Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Community College Journal of Research and Practice

ISSN: 1066-8926 (Print) 1521-0413 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ucjc20

Exploring the Lived Experiences and Intersectionalities of Mexican Community College Transfer Students: Qualitative Insights Toward Expanding a Transfer Receptive Culture

Erin L. Castro & Edén Cortez

To cite this article: Erin L. Castro & Edén Cortez (2017) Exploring the Lived Experiences and Intersectionalities of Mexican Community College Transfer Students: Qualitative Insights Toward Expanding a Transfer Receptive Culture, Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 41:2, 77-92, DOI: 10.1080/10668926.2016.1158672

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2016.1158672

Published online: 21 Apr 2016.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 1021

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Citing articles: 13 View citing articles

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=ucjc20

COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
2017, VOL. 41, NO. 2, 77–92
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2016.1158672

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Exploring the Lived Experiences and Intersectionalities of Mexican Community College Transfer Students: Qualitative Insights Toward Expanding a Transfer Receptive Culture

Erin L. Castro and Edén Cortez

Higher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

ABSTRACT
This qualitative study examines the experiences of six Mexican community college transfer students attending a research-intensive institution in the Pacific Northwest. Using semi-structured interviews, the objectives of this study were to 1) understand how Mexican students made meaning of their transfer experiences and 2) how those experiences could inform conceptual and practical thinking toward building a transfer receptive culture at the receiving institution. We use intersectionality as a site of material and discursive possibility to encourage predominantly White receiving institutions to recognize how they position Mexican community college transfer students on campus. Concluding are conceptual and practical recommendations that emphasize institutional and organizational responsibility in creating equitable environments for Mexican community college transfer students.

In their attempts to transfer from 2-year to 4-year institutions, community college students of Color face hurdles distinct from their White counterparts (Nuñez & Elizondo, 2013). Research indicates gross inequity in vertical transfer rates among students of Color and White students (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). Known as the racial transfer gap, African American and Latinx students transfer at rates far lower than the overall population (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014).[1] Vertical transfer inequity is particularly troublesome given the high numbers of Latinx students with aspirations to transfer (Gándara, Alvarado, Driscoll, & Orfield, 2012), and the discrepancy remains a problem for the field. Yosso and Solórzano (2006), for example, found that while over 60% of Latinx students begin their postsecondary journey at community colleges, less than 1% of students transfer to 4-year institutions. This break in the pathway, or leak as they define it, comprises what Nuñez and Elizondo (2013) describe as the Latina/o Transfer Gap, where Latinx students remain underrepresented at 4-year institutions despite their expressed intentions to transfer and complete a baccalaureate degree.

As an umbrella term, Latinx is similar to the term Hispanic in that it is used, broadly, to classify individuals in the United States with Spanish speaking origins.[2] While individuals who are classified as Latinx or Hispanic can fall within a diverse range of ethno-racial identity, the majority of

CONTACT Erin L. Castro, Assistant Professor erin.castro@utah.edu Higher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy, University of Utah, 1725 Campus Center Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84112-9254.

[1]The politics of identity and identity labels are always in flux. In this essay, we use the term Latinx as a gender-neutral term to refer to female, male, transgender, gender queer, and gender nonconforming individuals who racially, ethnically, and/or culturally identify as descendants of Latin Americas—including South and Central America as well as colonized and borderized territories of North America. Certainly, the extent to which gender matters in languages other than English is an unsettled question, and our aim here is simply to be inclusive of individuals who do not identify within the gender binary. Unless we are directly citing other research, we use the term Latinx to refer to student groups traditionally included in the terms Latino, Latina, and Latina/o.
[2]According to the U.S. Census 2010 questionnaire, Hispanic refers to individuals who classify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban and/or individuals who identify as "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin" (para. 3). The latter refer to individuals whose origins are from Spain, Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic (http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/long_RHI725214.htm).

© 2016 Taylor & Francis

individuals residing in the United States are from Mexican origin. Drawing from the 2010 Census, Motel and Patten (2012) found that individuals who self-identify as Mexican or Mexican-American comprise the largest subgroup of Hispanic people in the United States, accounting for 64.9% of the total Hispanic population (p. 1). In this essay, we are interested in the unique experiences of Mexican students and draw from a wide range of literature that uses varying terms.

