

TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE: ETHNIC STUDIES AS A PATHWAY TO
HEALING FOR LATINO BOYS

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
San Francisco State University
In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree

Master of Art

In

Ethnic Studies

by

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San Francisco, California

May 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

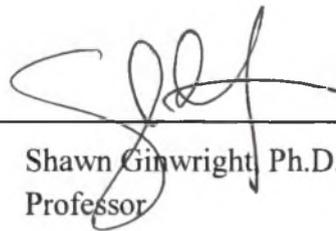
This thesis is for the resilient youth who have motivated me to inquire about healing within the current educational system. In particular, for my nephew, who has inspired me to open my heart and mind in order to listen more attentively and love more compassionately. For the countless words of encouragement and support that my family, friends and loved ones have instilled in me that have given me the strength to endure through the obstacles on my journey. I am especially thankful for the love, guidance and support from Dr. Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales and Dr. Shawn Ginwright. Last but not least, all the professors in the College of Ethnic Studies that have given me the tools to begin my own path of healing through their courageous and inspiring teachings. All this would not have been possible without any of you on this journey with me.

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *Transformative Knowledge: Ethnic Studies as a Pathway to Healing for Latino Boys* by Elisa Leon, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Art in Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University.



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TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE: ETHNIC STUDIES AS A PATHWAY TO
HEALING FOR LATINO BOYS

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2019

The following project presented is an examination of the types of teaching pedagogies that teachers utilize within and outside of their classrooms that is most effective for students of color, particularly “at risk” Latino boys. Through teacher narratives, I demonstrate how love, family and trust are essential in creating an environment that nurtures growth and cultivates knowledge. While traditional norms of teaching keep “at risk” students of color in the margins, the educators in this project strive to rid their classrooms of stereotypes and norms that undermine their students’ ability to be anything but great academics. Centering love, family and trust in their teaching, the educators provide an environment that utilizes education as a form of healing and liberation.

I certify that the abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.


Chair, Thesis Committee

5.22.19
Date

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Chapter One: Introduction

Personal Narrative

It was my second semester in graduate school and I was sitting in Professor Almaguer's Seminar in Latino/a Studies thinking about Manuel. It had been three days since my sister had told me that he had run away. I was physically present in class but my mind was elsewhere, thinking of Manuel and what he was possibly doing at that moment while I was sitting in this "safe haven" that we call school. When was the last time he had eaten? Had he showered lately or gotten some sleep? Where could he possibly be? The more I thought about my nephew, the more I thought about how he came to the decision to run away from home.

Manuel was a typical 14-year-old boy who liked to wear saggy pants and listen to rap music from up and coming artists on Sound Cloud. He was not very tall and had a thin built frame and was one of the goofiest and warm-hearted people in my life. Manuel's father, my sister's ex-husband, was currently incarcerated and had a release date in May of the year 2020, when Manuel would be 18 years old. He was going to miss some of the most crucial years of my nephew's life. He would not be present when my nephew was trying to understand and develop his sense of manhood. How was this young and loving brown boy going to be prepared to become a constant target of police when all he was doing was walking back home from the corner store? He would also be rejected and ignored by teachers and administrators as one more brown boy who was beyond saving, who was dispensable. Where the easy solution was to be pushed out of school

into some place that could be more suitable for his needs, in their eyes, a place like prison. What he needed was punishment and reform before education, as if those were the means of treating a child. After all, some teachers and administrators knew his father was incarcerated and assumed that Manuel would continue the inescapable cycle.

Manuel's restlessness and lack of interest in the classroom would escalate to behavior that ultimately lead to his expulsion. Manuel's expulsion was yet another mark on his student file, yet another record that would be kept on him. Unfortunately, being overlooked and hyper surveillanced on behalf of authoritative figures, was nothing new to Manuel. He was regularly stopped by police while walking home from school and was even video recorded by an officer one day while on his way home because the officer deemed him as a "suspicious criminal." It seemed no matter where he went, he was not seen as a boy or student but a threat or criminal. Long before his expulsion in middle school, Manuel's focus within the classroom began to drift. While his father did periods of time in and out of prison when he was much younger, this was the first time Manuel was more aware that his father was not there. He was no longer a little boy and now began to understand that his father was incarcerated. This took an immense emotional toll on Manuel's mental and spiritual health that began to greatly affect other parts of his life. When his father was physically present with him every day, Manuel's whole demeanor would completely change, his emotional state was much healthier, and his focus in school would improve.

Little did I know in that moment, that that particular experience with my nephew was a turning point in my life which made me realize that no matter how much help Manuel needed, not all the educators at his school were properly trained nor aware of what challenges he was facing and how to properly assist him. They were even less aware of how to identify obstacles and find ways to promote healing from the systems of oppression that caused many of these challenges. Manuel's expulsion might as well have been a big red 'X' on his student record because even with his mother's determination and perseverance, no school administrators nor school districts in the surrounding areas wanted to allow him to attend their schools. A young, Latino boy, Manuel had too much time to spare, had no school to go to and a tendency to get into trouble. These factors along with an incarcerated father and an overworking mother were a catastrophic combination that pushed him to look for role models on the street.

Manuel would tell me how he did not want to go to school anymore, that school was not for him. Whenever he would express his feelings of hopelessness and lack of interest, I began to fill with frustration. I started to wonder why he felt that school was not a place where he belonged and what role the teachers, school administrators, and educational system as a whole played into his feelings of despair. I began to blame the lack of attention on behalf of the teachers who could not recognize that Manuel needed them to understand the challenges that he was going through, to be able to give him support and resources to thrive and start to heal from those challenges. I began to blame the absence of a compassionate and welcoming environment in which Manuel felt

ostracized and felt that school was not meant to cultivate and enrich him. I thought of the growing strain of his father's absence and mother's hectic work schedule that made it difficult for Manuel to sustain a healthy relationship with men and most adults around him. His relationship with his father was one made through fifteen-minute phone calls, letters and monthly visits to a prison. Consequently, he had begun to develop a problematic relationship with O.G.'s and youngsters of the gang. They encompassed the protective family dynamic that he was so desperately searching for.

While my personal experience with education has been very different than my nephew's, I also found myself, as a second year college student, disengaged and disconnected when I was asked what I wanted to do with my degree and my education in general. When I first started as a freshman, I was majoring in Criminal Justice with an intention of going into law enforcement. My thought process then was that I was going to be within the people I would have sworn to protect and serve. In doing so, I was the first person they would encounter before entering the criminal justice system. I wanted to be a different police officer and show the community that I actually cared and did not want to just throw everyone into jail. I was set on this vision for my future but then I took a cross listed Criminal Justice class with the Latina/o Studies Department called Latina/o Youth, Crime, and Justice which was being taught by Dr. Larry Trujillo, and that changed everything.

Dr. Trujillo's class opened my eyes and gave me a completely different perspective on how the hegemonic systems in our country functioned. He and his late

wife, had been protestors during the 1968 strike for the establishment of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University and he taught with such passion that it was hard for me to not completely immerse myself in his lectures. Dr. Trujillo taught in a lecture hall with about 120 students and although, I rarely spoke up in class, he was one of the first professors at SF State that really captivated my interest and nurtured my love for Ethnic Studies.

This was one of the first classes that excited me since it felt so real and relevant to my lived experiences. Not only was I relating it to my own lived experiences, but to my loved ones as well. I was finally able to see my family and myself in the class material. This was the first time I was exposed to terms like criminalization, globalization, and racialization. We read about the criminalization of Latina/o youth and how they were disproportionately represented in “behavior correcting” tactics within their educational setting. Dr. Trujillo’s class fostered a new sense of awareness to the violence suffered by people of color at the hands of the unjust and unfair conditions faced in various institutions particularly the educational and criminal justice systems. This was one of the many “first experiences” into becoming the student and person I am while writing this thesis. It was the first real time in my educational journey, and life, that I was being forced outside of my comfort zone of my own mind. I was challenged to think about how I wanted to use my own personal experiences to educate others, and that touched a deeply rooted nurturing aspect in myself that made me want to cultivate those emotions into

something that could be transformed to inform, benefit, and progress myself and possibly my family and my community.

Statement of the Problem

Context of the Problem

Through the various other Ethnic Studies courses that I took while being an undergraduate, I was finally able to find the voice that allowed me to express myself in ways I had not been able to before. I was more confident in who I was because of the classes I took through the College of Ethnic Studies with professors and peers that could relate to my lived experience as a first generation Latina college student that came from immigrant parents. With the support and guidance of professors, lecturers, peers, and friends I saw myself applying to a graduate program, something I never saw in my educational future before taking Ethnic Studies courses. Given the chance to take Ethnic Studies courses granted me the opportunity to enrich my personal and educational journey which I believe should be available to all students, especially students of color that are marginalized too many times in their educational journeys. I also believe that being exposed to and taught through an Ethnic Studies lens should begin as early as possible but it is especially crucial during a youth's high school years.

Ethnic Studies pedagogy is a method that could engage students who are struggling and/or are not interested in school. As stated by Tintiangco-Cubales, et al. (2014), "Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and comparative study of the social, cultural, political, and economic expression and experience of ethnic

groups” (107). Through this pedagogy, teachers are able to give a wider and more comprehensive approach to the curriculum they teach as well as the strategies and practices they utilize to do so.

Thesis Statement/Outline of Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to explore what pedagogies will be the most effective when teaching Latino boys, specifically those who are considered “at risk.” In order to do this it is important to examine the different approaches teachers utilize within their curriculum as well as through their classroom pedagogies. It is also essential to determine if and to what degree these teachers provide opportunities for “at risk” Latino boys to discuss and heal from traumas they may have experienced.

Following this introduction, chapter two of my thesis will review literature that provides frameworks for this thesis as well as support for the topics related and discussed. Henceforth, chapter three will provide insight into the types of methodologies most effective to answer my research questions. Chapter four will analyze the findings of my research, giving space to the voices of the teachers’ narratives. Finally, chapter five will summarize the findings, give suggestions for future research, and conclude this thesis.

