hours, breakfast or lunch, and before or after class time. These spaces provided opportunities for graduate students to network and build rapport with specific faculty members. Many graduate students even developed mentoring relationships with their professors, which was essential to better navigate their programs, create a support system, and prepare for their career pathways. However, the global pandemic eliminated or restricted these opportunities to connect in person.

Vanessa, a fifth-year Latina doctoral student attending a public university, reflected on how her faculty instructor created space during class time to check in with students and encourage them to share their recent achievements or challenges.

> She just opened up, and I remember in every class, she would create space either at the beginning or the end to check in. But to actually check in, not just to be like "Oh, how are you guys? Okay, cool. Let's move on to what we're going to cover." She actually went around [the classroom], and students felt comfortable sharing how they were doing, how they're feeling, what they were struggling through very deep and personal things.

Prior to the pandemic, Vanessa's faculty instructor would have in-person instruction and humanize her graduate students' experiences in an effort to be a validating and supportive mentor. These moments made Vanessa ask her professor to become her mentor and guide her throughout her doctoral journey. After the rapid transition to an online platform, Vanessa and her faculty mentor moved their exchanges to email, text, phone, and Zoom. As a first-generation graduate student, there were plenty of tools and strategies Vanessa had yet to learn; but both knew it was essential to maintain the mentoring relationship despite circumstances.

Given their position, faculty mentors have the capability to advocate for students at a higher level within the institution. By checking in with students, faculty can learn about the conditions of their students' well-being and shift their attention to specific needs. Rebeca, a second-year Latina doctoral student attending a public university, noted many graduate students experienced heavy financial repercussions from the pandemic. She shared a critical moment when faculty and graduate students attended a virtual town hall meeting and advocated for students' needs, primarily on their financial difficulties.

> When COVID really picked up and we realized that this is going to be something that we are going to have to deal with for the long run, there was a town hall within the department and the students [to discuss available financial resources]. We decided that those [departmental research] funds were going to be distributed equally to all the students. I think we each got like $500 or something like that, which was very helpful because it was hard. I wanted to be able to feed myself. I wanted to be able to pay rent, and it can be really stressful when graduate housing is increasing our rents significantly and you don't have a TA position over the summer. You don't have income for like four months. So, it was helpful in terms of like, "okay, I can see that you guys kind of care," but substantively, in those four months where I didn't have any income, $500 is like nothing.

Rebeca, her colleagues, and certain faculty members advocated for more funding to alleviate some financial challenges. After successful advocacy, the department was able to tap into a research funding source and distribute it among graduate students equally as a minor form of aid. Though it was insufficient for many students, Rebeca believed it was the start of the right direction as faculty members and other institutional agents began to remotely support students in partnership and collaboration. Thus, faculty members can bring graduate students' concerns to administrative meetings and help develop actions to respond to those needs.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many devastating outcomes and a long-lasting impact on graduate education and curriculum. Now, graduate departments and faculty mentors can (re)calibrate their priorities and implementation efforts to effectively improve the graduate student experience. Graduate students need faculty mentors and graduate departments

to advocate for their well-being, support, and resources. To adapt to the remote learning environment and for institutions planning to return to in-person instruction, graduate programs and faculty must advocate and create emancipatory changes in the curriculum, mentoring models, and equitable resources to ensure it does not compromise the health and well-being of students. Additionally, though it is evident the global pandemic made access to in-person mentoring relationships unadvisable, faculty members can still expand their efforts to connect and build rapport with graduate students.

Many graduate students noted their mentoring relationship with faculty transformed and adapted remotely to continue checking in and share their personal challenges. Additionally, several faculty members advocated on behalf of graduate students and their personal challenges through administrative actions. These methods can be implemented and incorporated into faculty-student mentoring relationships to further support graduate students. Several other graduate students shared the lack of response from their institutions or graduate program that led to unfortunate outcomes. Faculty members and graduate programs must be accessible and available to graduate students, as many participants shared that they were unprepared for the switch to a remote learning platform while handling their other personal and academic challenges. Several participants shared that their faculty mentors did an excellent job promoting resources and outlets such as counseling sessions to cope with the pandemic and other external situations (e.g., police violence, institutional scandals, etc.).