A number of models and recommendations for practice have emerged in the last 5 years in an attempt to address the Latino Transfer Gap. Models focus on the successful pretransfer, transfer, and posttransfer experiences of Latinx students at 4-year institutions. Pulling strongly from validation theory (Rendón, 2002), Pérez and Ceja's (2010) research provided a framework to develop a *Latina/o Student Transfer Culture* that prioritizes "institutional structures, policies, and partnerships" (p. 16). Similarly, and drawing from the commitments of Critical Race Theory, Jain, Herrera, Bernal, and Solórzano (2011) outlined a *Transfer Receptive Culture* that institutionalizes an explicit commitment to underrepresented transfer students and provides the supports needed for their success. Bringing together a number of theoretical contributions, including transfer student capital (Lanaan, Starobin, & Eggleston, 2010), Handel (2012) proposed a *Transfer-Affirming Culture* that entails shared responsibility for successful student transfer on behalf of both 2- and 4-year institutions. Lastly, Herrera and Jain (2013) extended their previous emphasis on building a *Transfer Receptive Culture* by providing specific recommendations to assist institutions in creating critical and affirming spaces for first generation, low-income transfer students of Color. A number of commonalities are shared among the aforementioned frameworks, including normalizing the transfer function, clearly articulating a transfer pathway for students, and ensuring that institutional support structures are evident and accessible throughout all phases of the transfer process to make the pathway a reality.

A second theme among the frameworks is an asset-based or antideficit emphasis to what transfer students bring with them into receiving institutions. Pérez and Ceja (2010), for example, recommend that college outreach programs be culturally responsive and instill in Latinx students a "sense of pride in their heritage" (p. 16). Handel (2012) asked institutions to leverage the "social capital" that students with bring with them to higher education (p. 416), and Jain, Herrera, Bernal, and Solorzano (2011) asked institutions to acknowledge the "lived experiences that students bring" with them and the "intersectionality between community and family" (p. 260). We are drawn to the theme of wealth that cuts across all of the frameworks; and in this essay, we are interested in theorizing how institutions might respond to these calls. Thus, through acknowledgment of lived experiences that students bring with them into the university and the intersectionality between community and family, this study addresses calls for building institutional cultures that affirm and support Latinx transfer student populations.

Using qualitative inquiry, we examine the experiences of six Mexican community college transfer students attending a research-intensive institution in the Pacific Northwest during the 2012–2013 academic year. Using semistructured interviews, the objectives of this study were to understand how Mexican students articulated and made meaning of their transfer-related experiences while enrolled at the receiving institution. This study addresses the following research questions through interviews with students at least 1 year posttransfer:

(1) How do Mexican community college transfer students describe their transfer-related experiences while enrolled at the receiving institution?
(2) How can the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students inform conceptual and practical thinking toward building a transfer receptive culture at receiving institutions?

In what follows, we review extant literature related to the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students and racialized inequity in the vertical transfer process. We then describe the theoretical framework and methodology used in the study, followed by our critical analysis. We

conclude with conceptual and practical recommendations for higher education practitioners and others working with and for Mexican community college transfer students.

Inequity in the vertical transfer process

Equity in opportunity and outcomes throughout the transfer process is a growing concern among researchers (e.g., Bensimon & Dowd, 2014) and practitioners (e.g., Castro, 2015). Growing inequitable opportunity along the lines of race, ethnicity, and social class make the transfer process a critical area of examination in educational pathway research, particularly given the numbers of students of Color attending community colleges throughout the nation (Chase, Dowd, Pazich, & Bensimon, 2014; Crisp & Nuñez, 2014; Dowd & Melguizo, 2008; Martínez & Fernández, 2004; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Persistent inequitable opportunity should be cause for concern—not simply because there exists large discrepancies between aspirations to transfer and actual transfer among Latinx students, but as Bahr, Toth, Thirolf, and Massé (2013) contend, because the completion of a baccalaureate degree remains a "principal portal to upward socioeconomic mobility" (p. 459). Thus, a concern that historically and contemporarily underserved communities of Color gain equitable access to transfer opportunity and completion is part of a sociopolitical, moral, and economic agenda.

As open access institutions of higher education, community colleges provide educational opportunity to a vast student population, particularly to students who have been historically marginalized and discouraged from accessing postsecondary education: students of Color, low-income students, first-generation students, undocumented students, among other minoritized communities. Students of Color enter community colleges at a greater rate than 4-year institutions and Latinx community college students face unique challenges throughout the transfer process (Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007). Of Latinx students who are able to complete the transfer process, many will encounter new challenges at their receiving institution (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014; Núñez, Sparks, & Hernández, 2011).