Research Aims and Questions

The aim of this research project was to figure out what needs to happen in high school classrooms that would restore and retain “at risk” Latino boys’ engagement and attention at school. The intention is to analyze the pedagogies practiced by high school

educators within and outside of their classrooms that have been effective with students who have been marginalized and disenfranchised. In taking a closer look into their curriculum and the implementation of their teaching philosophies with their students, I aim to answer the following questions:

1. How does Ethnic Studies provide a framework to engage students of color who have been historically marginalized?
2. What pedagogies are most effective when teaching historically marginalized students, specifically, Latino boys?
3. What types of classrooms provide opportunities for “at risk” students-- specifically Latino boys--to heal from trauma they may experience?

Operationalization of Main Concepts

In this section, I provide descriptions of the main concepts that I use throughout the thesis:

Latino Boys:

Through teacher narratives, this project is enriched by the lived experiences of students of color, particularly Latino boys. Noguera (2012) provides evidence that group Latino boys at the bottom of statistics that are “indicators of academic achievement, educational attainment and school success” (9). He also states that it is found that they “are more likely than any other group [alongside African American boys] to be suspended and expelled from school” (Fergus & Noguera, 2010). Although these statistics have shown that Latino boys have not been as successful in school as their

peers, this has created a paradox that Rios (2011) says creates a “political consciousness and resistant identity” amongst Latino boys (xv). With odds against them, Latino boys are able to express love, trust and growth through the narratives of their teachers.

Historical Marginalized People:

Marginalized peoples’ narratives and experiences have historically, been works kept out of dominant discourse since they did not seem to contribute any significance. Drawing upon the works of Duncan-Andrade (2005) and Perry, Steele, and Hilliard (2004), Camangian (2010) states, “academic contexts where both Black and Brown student school performance is negatively impacted by mainstream narratives and ideologies that construct them as intellectually inferior” (182). Here, students of colors’ contribution to the educational environment are disregarded since they are considered inferior, which further marginalizes them. In order to not further marginalize students of color,

Teachers must draw from young people’s “robust” literacies to connect their curricula to the needs of students struggling to navigate culturally alienating schooling institutions and the harsh conditions of everyday life (Camangian, 2010).

While the academic environment and educational system as a whole continues to marginalize students of color, Camangian explains that teachers should make the means more accessible for these students to “navigate” through education.

“At Risk”:

On his website, Dr. Victor Rios describes “at risk” youth as:

youth in different situational circumstances that are guiding them towards failure in the educational system, and into the mass incarceration systems or low skilled jobs; [a term] to describe children in lower socioeconomic standings, youth with parents with little education or students from undocumented working class families; [as well as] used to show the potential number of future youth that are predicted to join the statistics, despite never have been given a chance to prove themselves

(<http://www.drivictorrios.com/at-promise-youth.html>)

In this context, it is portrayed as a negative label for youth who are systematically disadvantaged. For the purpose of this thesis, it is intended as a descriptive term that encompasses the social, economical and educational circumstances students of color are subjected to within this educational system. It is speaking to the students who are currently or have been struggling in their educational journeys.

Ethnic Studies:

The College of Ethnic Studies website states that Ethnic Studies emerged out of student strikes of 1968 and 1969 that demanded a more inclusive education that “reflected a respect for the diverse intellectual traditions and cultural expressions” (<https://ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu>). Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2014) explain the purpose of Ethnic Studies as a means “to develop students’ critical understanding of the world and

their place in it, and ultimately prepare them to transform their world for the better by using academic tools” (111). This purpose is centered on the ideas of decolonization, self-determination and anti-racism that were demanded by the Third World Liberation Front Movement of 1968 (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2014).

Pedagogy:

Tintiango-Cubales (2010) thoroughly describes pedagogy as “a philosophy of education informed by the positionalities, ideologies and standpoints (of both teacher and learner)” that combines the purpose, context, content and methods of education and teaching as well as the identity of those involved (viii). She explains that pedagogy encompasses the relationship the purpose of education has with the context and content of it as well as how it is taught. She also points out the importance of how that relates to the identity of the teacher and the student as well as their relationship to each other and the power structure.

Healing:

As defined by Ginwright (2016), healing is “an explicit process for restoring individuals and communities back to optimal health” from a harm that is psychological, physical or combination of both (37, 38). He explains that the injury could manifest itself in a psychological, spiritual or cultural sense (37). Ginwright (2016) argues that healing asks, “what caused the harm and how do we repair the injury?” (38). In this thesis, I will address the “what” by highlighting the shortcomings of the educational system that contributes to the harm endured by students of color, particularly Latino boys. The “how”

will be demonstrated by the guidance, love and care that the teachers provide for their students as well as the spaces they are able to create to facilitate healing.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Through personal experience and observations, I have been able to familiarize myself with how Latinas and Latinos have used education as a form of resistance (Solorzano, 2001) and have been used against them as a form of alienation where educators provide unreasonable assumptions about how to care for their students (Valenzuela, 1999). In my particular research, I am looking at what teaching pedagogies, within and outside of the classroom, are most effective when teaching “at risk” Latino boys. I would also like to explore if teachers are providing a space for “at risk” Latino boys to heal from traumas they may have experienced. I will organize the literature in the three following domains: Race and Incarceration—School to Prison Pipeline; Latino Boys and Criminalization and Identity Formation; and Pedagogy, Practice and Healing. The literature will draw from social sciences such as Sociology, Psychology, Women’s Studies, Education, and Ethnic Studies. The first domain introduces literature that examines the relationship between race and incarceration that has led to mass incarceration in the United States as well as theories of resistance that recognize a person’s human agency in resisting the power structure. In the following domain, literature will explore in what ways Latino boys are criminalized and how that affects their identity formation. It also describes the lack of resources for “at risk” Latino boys, in particular a lack of safety that is needed while attending school. For the last domain, the literature will be demonstrating how the classroom, and educational system as a

whole, alongside social justice centered educators provide a bridge to healing for “at risk” Latino boys and all students of color within education.

Race and Incarceration—School to Prison Pipeline

For this particular domain, a review of the literature will provide an insight into race and incarceration as well as a school to prison pipeline that the current educational system subjects students of color to. This examines and interrogates the “at risk” label that categorizes Latina/o and all students of color and explains the implications of the label. The literature and my interpretation of it will shed light on how the label “at risk” is something that is negative but adversely shows how the students’ resilience and lived experiences will also change the outcome of the label.

In her book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander (2010) is explaining the correlations, as the title suggests, between the Jim Crow era in the late 1870s to 1950s to a new Jim Crow era currently happening in our society. She addresses the crisis of mass incarceration that strategically began to take place before the Reagan administration officially declared a war on drugs. This in turn prompted national media to sensationalize the inner city, poor Black community, in particular, as “‘crack whores,’ ‘crack dealers,’ and ‘crack babies’” in order to portray the Black community as racially inferior and morally defiant (5). Alexander states that in the course of thirty years, the prison population increased from 300,000 to 2 million during the same time that drug convictions were exponentially on the rise. As more readily known now but previously detailed by Alexander, the United

States has the largest prison system in the world with 750 per 100,000 people behind bars compared to Germany that has 93 per 100,000 people, incarcerated. Even in comparison with more authoritarian government states like Russia, China, and Iran, the United States still has more people incarcerated in jails and prisons (6). Alexander further emphasizes that race is essential when investigating the crisis of mass incarceration since racial and ethnic minorities are imprisoned at a much higher rate than their white counterparts. Furthermore, it is important to note that the poverty level, especially for poor people of color, also plays a vast role in determining the likelihood and the amount of time you spend incarcerated. Alexander notes that these realities are in direct conflict with the studies done on the people that use and sell drugs since conclusively people across all race and ethnic backgrounds have similar drug patterns (7). Alexander's work helps to establish how people of color are subjected to harsher sentencing and face racial bias when interacting with the criminal justice system particularly when thinking about drug abuse and drug offenses.

According to Daniel G. Solorzano and Dolores Delgado Bernal's (2001) explanation of theories of resistance, they differ from social and cultural reproduction theories in that they acknowledge an individual's role in resisting the power structure as well as allow them to "negotiate and struggle" with the structures in order to create their own meanings (315). These theories of resistance also recognize an individual's human agency, as defined by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, as "the confidence and skills to act on one's behalf" (315, 316). Both Solorzano and Delgado Bernal state that although these

theories of resistance provide a different framework in contrast to social and cultural reproduction theories, they still do not provide the structure that emphasizes a social justice framework (316).

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal provide a sort of spectrum of student resistance with one end being the student that acts out in class and does not have a social critique in relation to the oppression against themselves or others. On the other hand, there are students that have a strong critique of the oppressive structures but unfortunately most of the time, they end up reproducing the same dynamics with self-defeating resistant behavior (316). In order to offer further insight into this spectrum, the authors take from a study conducted on Chicana school resistance which created a framework of Chicana and Chicano students and the different types of school resistance based on two criteria: "...Students must have a critique of social oppression, and students must be motivated by an interest in social justice" (316, 317). The following are the four different categories for student school resistance, which also fit the criteria: reactionary behavior, self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance, and transformational resistance (316). Reactionary behavior is when a student has no social critique and is not aware of the oppressive conditions in addition to not having drive to enact social change. A student that engages in self-defeating resistance is one that has slight awareness of social injustices but has very little desire in changing social norms and actually participates in behavior that is self-defeating. The student who falls into the conformist resistance criteria would be one that is interested to bring about social change but only within the social and cultural

parameters that already exist. There is no real motivation for structural or institutional change. The last category is transformational resistance where students do have an awareness of social oppressions and have a desire to bring about social change. This spectrum given by the authors is extremely useful to my research since it is able to provide me with a framework that has already been established in order to find similarities and compare differences with “at risk” Latino boys in their educational settings.

Latino Boys, Criminalization and Identity Formation

In this next domain, the review of the literature will explore how and in what ways Latino boys are criminalized and the impact it has on the formation of their identity. This domain will further explore what criminalization means and in what ways it relates to Latino boys, particularly in an educational setting. This section will explain and expand what identity formation is and how it applies to Latino boys as well as what identities Latino boys seem to embrace and which ones they seem to reject.