Validation theory and a narrative methodology guided the development of recommended solutions for graduate faculty and programs to implement or adjust their policies and practices:

1. When developing the curriculum for classes, incorporate time for check-ins and explicitly state available (remote) student support services on the syllabus.
2. Conduct routine checks (e.g., surveys) throughout the academic term to grasp a broad understanding of students' current situations as it can help adjust the workload and pace of course assignments.
3. Encourage the faculty in the department to send out an email to students (e.g., those in coursework, qualifying exams, dissertation stage, etc.) to emphasize opportunities to connect via remote office hours, phone calls, or email as alternative methods to in person.

4. Develop (virtual) outlets such as town halls to provide graduate students and faculty to voice their concerns and create actionable solutions.
5. Develop feedback outlets for graduate students to nominate supportive faculty members for mentoring awards.

These recommendations prioritize student well-being and validate their important contributions from their presence to their work. Additionally, it provides a roadmap for initiating changes within institutions and graduate programs to adapt to the (post)pandemic era. Overall, supportive and encouraging faculty and graduate programs with constant communication will positively contribute to graduate students' empowerment and academic success.

References

Acevedo-Gil, N., & Madrigal-Garcia, Y. (2018). Mentoring among Latina/o scholars: Enacting spiritual activism to navigate academia. *American Journal of Education, 124*(3), 313–344.

Alcantar, C. M., & Hernandez, E. (2020). "Here the professors are your guide, tus guías": Latina/o student validating experiences with faculty at a Hispanic-serving community college. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 19*(1), 3–18.

Bagaka's, J. G., Badillo, N., Bransteter, I., & Rispinto, S. (2015). Exploring student success in a doctoral program: The power of mentorship and research engagement. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 10*(1), 323–342.

Baker, V. L., & Griffin, K. A. (2010). Beyond mentoring and advising: Toward understanding the role of faculty "developers" in student success. *About Campus, 14*(6), 2–8.

Bonilla, J., Pickron, C., & Tatum, T. (1994). Peer mentoring among graduate students of color: Expanding the mentoring relationship. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 1994*(57), 101–113.

Bragg, D. D. (2001). Community college access, mission, and outcomes: Considering intriguing intersections and challenges. *Peabody Journal of Education, 76*(1), 93–116.

Brown, M. C., II, Davis, G. L., & McClendon, S. A. (1999). Mentoring graduate students of color: Myths, models, and modes. *Peabody Journal of Education, 74*(2), 105–118.

Bruce, A., Beuthin, R., Sheilds, L., Molzahn, A., & Schick-Makaroff, K. (2016). Narrative research evolving: Evolving through narrative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 15*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916659292

Brunsma, D. L., Embrick, D. G., & Shin, J. H. (2017). Graduate students of color: Race, racism, and mentoring in the white waters of academia. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 3*(1), 1–13.

Cadenas, G. A., Liu, L., Li, K. M., & Beachy, S. (2021). Promoting critical consciousness, academic performance, and persistence among graduate students experiencing class-based oppression. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*.

Calarco, J. M. (2020). *A field guide to grad school: Uncovering the hidden curriculum*. Princeton University Press.

Christe, B. L. (2013). The importance of faculty-student connections in STEM disciplines. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research, 14*(3), 22–26.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice, 39*(3), 124–130.

DeAngelo, L., Schuster, M. T., & Lachaud, Q. A. (2021). The faculty role in grooming and gatekeeping Students' of color potential along the professoriate pipeline. *The Review of Higher Education, 44*(4), 493–521.

Dodson, J. E., Montgomery, B. L., & Brown, L. J. (2009). "Take the fifth": Mentoring students whose cultural communities were not historically structured into US higher education. *Innovative Higher Education, 34*(3), 185–199.

Espino, M. M. (2014). Exploring the role of community cultural wealth in graduate school access and persistence for Mexican American PhDs. *American Journal of Education, 120*(4), 545–574.

Felder, P. (2010). On doctoral student development: Exploring faculty mentoring in the shaping of African American doctoral student success. *Qualitative Report, 15*(2), 455–474.