Research documenting the barriers that Latinx students broadly face in higher education is vast (see, for example: Frye, 2002; Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). In her research analyzing the unique challenges faced by Latinx students, Nora (2004) identified environmental pull factors that interfere with students' academic goals in postsecondary contexts. Environmental pull factors function to pull students away from dominant understandings of full academic and social engagement with the institution. Pull factors may include family or employment responsibilities, and they tend to be strongest for Mexican students during the final stages of the college choice process (Nora, 2004). Pull factors are conceptually similar to critical barriers identified by scholars such as Bensimon and Dowd (2009), whose qualitative analyses document cultural, informational, and institutional challenges that Latinx students face throughout the transfer process. In combination with barriers and challenges, Bensimon and Dowd found that individual student experiences are persuasive factors in the pursuit of a bachelor's degree, a finding echoed in Suarez's (2003) research. They found that individual Latinx student experiences can deter students from enrolling into selective institutions despite their eligibility.

Extant literature regarding posttransfer transition processes for students of Color is limited, and little is known about the specific posttransfer experiences of Latinx students. In their review of literature on community college students' posttransfer transition processes, Bahr et al. (2013) found that research and literature heavily focuses on pretransfer factors affecting baccalaureate degree attainment. They argued that a serious gap in research exists regarding the posttransfer processes at 4-year institutions, and that the literature has paid insufficient attention to these processes. In regard to research that documents the nuances of posttransfer transition processes, particularly for underrepresented groups, the authors state that "one is struck by how little ground has been gained in the last several decades" (Bahr et al., 2013, p.

461). The present research study aims to address the need for additional knowledge and insight regarding the posttransfer experiences of Mexican community college transfer students by emphasizing lived experience and intersectionality.

Conceptual framing: Transfer receptive culture and intersectionality

This analysis is guided by the fourth tenet of transfer receptive culture (Herrera & Jain, 2013; Jain, Herrera, Bernal & Solórzano, 2011), which is aligned with similar sentiments expressed in the aforementioned Latinx transfer student success models. The goal in cultivating a transfer-receptive culture is for receiving institutions to build institutional capacity to support the success of transfer students—particularly first generation, low-income, transfer students of Color. In order to build institutional capacity, universities need to normalize the transfer process for all participants and create clear and viable pathways for underrepresented and underserved students. According to Jain et al. (2011), a transfer-receptive culture includes the following characteristics:

(1) Establish the transfer of students, especially nontraditional, first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, as a high institutional priority that ensures stable accessibility, retention, and graduation.
(2) Provide outreach and resources that focus on the specific needs of transfer students while complimenting the community college mission of transfer.
(3) Offer financial and academic support through distinct opportunities for nontraditional-reentry transfer students where they are stimulated to achieve at high academic levels.
(4) Acknowledge the lived experiences that students bring and the intersectionality between community and family.
(5) Create an appropriate and organic framework from which to assess, evaluate, and enhance transfer-receptive programs and initiatives that can lead to further scholarship on transfer students.

By drawing from Mexican students' own descriptions of their transfer processes, our analysis is anchored in the fourth tenet emphasizing lived experiences and intersectionality. Acknowledgment of lived experiences is essential in supporting transfer student success and improving transfer equity; however, it may be difficult to determine what acknowledgment looks like, how universities make a commitment to acknowledgment, and/or where to begin in building institutional capacity. We place a heavy emphasis on intersectionality in our analysis as one way to theorize acknowledgment and to inform institutional thinking and capacity building.

The notion of intersectionality emerged from Black Feminist thought and thinkers, with Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) research serving as a catalyst for further theorizing and debate (Collins, 1990; Cooper, 2015). As an analytic framework, intersectionality emerged to illuminate the positionalities of women of Color as distinct from White women and to push White feminist thinking to emphasize race and processes of racialization in gendered critique. Intersectional analyses illustrated why broad categorical constructs such as *woman* were insufficient tools used to describe the experiences of all women by deessentializing identities such as race, class, and gender. Indeed, intersectional analyses troubled not simply the conception of essentialist experiences, but so too their utility in understanding how individuals experienced the world. In this analysis, we take up intersectionality as a site of theoretical possibility that can inform higher education practice.