In Martha E. Bernal and George P. Knight’s book (1993), they have a chapter that speaks to identity formation, specifically ethnic identity formation, in which they are referring to Erik Erikson’s work in ego identity formation. His theory suggests that there needs to be a development of one’s identity while searching through one’s “abilities, interests, and options” in order to establish and reinforce one’s identity as a foundation for future guidance (62). Erikson’s theory and research is largely based upon Marcia’s empirical work on ego identity formation. Marcia has created four statuses, as he calls

them, in order to categorize youth based upon the consciousness or unconsciousness to explore their identity and their commitment to their identity which are the following: identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium and identity achieved (62, 63). Identity diffusion refers to youth who have yet to experience reinforcement and/or commitment to their identity, which would suggest a lack of focus on their behalf. Identity foreclosure describes youth who have not necessarily explored their identity but have made a commitment based upon the ideas and views of others. Youth who are conscious and exploring their possible identities are said to be in an identity moratorium. And lastly, the youth who have ventured in depth and have come to a sure conclusion of what their identity is are said to be identity achieved individuals (62, 63). This piece provides examples for identity formations and a scale of identity based within psychological discipline.

In their book, Eugene E. Garcia (2001) states that African American and Latino students are not as successful in school for more reasons than just academics. According to Rumberger and Larson (1998) about 40 percent of Latinos stop attending high school for reasons not due to academics, some of which have to do with low school attendance and lack of interest with the school system itself. To further address the low school attendance and truancy within Latinos, Rumberger and Larson (1998) state that at the start of the seventh grade they had an average rate of 12 percent of absences in comparison to other ethnic groups but this figure increased to twice as many by the end of the year. As the high school years went on, the same students had an increasing

number of trancies or they dropped out completely. In their research, they concluded that by ninth grade about 17 percent of Latinos had dropped out of high school (Rumberger & Larson, 1998). Of those Latino students in the ninth grade, less than half of them are actually on the pathway to graduation and by the end of tenth grade the number of dropouts had almost doubled to 31 percent. Meanwhile, the number of students on the pathway to graduation was also reduced to less than a quarter of the Latino student body.

Patricia Gandara and Frances Contreras (2009) diagrammed a chart in which they show the context for schooling Latino youth. In the center and the main circle they have the Latino student. In a box named “school resources” it contains facilities, curriculum, skilled teachers and school leaders, technology and special programs. In another box named “school climate” they include safety, inclusiveness and segregation. In the last box named “school peers” they cover extracurricular activities and social capital. For the purpose of this domain, the school’s facilities in the “schools resources” box and safety in “school climate” will be addressed. According to Gandara and Contreras (2009), in California in 2007 there was an average of one school counselor per 800 students, one psychologist per 1,383 students, one librarian per 5,123 students, one nurse per 2,242 students and one social worker per 18,117 students. All of these different mental, emotional, psychological and physical support systems play an active role in providing students a well equipped educational environment in which they can flourish. The authors Gandara and Contreras (2009) also explain that while Latino students represented 78

percent of the overall student body in Los Angeles schools, only 13 percent of those Latino students were enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The lack of Latino students within college prep and AP courses is troubling and as Gandara and Contreras (2009) explain, schools with large Latino student populations are not equipped to serve more college prep and AP courses and unfortunately, many Latino students are not ready to take the courses. Gandara and Contreras (2009) also stated that, “Without a considerable redistribution of resources it would be impossible for Latino students to take highly demanding courses...” with the inadequate lack of preparation the educational system has provided them thus far (99).

Gandara and Contreras (2009) also point out that the lack of safety experienced by Latino students greatly affects the school climate, which in turn greatly affects their educational experience. According to Gandara and Contreras (2009) in 2005, nationally about 10 percent of Latino students were far more likely to say that they did not feel safe at or on their way to school when compared to 4 percent of all white students. The actual location of the school as well as poverty level in addition to the feelings of lack of safety had a significant impact on the academic outcomes of the Latino students. According to Gandara and Contreras (2009), gangs had two different negative impacts of the Latino student’s sense of safety within and on their way to school. One was the presence of gangs within a Latino student’s neighborhood but not being affiliated with any particular gang. The other was actually being affiliated and being an active member of a gang in which 4 to 10 percent of Latino students from the ages of twelve to eighteen years of age

pertain to. This specific population of Latino students is more likely to participate in disruptive and sometimes violent activities that comprised the school's climate of safety (111). Gandara and Contreras (2009) explain that the threat of violence, which in turn compromises the student's sense of safety within the school, actually decreases with age. This finding states that middle and high school students are less likely than elementary students to say that the threat of violence affects their safety is not because the threat of violence decreases but because being perceived as scared and weak while getting older is looked down upon. Gandara and Contreras (2009) state that overall 10 percent of Latino students fear for their safety, which in turn negatively affects their educational achievement.

Pedagogy, Practices and Healing

For this next domain, the review of the literature will focus on how educators and researchers will provide and have provided critical pedagogy frameworks for a better equipped socially and culturally competent educational system. This socially and culturally competent educational system is hopefully the pathway to integrating healing into education.

In the article, "Toward an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy: Implications for K-12 Schools from the Research," by Allyson Tintiango-Cubales, Rita Kohli, Jocyl Sacramento, Nick Henning, Ruchi Agarwal-Rangnath and Christine Sleeter (2014), they are examining what Ethnic Studies pedagogy looks like and what are the effects for employing and training K-12 educators to teach Ethnic Studies. Unlike Senate Bill 1108

in Arizona, San Francisco Unified School District's Board of Education unanimously agreed to embrace Ethnic Studies in schools within their district. The authors establish that the pedagogy consists of three different parts which include culturally responsive pedagogy that addresses students' cultural needs; community responsive pedagogy that focuses on engaging the students' classroom learning with their community; and teacher racial identity development that constantly is conscious of race, culture and identity (2014, 10-14). This literature supports the research because it provides a framework in which Ethnic Studies has been working in and while focusing on a specific group of students, in this case "at risk" Latino boys, and how Ethnic Studies can help or hinder their educational experience and address any educational traumas as well as provide a space to heal.

In her book, Angela Valenzuela (1999) goes into detail about the teacher-student relationships and the politics of caring that describe how teachers portray their students and how the students come to build their relationship based off that portrayal. When talking in particular about one of the social studies teachers in her study, she states how she is loved by her students and admired by her colleagues. Valenzuela states that Ms. Aranda "embody[s a] near-perfect mix between aesthetic and authentic caring" which she demonstrates with her students in and outside the classroom as well as with her department (101). Her students can sense the genuine care their social studies teacher has for them so they are in turn able to care about her. This ultimately creates a loving space where students are able to engage. Ms. Aranda provides a culturally sensitive curriculum

to make all her students feel included. In this particular example, she allows her students that work late to do a project instead of taking a test in order to show their comprehension in the class (100). Valenzuela's concept of *cariño* expands on the notion of providing a socially competent education through building genuine and meaningful relationships between teacher and student as well as the humanization process that happens for both of them.

This act of humanization is a process that “humanist, revolutionary” teachers strive for with their students, according to Paulo Freire (2003, 75). He describes the banking method of education where the teacher is the holder of knowledge and the students are the ones who “bank” the information. But Freire explains that in this educational relationship there is no change to the status quo of the oppressive systems that hold control. On the contrary, Freire (2003) states that education should serve as a tool to liberation and revolutionary educators are aware of this and instill this in their students by driving them “to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization” (75). Instead of thinking of themselves as a the sole holder of knowledge, revolutionary educators create a “partnership” with their students that in turn “undermine[s] the power of oppression and serve[s] the cause of liberation” (75). In thinking of students in this capacity, teachers are then able to start to build an environment of collaboration in which students will feel empowered. This empowerment and humanization creates a classroom that is then able to support and sustain a space for healing.

In thinking of an education rooted in liberation, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) present a critical pan-ethnic studies that creates a partnership between teacher and students “to investigate racial injustice [and] collaborate to eradicate it” (138). They also state that while this framework “develops young people’s intellectual capabilities and racial identities...it is [also] rooted in struggles for change” (138). To further describe their liberating framework, they state that when applied, it can help to form relationships that could offer actual change where it is being implemented (140). To expand on Freire’s approach to education that focused on aspects teachers could do, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell propose frameworks that could manifest change within schools, specifically urban schools. While it is important that teachers do their part in carrying out revolutionary work, these scholars are providing progressive and innovative ways to reform educational structures of the schools that need it the most and would also benefit greatly from it.

Shawn Ginwright (2016) is examining and explaining how a framework structured around healing and justice is utilized in order to restore hope in urban communities that has been greatly affected by structural violence. The author is focusing on work of teachers’ and activists’ efforts with healing strategies and frameworks within schools and community organizations to help promote hope. Ginwright provides five features within this radical healing framework called CARMA that stands for Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement (25). The *culture* aspect connects youth to a sense of belonging where they are then able to establish *agency* that gives them

the avenue to express and investigate social issues that in turn creates meaningful *relationships* among youth and adults. It is here where youth are then able to begin to discover *meaning* in their lives and ultimately celebrate their *achievements* through it all (25). For the purpose of my research, this radical healing framework is very useful since it addresses social, communal and individual healing. This lays the groundwork for teachers who want to create spaces for healing with their students within the classroom.

Chapter Three: Methodology

My research is examining which pedagogies are most effective when teaching “at risk” Latino boys as well as what types of classrooms and spaces provide opportunities for these boys to heal from traumas they may have experienced. Since my research is examining the types of pedagogies teachers utilize in their classroom and how those types of pedagogies affect “at risk” Latino boys, it would be imperative to use qualitative research methods through in depth interviews. Through these interviews, I could dialogue with the teachers to see what kind of effects their pedagogies have on this specific student population. Conducting teacher interviews will be the best avenue to determine which pedagogies are most effective when teaching “at risk” Latino boys since they have the direct vantage point to answer what types of classrooms they operate as well as the types of spaces they provide for “at risk” Latino boys to heal from traumas they may have experienced. Since the teachers have been working with this student population directly, they are experienced and familiar enough with these students that they can give significant assessment and critique. In order to answer the questions my research is proposing, it is important for me to draw from real lived experiences and speaking with teachers directly can give me insight to just that. In order to guide my research, I used the following questions:

1. How does Ethnic Studies provide a framework to engage students of color who have been historically marginalized?

2. What pedagogies are most effective when teaching historically marginalized students, specifically, Latino boys?
3. What types of classrooms provide opportunities for “at risk” students-- specifically Latino boys--to heal from trauma they may experience?