Gardner, S. K. (2008). Fitting the mold of graduate school: A qualitative study of socialization in doctoral education. *Innovative Higher Education, 33*(2), 125–138.

Gardner, S. K. (2010). Contrasting the socialization experiences of doctoral students in high-and low-completing departments: A qualitative analysis of disciplinary contexts at one institution. *The Journal of Higher Education, 81*(1), 61–81.

Gardner, S. K. (2013). The challenges of first-generation doctoral students. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2013*(163), 43–54.

Gay, G. (2004). Navigating marginality en route to the professoriate: Graduate students of color learning and living in academia. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 17*(2), 265–288.

Gildersleeve, R. E., Croom, N. N., & Vasquez, P. L. (2011). "Am I going crazy?!": A critical race analysis of doctoral education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 44*(1), 93–114.

Gloria, A. M., Castellanos, J., Lopez, A. G., & Rosales, R. (2005). An examination of academic nonpersistence decisions of Latino undergraduates. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 27*(2), 202–223.

González, J. C. (2007). Surviving the doctorate and thriving as faculty: Latina junior faculty reflecting on their doctoral studies experiences. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 40*(4), 291–300.

Griffin, K. A. (2012). Learning to mentor: A mixed methods study of the nature and influence of Black professors' socialization into their roles as mentors. *Journal of the Professoriate, 6*(2), 27–58.

Griffin, K. A., Perez, D., Holmes, A. P., & Mayo, C. E. (2010). Investing in the future: The importance of faculty mentoring in the development of students of color in STEM. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 2010*(148), 95–103.

Hackmann, D. G., & Malin, J. R. (2019). Mentoring for the educational leadership professoriate: Perspectives from jay D. Scribner mentoring award recipients and mentees. *Journal of research on leadership. Education, 14*(3), 236–260.

Hagedorn, R. L., Wattick, R. A., & Olfert, M. D. (2021). "My entire world stopped": College students' psychosocial and academic frustrations during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 1–22.

Hayes, E. F. (2005). Approaches to mentoring: How to mentor and be mentored. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 17*(11), 442–445. https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2018/demo/education-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html

Holloway-Friesen, H. (2021). The role of mentoring on Hispanic graduate students' sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 20*(1), 46–58.

Huerta, A., & Fishman, S. (2014). Marginality and mattering: Urban Latino male undergraduates in higher education. *Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 26*(1), 85–100.

Huerta, A. H., & Fishman, S. M. (2019). Marginalizing what matters: Revisiting Latino male students in the educational pipeline. In *Marginality in the Urban Center* (pp. 133–157). Palgrave Macmillan.

Huerta, A. H. (2022). Exploring Undergraduate Students' Emotional Vulnerability in Men of Color Programs. *Journal of College Student Development, 63*(1), 51–68.

Jehangir, R. R. (2009). Cultivating voice: First-generation students seek full academic citizenship in multicultural learning communities. *Innovative Higher Education, 34*(1), 33–49.

Kamimura-Jimenez, M., & Gonzalez, J. (2018). Understanding PhD Latinx career outcomes: A case study. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 17*(2), 148–168.

Lambie, G. W., Hayes, B. G., Griffith, C., Limberg, D., & Mullen, P. R. (2014). An exploratory investigation of the research self-efficacy, interest in research, and research knowledge of Ph.D. in education students. *Innovative Higher Education, 39*(2), 139–153.

Lechuga, V. M. (2011). Faculty-graduate student mentoring relationships: Mentors' perceived roles and responsibilities. *Higher Education, 62*(6), 757–771.

Levine, F. J., Nasir, N. I. S., Ríos-Aguilar, C., Gildersleeve, R. E., Rosich, K. J., Bang, M., Bell, N. E., & Holsapple, M. A. (2021). *Voices from the field: The impact of COVID-19 on early career scholars and doctoral students.* American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Lopez, E. F. (2021). *6 ways faculty can support grad students.* Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/04/15/why-and-how-faculty-should-support-grad-students-mitigate-pandemics-impact-opinion

Lunsford, L. G., Baker, V., Griffin, K. A., & Johnson, W. B. (2013). Mentoring: A typology of costs for higher education faculty. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 21*(2), 126–149.