To understand how policies and programs affect underrepresented and disempowered communities, it is insufficient to understand race alone, or to understand race in addition to other identity categories (Anthias, 2012). Intersectionality provides a platform to more accurately understand how identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, among others, for example—are not individual

accounts of identity so much as they are reflections of larger organizational systems of power and oppression (Cooper, 2015). In this sense, intersectionality is not the sum of individual identity categories that Mexican community college students bring with them into receiving institutions, but rather how those identities interlock with one another (Razack, 1998) and are simultaneously configured by networks of power and organization within the larger society. In other words, Mexican community college transfer students are not simply Mexican students and community college transfer students and adult learners and nontraditional students and so on. Simply identifying individual identity traits fails to produce meaningful understandings about how those identities converge. Moreover, such a perspective also fails to direct our attention toward the larger role that power plays in societal organization and the production of discrimination and subjugation. Knowledge of ethno-racial identity is useful insofar as we consider context, and in the context of higher education, intersectional perspectives on ethno-racial identity draw our attention toward normative structures that maintain predominantly White institutional spaces. We delve further into this angle of analysis in the discussion.

Methodology

The data analyzed for this study were drawn from research conducted in 2013 (Cortez, 2013). In order to gain a rich, in-depth understanding of student experience, the research employed qualitative methodology through the use of semistructured individual interviews with Mexican community college transfer students at least 1 year posttransfer. Particular attention was paid to the personal knowledge or wealth (Yosso, 2005) held by participants. Drawing from the perspectives of LatCrit (Alemán, 2009), the original study analyzed how Mexican students described the process of vertical transfer in the context of their own lives. While we do not use LatCrit in the current analysis, it is important to note that the original research design was rooted in what Solórzano and Bernal (2001) described as a theory that "elucidates Latinas/Latinos' multidimensional identities," providing rich possibilities for analyses aimed at understanding the lived experiences and intersectionalities of Mexican community college transfer students (p. 312). Grounding the research project in an asset-based paradigm helped to position participants and their experiences in antideficit ways.

Participants

A total of six Mexican students, three individuals who identified as women and three individuals who identified as men, participated in this study between 2012 and 2013 (See Table 1). All participants transferred from the same 2-year institution to the same 4-year university and identified as either Mexican or Mexican-American. Five of the students were the first in their families to attend college and earn a high school diploma, with the remaining student earning a General Educational Development (GED) diploma. Academic major at the receiving institution is included in Table 1 for further context.

Potential participants were recruited via e-mail solicitation. E-mails were sent to Mexican student organizations, advisors from academic colleges on campus, and student support programs aimed at serving first-generation and low-income students at the receiving institution. Snowball sampling (Merriam, 2009) was used to recruit additional eligible students. Eligibility was based on two inclusion criteria: First, students needed to have self-identified as Mexican and/or Mexican-American. Second, potential participants must have attended at least one academic year at the community college prior to transfer and completed at least one academic year at the receiving institution.

Methods

One-hour interviews were conducted in English with individual students over a 4-month period and transcribed. Data were coded in two cycles using first and second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2013).

Table 1. Participant demographic information.

Name	Age	Sex	Race/Ethnicity	College Generation Status	Secondary Credential	Major
Ana	21	Female	Mexican American	1st generation	High School Diploma	Animal Science
Claudia	22	Female	Mexican	1st generation	High School Diploma	General Science
Gerardo	21	Male	Mexican	1st generation	High School Diploma	Computer Science
Jaime	35	Male	Mexican American	1st generation	GED	Ethnic Studies
Rebeca	21	Female	Mexican	1st generation	High School Diploma	Geography
Sam	29	Male	Mexican American	Father college graduate	High School Diploma	Ethnic Studies

Before first cycle coding, both researchers carefully read through the transcripts with thoughtful attention paid to the fourth tenet of transfer receptive culture that asks for acknowledgment of students' lived experiences and intersectionality between community and family. After initial reading of the data, the researchers separately coded the data using a combination of initial coding, in vivo coding, and narrative coding (Saldaña, 2013). After coding was finalized, the authors checked each other's codes to ensure that the data were fully explored and codes were accurate.