Overview of Study Procedures

The study design for the research is to conduct in depth interview sessions with educators to examine the types of pedagogies they use within their classroom that is especially engaging to “at risk” Latino boys. Teacher participants and researchers will arrange a time to do a 45 to 60 minute interview. These interviews will ask participants to share narratives of their relationship with their students, specifically their Latino male students; what they are teaching in their classes; how they think what they are teaching is impacting their students’ schooling experience with their pedagogy; and if they think they are providing a space for their students’ to heal from their traumas. The purpose of the in depth interviews with these teachers is to have a clear understanding of what their pedagogies consist of and how they apply them to the curriculum and classroom. It would also be important for teachers to explain why they choose an Ethnic Studies pedagogy and lens instead of others because it is crucial to understand the relationship between the teacher, their pedagogies and the impact they wish to have on their students.

Population and Sample

The population sample for my research consists of educators who teach at or taught at high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. These teachers had to teach within

an Ethnic Studies framework and within a school that has a large Latino presence. It was important for me to interview teachers who approached their teaching styles and curriculum in a non-traditional sense. In the following segment I will briefly introduce the educators.

Eva

A passionate, caring educator at a historical inner city San Francisco high school, Eva has dedicated more than 10 years to teaching “at risk” Latino boys. While in college, she took an Ethnic Studies course and she was intrigued. As one of the only students of color in her classes, she found a passion in Ethnic Studies, later becoming an Ethnic Studies and social studies teacher at a high school level after previously wanting to teach elementary school aged kids. Eva “kind of” fell into teaching and found herself at a predominantly Latino high school that was located in a highly Latino populated part of San Francisco. Growing up as one of the only students of color in her classes, Eva felt marginalized much like the students she is currently teaching. Although teaching her students could be “crazy hard” it also inspires her to learn and keep growing as a teacher. All the while, having fun!

Fernando

A Bay Area native, Fernando became a community organizer and activist at a young age. He said through the inspiration of his mentors, he found teaching as a career that was always in demand. Working primarily with “at risk” youth at after school and community programs at Downtown High School, Mission High School and John O’Connell High

School, Fernando has an extensive background in assisting this population. He is able to build meaningful relationships with his students because of the similar background and environment he was exposed to while a youth himself. Although he began getting a feel for teaching at just 19 years old, it was not until years later that he was acquired a permanent position at another Bay Area high school that serves predominantly students of color. Fernando taught history and later Ethnic Studies at the high school he attended years prior as a student himself. Ironically, he was expelled from this high school for his involvement in protests for a more inclusive education that was deemed dangerous by administrators. Fernando saw teaching as an avenue where he could continue his community organizing work while having continuous access to the population that he was very familiar with.

Misha

Originally from the San Diego/Tijuana border area, she found a home in a couple Oakland high schools where she was able to apply her deeply rooted love for “at risk” youth through her teaching. Misha’s experience with high school was one that made her feel “unsafe [and] angry” with a system that she says was “meant to only serve one group of people.” Having experienced a seemingly traumatic educational experience, Misha turned that disappointment into drive to become a teacher she never had. With a combined 12 years of experience, she continually centers love in her classroom, love for her students and love for their future. Currently, a doctoral student at University of

California, Los Angeles, Misha strives to provide insight to her students that their education is a tool for humanization and liberation.

Christian

Alumni of San Francisco State University, Christian was majoring in Engineering with a goal to become an architect. In his third year of undergrad, he took part in a three-month program in Mexico and was in need of work when he returned. While looking for work, a friend recommended that he apply to be a temporary teacher at a Special Ed. program for the summer. More than fifteen years later, Christian could not picture himself anywhere else but teaching Spanish at a small town high school that serves mostly students of color. He prides himself on being a teacher that is widely respected by students as well as a mentor. Christian says that he hopes to motivate his students to go to a UC, to help their community and take advantage of the opportunities that their parents did not have. The small town he lives and serves in is mostly comprised of working class and low-income families of color. While a college degree is not rare, it is also not the norm for these families that work day in and day out to provide for their students. Christian wants to provide a quality education for his students so they could do the same for his children one day.

Tommy

Initially working in finance before the 2008 recession, Tommy wanted to do something different with his business degree. With the encouragement of his sister, he decided to get his credentials and is now in his second year of teaching at a struggling small town high

school with predominantly students of color. This is a relatively new shift for the school, with it being about 50 percent white students just 15 years prior. With a total of 10 years of teaching experience, Tommy is now able to use his degree in business to structure classes in personal finance for students who are not usually taught such life skills.

Although administrators have expressed their concern with the complexity of the topics taught in his personal finance class, Tommy explains, for example, that it is important to teach them how to invest their money since there are few adults in their lives doing so. Through his easygoing demeanor, Tommy creates an environment where his students feel supported and cared for in a school that easily disregards students of color.

Rachel

Having a similar experience to Misha, Rachel was a very disengaged student until she took an Ethnic Studies class her senior year in high school. She says after taking that Ethnic Studies class, she felt the need to find her purpose that led her to joining Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) where she determined that teaching is how she was going to help serve others. For close to ten years now, she has been teaching at a high school located in the Excelsior District in San Francisco that serves mostly students of color.

While not teaching an Ethnic Studies course, she is determined to teach through an Ethnic Studies lens that is centered on the lives of marginalized communities while focusing on an anti-racist and anti-sexist framework. Rachel says that while many students lack an interest in school, she is able to create lessons that restore interest and

engage students to share their narratives to the classroom content. Rachel's goal is making an engaging and reflective education accessible to students before a college level.

Jesus

Being the teacher with close to 20 years of teaching at a small town high school, Jesus has had his fair share of students. The high school is predominantly students of color and about ninety-five percent of his classes are Latino. Similar to many of the other teachers, Jesus sort of fell into teaching and fell in love with it. Little did he know at the beginning of his career, he would become a social worker, role model, counselor and even father figure for some of his students. He is open with his students about his life and they are with theirs. Jesus says it has become important to learn about his students' lives since it affects how they perform in his class. Working with students that come from low income and working class families, some of them do not even have access to internet or a computer itself. By creating a welcoming, laid back atmosphere in his classroom, Jesus establishes close and meaningful relationships with his students. At his particular high school, autonomy for teachers is limited with much of the curriculum set and texts, which are not culturally or critically relevant to students. Being inspired by the interview, Jesus decided to discuss with administration the need for more Ethnic Studies and culturally responsive courses for students.

Data Collection

I decided doing in depth interviews with the teachers mentioned above would be the best avenue to capture the types of teaching strategies they used in the classroom;

what their curriculum consisted of; as well as how they built meaningful relationships with “at risk” Latino boys. The teachers would also give me insight into how they provided spaces within their classroom that allowed for “at risk” Latino boys to share and discuss traumas they may have experienced. Initially, the teachers were contacted via email to explain my interest in conducting an interview to gain their perspective on my research. After agreeing to participate, a date, time and location was agreed upon to meet. Before beginning the interview, I presented the participants with an informed consent form which they were given time to look over. As mentioned earlier, the interviews lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour and were digitally recorded by the researcher. The questions for the interview were organized into four separate sections:

Demographic Information

1. How many years have you been teaching/have taught?
2. How many years have you been teaching/have taught at your current/last school?
3. What classes and/or grades do you teach?
4. What are the demographics of your students?

Pedagogy

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. How would you describe your teaching philosophy? What frameworks have influenced your teaching?
3. What is your purpose as a teacher?

4. How would you describe your teaching methods?
5. How would you describe that content of your teaching?
6. Why do you think it is important or necessary to teach ethnic studies in K-12, particularly high school?
7. How important is it for you to learn about your students (their interests, their family, home life)? Can you talk about a time when you did this with a student?
8. How important is it for you for students to learn about you (in terms of your interests, family, home life)? Can you talk about a time when you did this with your class or a particular student?
9. How important is it for you that you talk with your students about issues that are happening in their community? Can you talk about a time when you did this with your class? How did they respond?
10. Do you believe your classroom is place where students can express any traumas experienced within education, in their community, etc.? How so?

Experience with Latino Male Students

1. What are some of the things you've noticed that your Latino male students experience at your school? What have you noticed them expressing about their classes?
2. What are your experiences teaching Latino male students? How about specifically Latino male students who are struggling in school?

3. What teaching strategies/methods have you observed that work best with your Latino male students?
4. Do they seem more engaged with some particular methods over others?
5. Do you feel like Ethnic Studies supports Latino male students? If so, how and why?

Teaching/Educational Challenges and Changes

1. Have you encountered challenges while teaching ethnic studies at the high school level? From students? Other educators? What were these challenges?
2. What keeps you committed to teaching in Ethnic Studies?

Data Analysis

Although Critical Race Theory was developed in a legal discourse, I took the spirit of the theory to assist in analyzing the data. In the article, *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, Victor F. Caldwell (1995) states that Critical Race Theory was rebellious in the legal field because of the use of

...storytelling and counter storytelling in which scholar's draw on parables, chronicles, and anecdotes aimed at revealing the contingency of majoritarian presuppositions, received wisdoms, and cultural understandings that have driven American legal thought.

Even though my research is not contesting or reviewing law, I used a Critical Race Theory lens to conduct and analyze my research. I utilized teacher narratives to give light

to the “at risk” Latino boys’ lived experiences instead of having a traditional means (“bad” grades or disciplinary record) dictate their story.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I began to look for broader themes that seemed present in most of the interviews. The three major pillars that were present throughout all the interviews at some capacity or another were love, family, and trust. It also became apparent that although teachers were influenced by and taught through certain pedagogies within the classroom, a considerable amount of their work transcended outside the classroom. Therefore, it became necessary to divide pedagogy into two sections: inside of the classroom and outside of the classroom. To further clarify how these different types of pedagogies worked, it became necessary to break down each type of pedagogy into three subsections.