McCoy, D. L., Winkle-Wagner, R., & Luedke, C. L. (2015). Colorblind mentoring? Exploring white faculty mentoring of students of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 8*(4), 225–242.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Designing your study and selecting a sample. Qualitative research: *A guide to design and implementation, 67*(1), 73–104.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). Race/ethnicity of college faculty: Full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and academic rank: Fall 2015, fall 2017, and fall 2018. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_315.20.asp

Noonan, M. J., Ballinger, R., & Black, R. (2007). Peer and faculty mentoring in doctoral education: Definitions, experiences, and expectations. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 19*(3), 251–262.

Pérez Huber, L., Malagón, M. C., Ramirez, B. R., Gonzalez, L. C., Jimenez, A., & Vélez, V. N. (2015). *Still Falling through the Cracks: Revisiting the Latina/o Education Pipeline.* CSRC Research Report. Number 19. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

Perez, R. J., Harris, L. W., Jr., Robbins, C. K., & Montgomery, C. (2019). Graduate students' agency and resistance after oppressive experiences. *Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education*, 57–71.

Posselt, J., Hernandez, T. E., Villarreal, C. D., Rodgers, A. J., & Irwin, L. N. (2020). Evaluation and decision making in higher education: Toward equitable repertoires of faculty practice. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, 35*, 1–63.

Quezada, R. L., & Louque, A. (2004). The absence of diversity in the academy: Faculty of color in educational administration programs. *Education, 125*(2).

Ramirez, E. (2017). Unequal socialization: Interrogating the Chicano/Latino(a) doctoral education experience. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 10*(1), 25–38. https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000028

Reimers, F. M. (2022). Learning from a pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on education around the world. In *Primary and Secondary Education During COVID-19* (pp. 1–37). Springer.

Rendon, L. I. (1994). Validating culturally diverse students: Toward a new model of learning and student development. *Innovative Higher Education, 19*(1), 33–51.

Rosenthal, L., Lee, S., Jenkins, P., Arbet, J., Carrington, S., Hoon, S., Purcell, S. K., & Nodine, P. (2021). A survey of mental health in graduate nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Nurse Educator, 46*(4), 215–220.

Santos, S. J., & Reigadas, E. T. (2002). Latinos in higher education: An evaluation of a university faculty mentoring program. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 1*(1), 40–50.

Slay, K. E., Reyes, K. A., & Posselt, J. R. (2019). Bait and switch: Representation, climate, and tensions of diversity work in graduate education. *The Review of Higher Education, 42*(5), 255–286.

Smith, W. A., Mustaffa, J. B., Jones, C. M., Curry, T. J., & Allen, W. R. (2016). "You make me wanna holler and throw up both my hands!": Campus culture, Black misandric microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 29*(9), 1189–1209.

Solórzano, D. G. (1993). *The road to the doctorate for California's Chicanas and Chicanos: A study of Ford Foundation Minority Fellows.* California Policy Seminar.

Thomas, K. M., Willis, L. A., & Davis, J. (2007). Mentoring minority graduate students: Issues and strategies for institutions, faculty, and students. *Equal Opportunities International, 26*(3), 178–192.

United States Census Bureau. (2017). *Educational attainment in the United States: 2017.* https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/education-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html

United States Census Bureau. (2018). *Educational attainment in the United States: 2018.* https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2018/demo/education-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html

United States Census Bureau. (2019). *Educational attainment in the United States: 2019.* https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2019/demo/educational-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html

Williams, M. S., Brown Burnett, T. J., Carroll, T. K., & Harris, C. J. (2018). Mentoring, managing, and helping: A critical race analysis of socialization in doctoral education. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 20*(2), 253–278.

Wright-Harp, W., & Cole, P. A. (2008). A mentoring model for enhancing success in graduate education. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders, 35*, 4–16.

Zhou, E., & Gao, J. (2021). *Graduate enrollment and degrees: 2010 to 2020.* Council of Graduate Schools.