Limitations

There were many limitations while conducting this study. There was scheduling constraints on my behalf and on behalf of the teachers interviewed. In addition to being a graduate student, I also have to work full time in order to support myself financially. The teachers who participated consisted of full time teachers, community organizers and graduate students. It also became difficult to schedule interviews because of the distance some teachers live and work at was far for me to travel. Although I was willing to meet with the participants in the most convenient location for them, it sometimes required me to travel a couple hours during commute time and they had to push back their commute home as well. For the purpose of this thesis, I also limited my population sample to just

teachers, leaving the “at risk” Latino boys’ personal narratives absent. Nevertheless, I believed the teachers’ perspective would be sufficient for this study.

Role of Researcher

In the course of conducting this study, it was important to keep in mind my positionality as the researcher and how that could affect the findings and conclusion of the study. While I was personally motivated to do this research because of my nephew, I was also aware of the fact that I was a graduate student, an outsider, to the teachers’ classrooms. For the purpose of research, I wanted to know what kind of educators they portrayed themselves as and what their relationships with their students looked like. It is important to note the privilege I hold as a graduate student, in that I am able to ask for permission to gather peoples’ lived experiences, traumas and narratives for the sake of research. Their stories are now part of the larger body of academia through this thesis and I always wanted to honor their time and narratives.

Chapter 4: Findings

I guess my philosophy is really about seeing education as a tool for and towards liberation and really creating the opportunities for us to learn about ourselves in a way that is humanizing, in a way that allows us to love ourselves, our families, our communities in new ways so we can begin to heal from intergenerational and contemporary traumas we've experienced. And create planned action so we can begin challenging and dismantling primarily the systems in control of that. I call that love but people have all kinds of names for it. [Misha]

Creating spaces where students of color--specifically Latino boys, who have been marginalized and deemed "at risk"--can learn to love themselves, their families, and communities is the goal for all of the educators that I interviewed for this thesis. Through conversation and visualization, the educators in this study allowed me into their classrooms, and shared their versions of what Misha called "love." This love means they are willing to put in the work and fight for their students' right to a high quality, well-rounded, and engaging education. Based on my interviews with seven educators who teach about 90% students of color, I answer the following research questions: How does Ethnic Studies provide a framework to engage students of color who have been historically marginalized? What pedagogies are most effective when teaching historically marginalized "at risk" students, specifically, Latino boys? What types of classrooms and

spaces provide opportunities for “at risk” students--specifically Latino boys-- to heal from trauma they may experience?

Through dialogue with the educators, I have gained a stronger sense of what it takes to be effective with students of color who have been historically marginalized, especially Latino boys. I organize the findings into three pedagogical sections:

1. Pedagogy through 1. love, family, and trust; 2. Pedagogy in the classroom; 3. Pedagogy outside of the classroom. Prior the first section, which sets a foundation for the last two sections, I provide a brief discussion on the meaning of pedagogy and how I operationalize it in the rest of the chapter.

Pedagogy...

In order to answer my research questions, it is important to explain how these educators create spaces; how they talk to and relate to their students; and how their students respond to their teachers' environment. For the purpose of this thesis, pedagogy is more than the practice or method of teaching, as Tintiangco-Cubales (2010) stated,

Pedagogy is a philosophy of education informed by positionalities, ideologies, and standpoints (of both teacher and learner). It takes into account the critical relationships between the PURPOSE of education, the CONTEXT of education, the CONTENT of what is being taught, and the METHODS of how it is taught. It also includes (the IDENTITY of) who is being taught, who is teaching, their relationship to each other, and their relationship to structure and power (viii).

In the quote above, Tintiangco-Cubales perfectly describes the relationship the purpose of education has with the context and content of it as well as how it is taught. She also points out the importance of how that relates to the identity of the teacher and the student as well as their relationship to one another and the power structure. Tintiangco-Cubales is able to encompass a broader meaning of what pedagogy is and gives a better understanding and foundation to what pedagogy is in this research project.

In this thesis, the purpose of education is to find a pathway to healing. The context of education has been historically marginalizing for students of color, specifically in this project for “at risk” Latino boys. While some educators are teaching or have taught Ethnic Studies courses, the content and method has been through an Ethnic Studies lens. As stated by Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2014), Ethnic Studies teachers have both a culturally responsive and community responsive pedagogy that “support the goals of Ethnic Studies to align education with the historical experiences and current needs of communities of color” (117). One responds to a student’s culture, needs, agency and complicity of ethnic identity (Barnes 2006; Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings 1990, 1995; Sleeter 2005; Zeichner 2003) while the latter is more focused on the student’s environment and their ability to address issues in their community (Freire 2003). There are some teacher participants that have not taught an Ethnic Studies class since it is not offered at their schools. Nonetheless, this research will demonstrate how those educators are able to teach their curriculum (content), practice their methods or both, through an Ethnic Studies lens.

Tintiangco-Cubales (2010) describes how identity of both the teacher and student, their relationship to one another and their relationship to the power structure is one of the critical elements of pedagogy. Although coming from different backgrounds and experiences, all participants were teachers of color at high schools where the student body predominantly consisted of students of color. Less than half of the teachers interviewed taught eight years or less, at their current high school or in total. For the remaining educators, they have taught for ten or more years at the high school they are currently at. This stability made a difference in relation to the power structure (in this case, administrators) since they had autonomy, support or both with the administration. In the sections to follow I expand on Tintiangco-Cubales's definition of pedagogy, demonstrating how the educators cultivate a sense of love, family and trust inside and outside the classroom.

...through Love

One recurring theme in all the interviews conducted was love. Some of the teachers clearly explained that it was love, for Latino boys and students in general, that kept them going when patience was running thin. While a few of the other teachers did not explicitly say it was love that drove them, it was clear through their actions that they were influenced by love. Being a teacher is a difficult job with long hours, hormonal kids and low pay but it seems to be that genuine love is one of the qualities the best teachers hold. In her article, Hannegan-Martinez (2019) states, "Classroom spaces and content should create the conditions for young people to love themselves, their classmates, and

their communities” (12). This contributes to the Ethnic Studies pedagogical element of “creating caring academic environments” because the love and care these educators cultivate for Latino boys and students, in general, translates into their teaching (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014, 113). One of the teachers, Tommy, explained to me that it was crucial to him to ask and understand the current state of mind of his students when they are in his classroom before even addressing the planned lesson of the day. He says,

I really start with ‘Is everything alright with you?’ before I get in to what’s going on in my class because that will answer to me like if there’s something going on that they can’t focus then that’s a far more important thing then like ‘Oh today we have to learn this lesson.’

If his students had issues going on outside of his classroom, Tommy believed it was far more important for him to devote his time to making sure his students were okay than diving into the lesson plan for the day. Tommy also explains that showing his students that he cares in turn makes them care more about themselves as students and as people.

Another form of love that educators utilize is how they position themselves in relation to their students. Fernando, another educator, aims to express his love by establishing an ally ship stating, “At the end of the day, your students should know that you’re coming from a place of love. That you got love for them. You’re an adult ally. And really try to define that.” As defined by Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2014), one of the aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy as part of a broader Ethnic Studies pedagogy is creating a caring academic environment, which these educators strive to do. When

teachers demonstrate love to their students, the students are then able to become loving and caring individuals. This is where the love translated in the classroom becomes ingrained and enriches the students lives, and not just academically. Another educator named Eva, hopes that her students find joy in learning as well as “ Hav[ing] confidence in their own abilities to be intellectuals...that they have knowledge and they can spread it and act with love and compassion.” The content they are taught within the classroom reaches far beyond that of the walls they spend most of their days in.

...through Family

Another essential pillar in establishing a caring academic environment for Latino boys is family. Most of the teachers I spoke with made it evident that in order to love your students, you have to see them and relate to them as family. One educator stated that she thought of her students as her nieces and nephews, creating an environment where she can connect to them and share her experiences and knowledge with them by being the teacher she never had. She says, “I invest in knowing about them the way I invest in knowing about my family.” Misha also explains to me that shaping this sense of family also lets her express her emotions if she is overwhelmed or exhausted. Another educator, Rachel, expressed a similar sentiment and stated that in doing so, she humanizes herself and her students do not only see her as a teacher but also as family. She thinks back to when she was in graduate school and learning about Angela Valenzuela’s concept of *cariño*, where in essence she says that “[students] aren’t going to care about what you teach them unless they realize that you care about them.” Valenzuela’s (1999) concept of

cariño, or authentic caring, constitutes of “respect, mutual trust, verbal teachings and exemplary models...[that] emphasizes reciprocal relationships, unconditional love, and connection, where both students and teachers realize their humanity” (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014, 114). This act of creating a space where students feel like family is also demonstrating this concept of authentic caring by humanizing herself and her students. Rachel also expressed that she decided to become a high school teacher because she wanted to be there for her students unlike her teachers that were not there for her.

In families, there is usually someone that you look up to and Fernando had a lot more in common with these boys than all the others. He tells me about his school years saying,

I was a student who was getting into trouble at the school. Who got expelled from this institution and I overcame those challenges. I ended up with a degree and even a master’s degree, which is very rare in my community.

He uses his lived experiences to model towards Latino boys that although this may seem to be a rare success story, it is not impossible. This connection is not only inspirational, but helps to save lives. These educators ensure the Latino boys know they do not only have adult allies but they have family within the classroom as well.

...through Trust

Teachers can provide love and a sense of family for their students, but gaining trust was the only way to build a meaningful relationship. Latino boys, specifically those

“at risk,” have a hard time trusting people, specifically people who have authority. As lived through the eyes of Manuel, he could not trust his parents, cops and certainly not his teachers. How is a kid like Manuel supposed to feel trust within a classroom if his teachers would demonize him at any disengagement he expressed? On the contrary, Tommy prides himself in creating a space where students are able and even encouraged to reveal “the good, the bad and the ugly.” He says,

They’re full on, the good, the bad, and the ugly as themselves and with that they bring those things into the class. So when we have different things we go to, they will share their experiences way more than you need. But also it’s really good for the classroom.

Tommy believes this sharing is essential to the classroom climate. Rachel’s classroom shares a great resemblance to Tommy’s. At the beginning of the school year, she has the students write and share poetry connected to the educational injustices they have gone through. She says by starting the school year this way,

...helps me set the tone. I try to affirm what happened to you is messed up and that shouldn’t have happened to you in a classroom and that sets like ok she’s someone that I can trust with my personal life.

The other students and herself are able to resonate and affirm their traumas and lived experiences. In presenting a safe space for students to share their traumas and personal stories, Rachel is able to establish their trust, which in turn humanizes her and makes her

more approachable when students need help, whether it is about a class assignment or something they may be going through in their personal lives.

Christian, who is a teacher at my old high school, says establishing trust with your students is necessary as a way to show that you care. It also helps when there are students that typically do not respond well to authoritative figures. Christian says that because the students trust him, he is able to build rapport and gain respect from the students who typically act out in other classes with other teachers. Students will be less likely to act out or disrespect him because he cares and “is the only one who listens” to them. All these qualities account for, not only an admirable teacher, but an extraordinary, caring human being.

Pedagogy Inside the Classroom

Being that students spend most of their school day inside the classroom, this is where the teachers interviewed made a huge impact. They are able to influence and guide their students' minds. They have the power to make their students' educational experience memorable and empowering. I recognized and explain three major themes these educators brought into their classroom which are the following: 1. to change and transform the power structure between teacher and student; 2. encourage the inclusion of lived experiences as part of classroom content; and finally, 3. communal and non-traditional forms of teaching and learning.

Change in Power Structure

As a movement, Ethnic Studies was a response to the current oppressive powers that were taking place in social, economical, political and educational sectors of society, to name a few. Power and relationship to power is a concept that “at risk” Latino boys know all too well. More often times than not, they are striped of their power through dehumanizing interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system as a whole, constantly being stereotyped and criminalized. Many times, like Manuel, these boys do not find a safe haven at school either. School just serves as another institution that stereotypes and criminalizes these boys instead of educating them. Freire (2003) explains that in order to be a revolutionary teacher, they have to create a partnership with their students that in turn “...would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation” (75). The teachers in my research do just that whether consciously or not. In order to be a partner in the exchange of knowledge, Tommy tells me he tries to break down the power structure between teacher and students. He wants to “be someone who’s going to help guide them and not someone who’s going to tell them [what to do].” Eva takes it a step further by structuring and teaching critical thinking skills that

...means constantly allowing for opened ended discussions and encouragement of how to articulate what it is that you actually think. And encourage that there isn’t always a right or wrong answer and it’s my job to give content that is engaging students to be able to develop their own ideas over things that they are interested in.

She provides an encouraging educational space where her students are given the tools to develop and articulate their own thoughts.

The teachers are also changing the power structure by closing the “professional gap” and sharing more of their personal lives and lived experiences with their students. While many teachers prefer to share as little as possible about their personal lives, teachers like Tommy dress casually to look less authoritative in their classroom. Jesus, another teacher, is willing to answer his students’ curious questions whether if he is married and how many kids he has. Solely dressing casually and giving personal details about their lives does not make them better teachers in and of itself, it makes them more human, more relatable to their students. It is not only personal details like these that make sharing relevant but model sharing, as Rachel explains, is also very important and includes building trust amongst her class. For Rachel’s English class, there is an immense amount of writing done that encourages students to share very personal and sometimes traumatic lived experiences. Before asking her students to share, Rachel shares a personal story of hers to set an example for both what is expected of the assignment as well as setting up a safe space to do so. She says, “Every time they have to share a story and a piece of themselves, I’ll share too.” Transforming the relationship of power between teacher and student is revolutionary, as Freire stated, since it is the gateway to cultivating an education that is rooted in liberation.

Lived Experiences as Academics

Delving into the next and possibly most engaging theme of classroom pedagogy is dialoguing and centering the lived experiences of “at risk” Latino boys as part of the classroom content and curriculum. Incorporating the lived experiences of these Latino boys helps to validate their experiences and furthermore, their lives. This validation and humanization is necessary for these Latino boys in the wake of the constant criminalization at the hands of detached teachers that see their lived experiences as just a string of poor decisions. Rachel tries to center students’ lived experiences in the classroom as a form of decolonization. She says that in the poetry section of her class with her sophomores, they share a personal poem every week describing their struggles with racism and construction of their identities. She recounted a time one of her students wrote a piece,

...he shared his relationship with his mom after his dad passed away and it was very intense because they were very disconnected and they were both grieving. Surprisingly a lot of young men were congratulating this young man for being able to share hard emotions, which is what I recognized in the work.

The student was describing the strained relationship between him and his mother following the passing of his father. In this particular case, giving students the avenue to share their lived experiences as part of the classroom discussion enables them to not only

foster their own sense of identity within the classroom but also serves to promote vulnerability in a safe space.

This vulnerability gives way to building a stronger, more receptive and understanding community. For many “at risk” Latino boys, vulnerability is not a sentiment that typically benefits them within their social settings. Fernando bases his Ethnic Studies classes in community through personal classroom discussions and assignments very similar to Rachel. He states that it is very important to know a little about each student’s life to not only get to know them but also to be able to know what students are interested in. This gives him the ability to connect the subject matter more personally to students. He states, “Everything that we’re learning is personal in that sense. You just have to see yourself in it.” Fernando explains that history is much more engaging when you make it personal and make sure the students understand that it is not a subject of the past but “it is alive and it is present.” Making subject matter relevant to students’ lives is exactly what Misha does when she has her ninth graders read Sherman Alexie’s “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian” and analyze his experiences with the three eyes of oppression. She then has her students create their own absolutely diaries which,

...they are reading, they are journaling, the last thing is a creative book that summarizes and speaks to their own experiences, both in terms of oppression and the stuff they experience as teenagers.

Through assignments like Misha's, she is not only giving her students an avenue to share their lived experiences but is also encouraging a space where students have an opportunity to be vulnerable by unveiling these traumas.

Non-Traditional Forms of Teaching and Learning

These educators are able to captivate their Latino boys because of the love and care they show them but also through their effective teaching strategies. Most of the teachers use an Ethnic Studies lens when teaching in their classrooms. One of the teachers, Rachel, is keen on using a storytelling based curriculum and insists that her teaching "...is centered on marginalized communities." She also uses an anti-racist and anti-sexist lens in her teaching. Similar to Rachel, Eva also uses an anti-racist and anti-sexist structure within her classroom. In addition to the pedagogies of the classroom that most teachers can control, Eva states that as teachers, "...we have a lot of autonomy and I think that's another thing that isn't always discussed when talking about what teachers need." Through this autonomy, she is able to determine what curriculum she uses in her classroom and what is being taught to her students.

While some of the educators have autonomy to dictate their own curriculum, others do not have those same advantages. Nonetheless that does not discourage these teachers, they find ways to work around the bureaucracies and provide the most relevant education possible for their students. In Tommy's case, he simply uses the layout of his classroom to his advantage. He prefers to group his students in small groups of three or four which helps him teach a few students at a time rather than trying to teach 30 plus

kids all at once. He says, “A lot of my class is me sitting down at their tables and just talking to them.” Tommy explained to me that in using smaller groups to teach his students he is really able to figure out what students need more help and guide them in the right direction. He says, “If you sit down with 3 or 4 kids at a time you can meet them where they’re at” which helps him gain a better understanding of what is working in his classroom that helps his students learn and also, what needs to be clarified. Rachel uses a similar approach to Tommy, grouping her students in smaller groups of four. She believes in using community as a tool in learning stating,

I tell them they won't learn on their own, the things that are valuable to them will come from the people next to them. They will read and have their own individual stories along with if they talk about it they will have different ideas and personal experiences.

Rachel not only encourages her students to share their stories as part of the academic dialogue, but also fosters her students to regard each other’s lived experiences as part of their lesson as well. Many of the teachers interviewed promote community building and learning as opposed to the traditional idea of individualized learning.

Some teachers taught an actual Ethnic Studies class at their school, while others taught mostly through an Ethnic Studies framework. The teachers believed an Ethnic Studies class was necessary for “at risk” Latino boys, students of color and all students in general. For Rachel, she states,

There's not a lot of people who teach [Ethnic Studies] and so I thought I could be an English teacher and teach with an Ethnic Studies lens, which is another reason why I wanted to be a teacher at the high school level. I felt like that was an education that needed to be accessible. It shouldn't have just been kept at a college level.

She believes that bringing Ethnic Studies to her high school students at a younger age would be more beneficial to them. Rachel recounted a lesson where her Pacific Islander students were reading collegiate texts containing their histories and were able to understand and relate to their texts for the first time. She says,

It's very powerful and I think a lot more students of color would be able to relate to their education if it was reflecting them back from kindergarten all the way to 12th grade.

Ethnic Studies is a framework that is able to provide a relevant education to not only students of color but also a beneficial, well-rounded education for all students. To Fernando, Ethnic Studies builds a pathway to understanding the internalized traumas many students of color carry with them. When talking about "at risk" Latino boys, Fernando wants his students to understand the generational traumas caused by the war on drugs, deportations, and the revolving door of the prison system, to name a few. He says,

Ethnic Studies allows them to finally start answering the 'why' question.

Why is this happening to me? How is it that I am not the only person?

[They] get to see a connection that these struggles and obstacles that

they're facing with other people in the world and even from state to state and other cities, who have gone through the same thing.

Fernando believes that using Ethnic Studies within the classroom not only helps Latino boys and all students of color to see their struggles more clearly, it also helps to build empathy and community within their cities and beyond. Fernando also states that as teachers "...we have to build different spaces to address some of that trauma and/or space to heal..." in an attempt to push these students to vocalize, recognize and process their traumas. Eva was one of the teachers that actually taught an Ethnic Studies course at her school but that does not limit her to teach it solely for that class. Even if she does not teach an Ethnic Studies course she says,

I can still teach with a framework of Ethnic Studies and I can do that if I'm committed to the tradition and still honoring what Ethnic Studies actually means.

To her and the teachers aforementioned, Ethnic Studies is more than just a class or an idea. It is a way to approach traumas, build community and learn from one another. These teachers truly embody what Ethnic Studies is about and continue to nurture an environment outside the traditional means of teaching, which stimulates growth, learning and community.

Pedagogy Outside the Classroom

While conducting teacher interviews, it became more apparent in addition to all the ground-breaking and life changing work done inside the classroom, that there was an extensive amount of labor they did once all of the students went home for the day. To be a great teacher like the ones mentioned, the commitment to providing a quality education for their students inside the classroom had a lot to do with what was being done outside of it. Pedagogy expanded outside of the classroom for these dedicated educators into three major themes that consisted of: 1. activism in the community; 2. growing up and/or living in the community; and lastly, 3. academic and emotional support.

Activism

Since before the birth of Ethnic Studies, activism has played a vital role in allowing people of color an avenue to demand a better quality of life and in the case of Ethnic Studies, an inclusive education as a means of liberation. While talking with one teacher in particular, he explained to me that from a young age he was involved in some sort of activism. This devotion has translated to Fernando's teaching and he says,

I really just wanted my students to be able to think on their own. Be able to evaluate and analyze their lives. To be able to have tools and reflect on why things are happening and why do they happen beyond just the curriculum. I really wanted to teach them skills that they could basically start to see problems that are happening in their own lives or in the community. And then start to be able to think about solving them.

The critical thinking lens that Fernando is trying to instill in his students was going a step further than just giving them the safe space to address their traumas. Activism is a form of healing that gives a sense of power back to the activist. They are able to take action on something they feel passionate about and help influence change over that particular issue. He wanted to provide his students with the tools to approach solutions to the traumas they began to put a name to in his class.

Living in the Community

Another significant contribution that happens outside the classroom for these educators is simply that many of them currently lived or grew up in the community they served. There were two particular teachers, Fernando and Jesus, whose experiences made me aware of the impact their presence made to their students. Fernando says,

Because it was a smaller community I went to school with a lot of their older brothers, their cousins. I'd run into them at other stores that I would go eat at. I would eat at the same cafes and eat at the same restaurants, go to the same taquerias and run into my students and run into them at the mall.

Fernando explained that this allowed a deeper connection to his students and gave him an advantage over his colleagues that traveled from further away to work at his school. He also says these encounters with his students created impromptu parent-teacher conferences in the following:

That allowed me to be able bump into their moms, their aunties, and their grandmas and be able to talk about them and have an informal check in.

Parent teacher type check in. Right in their neighborhood.

He further explained these impromptu meetings served more than just a progress report with the student's parent or guardian, it helped to build community. Although it was not a method that would succeed every time with every student, it was necessary to establish a greater sense of community and camaraderie.

In the case of another veteran teacher, Jesus, these run ins with the student's family proved to be beneficial in recovering and strengthening the student's focus in the classroom. Having taught at that particular high school for close to 20 years, Jesus has had generations of students within a single family. He told me that once he ran into a former student of his while he had his younger brother in his current class. Aware that his younger brother was in his former high school teacher's class, they both get to talk about the student. After learning about the younger brother's lack of effort in Jesus' class, the older brother says he is going to take away some privileges. Jesus told me that the older brother,

...checks his grades now and now he's trying harder because his brother is putting pressure on the little brother.

For Jesus the impromptu meeting with his student's older brother became an avenue to address the issues going on in his class. This run in and others like it demonstrate how

living in the community and being part of the community can give opportunities for teachers to be outside the school environment but still show their dedication to their students.

Academic and Emotional Support

The last but definitely not the least is the additional academic and emotional support for “at risk” Latino boys, as well as the rest of their students, educators provide outside of the classroom. While providing safe spaces to discuss traumas and healing, these teachers provide a vast amount of emotional support for their students. All of the teachers interviewed clearly expressed that they were willing to assist any student in need beyond their designated class time. They are also always willing to further assist students who seem to be struggling in their class and create a plan to put them on a path to success. Fernando tells me about his “open door policy” in the following:

But at the end of the day they always knew I had an open door policy.

When they were ready to come talk to me or ready to come figure out and deal with what they were dealing with or ready to focus on school. That there was always a chair for them.

Fernando goes on to explain how it is very different and complex with each of his student but regardless, his door is always open. He often times would give up his lunch time for students who have missed a significant amount of school days. He says, “It was like a day for them to come in. It was my office hours really.” It was not only their lunch that these

teachers gave up, they would also come in early before the start of the school day to meet one on one with students who were struggling in their classes. Jesus says,

What I do is come in the morning and I'll work with students one on one.

Sometimes they are too shy to speak up in class, so the one on one is when they open up a lot more.

For many teachers, this was just a job that consisted of hours between eight in the morning and three in the afternoon but for Fernando and Jesus, the extra time spent with their students was worth it.

For another teacher, Christian, going beyond the classroom meant fighting for and advocating on behalf of his students. Christian makes it his duty to reach out to other teachers to see how his struggling students are doing in the other classes. For example, he had a Latino student that was struggling failing all of his classes so he talks to the student's mother and says she no longer knows what to do with her son, the troublemaker as she calls him. A meeting was set up for the student to see how his teachers and counselor could aid him. The student seemed to be distant and apathetic towards his counselor and other teachers but respectful towards Christian, a sentiment very familiar to him. Christian says,

I talked to some of the other teachers after the meeting and I was told that the student had lost one of his siblings and ever since, he was rebelling against the system.

Christian tells me that he differentiates the student from the person. The environment in his classroom is that of respect and love. He says that even though this particular student was failing his class, because of the lack of interest to do their work, the student was also a great assistance to him particularly. Christian is willing to come up with a plan for success for a struggling student even if the student decides not to follow through and it does not change the respect between them.

In some cases, the students were not even in Christian's classes. Christian is a huge soccer fan and his children play in the local soccer league so most of the soccer players know him. While he makes the deliberate decision to make sure his students are doing well, he is sometimes approached by other concerned adults in the students' lives. In the following, Christian tells me of a time he was approached by a fellow soccer coach from his children's league:

One of the coaches asked me, 'Can you help me out?' So I went and set up a meeting. This kid had a disability for almost two and a half years undiagnosed, so I did what I could to help. So now, he has a student success plan after he was diagnosed with A.D.H.D. and the law now mandates teachers to make accommodations for him.

Of course, any decent person would try to follow through or at the very least hand off the case to one of the student's teachers but Christian invested his time and resources into helping this student get his rightful accommodations. He says the whole process took close to six months, with three of those months just trying to get an appointment with the

district's administration. His tireless efforts have more likely than not helped to reclaim the student's educational journey.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Through the stories and experiences of the educators, we are given insight into what it takes to become a supportive and engaging teacher for “at risk” Latino boys. The educators reveal whether inside or outside of the classroom, the most effective teaching strategies transpire through love, family and trust. When centering pedagogy around love, these educators were able to create an environment where they not only show love to their students but they are also teaching them to love. It creates a space where students are then able to themselves become loving and caring individuals which further translates to their life outside academics. When creating this space with love, it helps to encourage a sense of family. A sense of familial ties within the classroom, especially with the teacher, helps to humanize one another and become more empathetic amongst your peers and teacher. Through showing their students *cariño*, as Angela Valenzuela calls it, educators are able to start connecting and getting through to their students. This in turn starts to create an atmosphere of trust where students feel comfortable and protected enough that they will begin to share their lived experiences, their vulnerabilities and their traumas.

These educators begin to transform their classroom by changing the power structure between teacher and student. According to Paulo Freire, to fight against the conventional relationship expected between teacher and student is a threat to the oppressive power structure and in turn advocates for a liberating education (2003). A

liberating education that is able to center “at risk” Latino boys’ lived experiences as a component of their classroom lesson plan. In addition to their effective teaching strategies, these teachers are also providing a space for “at risk” Latino boys to voice their traumas and begin a process of healing. Previously mentioned was the humanization that a sense of family creates within the classroom but that extends even further for Latino boys when centering their lived experiences. It provides an academic space where their peers and their teachers see their traumas as valuable as well as a space where their experiences are validated. The Latino boys and all students are then able to do so for their peers further establishing their communal bonds. This spirit of community and liberation is what motivates these educators to teach in a non-traditional means through an Ethnic Studies lens. As one of the teachers mentioned, it is essential to center the experiences of marginalized peoples as well as use anti-racist and anti-sexist lens. While many teachers were able to dictate their own curriculum in a non-traditional sense, others were not as fortunate but that did not hinder on their ability to teach through an Ethnic Studies lens. Many of the teachers expressed their sense of community by intentionally grouping their students so they could get away from the traditional concept of individualized learning and be able to learn with and alongside one another.

Through their narratives, it becomes evident that the love, care, and dedication these teachers invest expand outside the classroom as well. It was important to note that through their own lived experiences they were able to better understand and relate to all their students. Keeping in the spirit of Ethnic Studies, one educator in particular describes

how his involvement in community organizing and activism traditions strongly influenced his teaching. He wants to provide a different perspective for “at risk” Latino boys, one that will demonstrate how their lived experiences are the result of systemic oppression and generational trauma they have endured. It was imperative for Latino boys, and all students, to realize and value the power of their own voices. Their voices were the ones that were going to bring about solutions and change for the generations to come. Similarly, being a part of the community by living or growing up in the community they teach in makes a significant impact in how educators relate to their students, particularly “at risk” Latino boys. Growing up in and being part of the community, you are able to experience and are exposed to things that are going on within the community which other educators will not necessary relate to or understand as well. As discussed in the previous chapter, the teachers run into students and their families and are able to have informal check ins outside the educational setting. This not only helps establish more credibility and community with the student and their families, but furthermore humanizes the teacher as someone outside the classroom.

Dedicating time outside the classroom sometimes happens within the classroom before the school day starts, during teacher’s lunch time, or after school has ended. These educators are always willing to sit down with their students (actually encourage the students that are struggling) to meet them outside of their designated class time for more one on one assistance with their classwork. Even when students themselves do not approach them, these educators will check in and fight for their students’ right to a proper

education. As witnessed in the previous chapter, some teachers make sure their struggling students have a success plan. As Christian did with a student, who was not even in his class, he fought with the district administration to get special accommodations for a student with an undiagnosed learning disability. The love and care these educators have for their students expand beyond traditional boundaries that are expected of teachers. These teachers truly embody what Ethnic Studies is about and continue to nurture an environment outside the traditional means of teaching, which stimulates growth, learning and community.

Implications

Teachers and Professional Development

While talking with the teachers, there was a divide among the teachers who had extensive experience on Ethnic Studies and culturally responsive pedagogies, and those who did not. Although it was not a requirement for the teachers interviewed to have background knowledge on either of these pedagogies, it became clear that the more experience these teachers had, the less likely they were to perpetuate the cycle of neglect. For example, one of the teachers told me of a time where one of his students who kept falling asleep in his class was transferred to another class since he was failing. He later learned through another one of his students that the student kept falling asleep because he worked after school until late night to help support his family. The student would then smoke marijuana to go to sleep but continued being sleepy the next day. If the teacher had been given training through a course of Ethnic Studies or critical responsive

pedagogy, would they have dealt with the situation differently? It may not have made a difference at all but it could have given the teacher a different lens to approach and analyze the situation. It would be highly beneficial to do Ethnic Studies and culturally responsive pedagogy development for teachers who are at schools where this is not the main focus.

Similarly, while conducting these interviews, teachers who were not predominantly from San Francisco and Oakland high schools, had too much restriction on their curriculum. This was very limiting for teachers who wanted to bring in more diverse texts into their curriculum. On the opposite end, they also wanted to skip over lessons that were not as important that were still within the traditional discourse. One teacher explained to me, in the middle of the school year they were given a list of textbooks that they could use for the following year. Another teacher explained that they wanted to omit some lessons because they did not think it was relevant and it would not keep students interested but had to teach it since it was part of the required curriculum. It would be crucial for teachers to be able to adjust the curriculum according to their students' needs.

Developing Authentic Relationships

Another issue that came up while doing my research was that teachers needed to develop authentic relationships with “at risk” Latino boys. This is a relationship that develops over a course of time, with a lot of patience and a great amount of love. The amount of students a teacher has in a single class is sometimes too much and makes it

difficult to establish authentic relationships with all of their students. It would be helpful if teachers were offered a training course where they are given tools and strategies that would assist them in building better relationships with all students, but particularly with students who may be “at risk” or especially struggling in school.

Collaboration with Other Teachers

One of the most inspiring approaches to assist a struggling student was a teacher from my old high school who would organize meetings for struggling students. He told me about one student that was getting into trouble at school and he spoke to the student’s mom who was frustrated with her son as well and did not know what to do. The teacher coordinated a meeting with all his teachers and counselors to figure out a success plan for the student. These are very necessary steps to take in order to properly assist a struggling student but teachers are not always given the appropriate resources or are expected to do this on their own time. While it is through love and care that these teachers do their jobs and would gladly assist their students, it also takes a great deal of work that teachers are not compensated to do. Teachers should be able to collaborate easier and better with one another regarding their students, especially those who need extra help and attention.

Administrators/Leadership

Hiring

As mentioned above, teachers who have experience with Ethnic Studies and educational backgrounds in Ethnic Studies are trained to observe and respond to students’ experiences differently than a teacher without this framework. While many high schools

in the San Francisco and Oakland areas have a more open-minded approach to Ethnic Studies, the high schools the other educators teach at are not so fortunate. Administration at all high schools should be seeking and hiring more teachers with Ethnic Studies education. This is especially important at suburban high schools where Ethnic Studies is just beginning to expand to.

Support and Funding for Teachers' Training

In addition to hiring more Ethnic Studies trained teachers, it is also essential to train teachers currently employed. During my research, veteran teachers, who have been teaching for fifteen or more years and do not have a background in Ethnic Studies, especially need an option to do training in an Ethnic Studies centered course. This will guide all teachers to becoming more culturally and community responsive for their students. It will also serve to promote a better understanding of struggling students' needs and a conscious effort to providing a more receptive educational environment.

Provide More Resources for Expanding/Changing Curriculum

While Ethnic Studies is a growing educational foundation that more schools and teachers are willing to instill into their curriculum, it is not something that all schools are willing to do. The teachers in my research were honest to tell me that they were not able to control what goes into their curriculum, as previously mentioned. It would be beneficial for administrators to allow teachers to work on more responsive and engaging curriculum for their students. Giving teachers the autonomy, resources, and time to work

on expanding their curriculum would keep students drawn to their education as well as inspire them to look into their educational future.

Future Research

My research focused on discovering what teaching pedagogies, particularly through an Ethnic Studies lens, were most effective when teaching “at risk” Latino boys as well as if teachers were able to provide a space for these boys to discuss and heal from traumas they may have experienced. While my research was able to discover that there are effective teaching pedagogies to engage “at risk” Latino boys, it was not able to measure the growth experienced by them. Future research is needed on “at risk” Latino boys that measure growth through their engagement in the classroom as well as through the connections they are able to make with their teachers. How would you be able to measure growth in “at risk” Latino boys? Would this growth be an indication of healing? Would it be separate? For the purpose of this thesis, the research focuses on “at risk” Latino boys but it is also important to look at “at risk” youth in general.

Through my research, it became evident that teachers who have a background in Ethnic Studies were more common in the San Francisco and Oakland area but when looking outside of those cities, teachers’ backgrounds varied in other areas on education. While this in and of itself is not harmful, it would be necessary to do further research on why teachers outside of the San Francisco and Oakland area are less likely to have a background in Ethnic Studies? How could that possibly change? That being said, it is

necessary to have teachers from various expertise teaching Ethnic Studies and/or through an Ethnic Studies lens.

Future research could investigate and expand on Ethnic Studies in smaller urban and suburban schools. It could also look into how more teachers with Ethnic Studies backgrounds within these suburban schools could affect the amount of “at risk” Latino boys they influence? Is there enough support and push for Ethnic Studies in suburban and rural schools? Is there enough support for teachers who decide to teach with an Ethnic Studies lens? How could this become more accessible?

Conclusion

This research focuses on “at risk” Latino boys and the pedagogies which educators use that are the most effective and promote a sense of healing among them. While my research focused on Latino boys, it is important to look at all youth who are struggling in school and/or have trouble engaging in school. This research was meant to shed some light on the sometimes forgotten youth who often times, are pushed out of school instead of given resources to keep them in school. Education could be a form of healing and empowerment and my research wanted to start to capture how that could be a vessel to do so. The incredible, insightful narratives of the educators gave me a little perspective on what it takes to be a great educator, loving ally, and support system for your students. For me, it was an experience that gave me hope for creating a more caring and loving environment for all students.

Notes

1. O.G. is a slang term for someone who is incredibly exceptional, authentic, or “old school.” In context of this thesis, it’s referring to the older members of a group, or gang. (<https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/og/>)
2. Garcia (2001) uses the word “Hispanic” instead of Latina/o to describe an ethnic group of Latin American origin and/or descent. For the purpose of my thesis, I will refer to all of those who come from Latin American origin and/or descent as Latina/o.

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Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Transformative Knowledge: Ethnic Studies as a Pathway to Healing for Latino Boys

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

My name is Elisa Leon, I am a graduate student at San Francisco State University in the Ethnic Studies Department. I am conducting research on the effects of Ethnic Studies teaching on the educational experience of Latino boys and if and how educators, who teach Ethnic Studies, provide a space for healing for students that experience difficulties at school and within their community.

As part of my research, I would like to invite you to participate because of your role teaching Ethnic Studies to high school age youth that include Latino boys.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research, the following will occur:

- The interview will last about 45 to 60 minutes.
- I will ask you to share stories of your relationship with the Latino male students, what you are teaching in your class, how you think what you are teaching is impacting students' schooling experience and whether or not you feel that you are providing a space for healing for your students' traumas.
- The interview's audio will be recorded to ensure accuracy when reporting your statements.
- The interview will take place on an agreed upon date, time (between 3 pm to 8 pm), and location (public place like on school campus or café).

C. RISKS

There is a risk of loss of privacy. I will minimize the risks by minimizing the people who have access to any data received and minimizing the amount of non-participants in the area during individual interviews. The researcher and faculty advisor, Professor Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, will be only people who have access to data. All data will be kept in Professor Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales' office at San Francisco State University in EP 105. Following this study, the transcriptions, and notes will only be used in future research purposes consistent with the original purpose of the research.

I will also not use any real names and/or any other identifiers in the written report.

If you decide not to answer a question or stop the interview at any time, you can do so without any penalty. If you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the research study, your data will be deleted and not used in the study.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The research data will be kept in a secure location, and only the researcher and their faculty advisor will have access to the data.

Recorded data (whether audio recordings or transcriptions) in digital format will be stored in a password-protected laptop and a copy of this data will be kept in secure location located in Professor Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales' office at San Francisco State University in EP 105. These files will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Physical files such as observation notes will be shredded after being scanned and saved to the password-protected laptop.

At the end of the study, any audio files of recorded observations, recorded interviews, and/or transcripts will be destroyed after three years or at the end of the study. De-identified data will be kept indefinitely.

E. DIRECT BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefits to the participant.

F. COSTS

There will be no cost to the participant.

G. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

H. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative is not to participate in the research.

I. QUESTIONS

You may contact me before consenting to your participation in my research as well as any time during your participation. You may contact me by telephone at 925-899-8948, or by email at elisaleon6@yahoo.com or you may contact Professor Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales at aticu@sfsu.edu.

Questions about your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study also may be addressed to Human and Animal Protections at San Francisco State University, at 415-338-1093 or protocol@sfsu.edu.

J. CONSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to participate in this research, or to withdraw your participation at any point, without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research will have no influence on your present or future status at San Francisco State University.

Participant Signature _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature _____ Date: _____