Limitations

Despite careful attention to data collection and analysis, there are two important limitations to note. First, credibility of data interpretation may have been strengthened if both authors were present during the interview process. Peer-debriefing sessions between the authors may have enhanced understanding of interview data. Second, because of the large number of students in our sample who participated in student support programs throughout their transfer processes, our research cannot adequately speak to the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students who navigate transfer processes outside of such programs. Future research may want to examine the following: (a) if, and to what extent, Mexican community college transfer students successfully transfer to 4-year institutions independent of federal, state, local, and institutional support programs; and (b) the posttransfer experiences of Mexican community college transfer students who do not participate in these programs.

Analysis

The experiences of Mexican community college transfer students take root early in the educational pathway. Understanding why Mexican students begin postsecondary education at community colleges provides useful insight into how students understand their educational experiences and circumstances. Aligned with the fourth tenet of transfer receptive culture, our analysis begins with a brief introduction to the students and their expressed reasoning for attending a community college. We then transition into the role of family and conclude with an analysis using intersectionality.

Lived experiences: Stated reasons for attending a community college

The six students in this study explained that they began at community college for a variety of interrelated reasons that lie at the intersections of ethno-racial identity, socioeconomic status, and the politics of educational opportunity. Three commonalities emerged among their remarks and are also reflected within extant literature: students had general misinformation and/or lack of

information about college, students could not afford university tuition, and students perceived that they did not have the English-language skills necessary to be successful at a 4-year institution.

Jaime, a 35-year-old student who identifies as a displaced construction worker, mentioned a lack of information or misinformation as related to his enrollment at a community college. Jaime is a formerly incarcerated individual, which influenced his enrollment in the local community college and which we further explore later in the analysis. When asked why he began postsecondary education at community college, he said: "Because I didn't know anything about the university. The university seemed, to me, it just seemed like that was the role you had to do. You had to go to a junior college then go to a university." Jaime's understanding that an individual must begin at a community college and then transfer to a 4-year university is a racialized and class-influenced understanding of postsecondary pathways. He further explained his reasoning for beginning at a community college by stating that: "The first reason [to begin at the community college] was just because I was a displaced worker you know. I was working, doing really well in the construction field, and got laid-off. . .I went back and got my GED in 2009." Jaime earned his GED from the same community college in which he later enrolled.

Gerardo is a Computer Science student at the university, and his explanation for beginning at a community college is slightly different. Rather than believing that one had to begin postsecondary education at a community college, Gerardo thought that he did not have the grades to go to a 4-year university. When asked why he began college at a 2-year institution, he explained:

> I was not ready to go to a 4-year university when I ended high school. I did not have the grades to go into a 4-year university so I had to make-up for everything that I lost in high school. Community college offered me that option. I was there for 3 years.

When asked to elaborate on what he meant by "not ready," Gerardo said:

> I really wasn't thinking of going to college at all when I graduated from high school. But I was sent to experience the real world. Working without a degree and I didn't really like the experience so I decided that it was best for me to at least get a 2-year degree and get an education. My parents sent me to the fields picking berries [for] one summer. . .it was not very pleasant, it was very hard work. There wasn't a lot of income that you get from it. It makes you really tired.

Gerardo understood that he lacked the requisite grades for admission into a 4-year university and, therefore, decided to attend the local community college. Like Gerardo, Sam, a 29-year-old student who was formerly incarcerated, never really thought about going to college. Sam learned about the opportunity to attend community college while incarcerated and described his decision this way:

> I actually wanted to attend a community college to better my life. Before attending a community college I was incarcerated here in [State] penitentiary. A friend of mine asked me what I was going to do when I got out and I wasn't really sure. I didn't have a plan and he asked me, why not go to college? And I never really thought about it, and thought it would be a good idea. I filled out my FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid] papers 6 months before my release, sent it to [community college] and later got a response saying that I was going to receive financial aid and I was going to be able to go to college.

Ana decided to begin her postsecondary education at a community college, but unlike Jaime, Gerardo, and Sam, she knew she wanted to go to college. A 21-year-old student, Ana's stated reasons for enrolling at a community college were because of limited financial resources. She explained:

> In high school, I knew I wanted to keep going to school, I just didn't know where and actually I was deciding to apply to [university]. I was thinking about going to [university] instead of [community college], but I didn't have a scholarship or anything like that so. Basically, it was because of my financial status I couldn't afford to go to a 4-year college. That is why I decided to go to a community college. I was a part of a program when going to the community college that helped us out financially.

Confronted with the financial barriers associated with attending a 4-year university and the reality of her present economic status, Ana decided to attend a community college. Limited financial resources and the costs of attending 4-year institutions remain impediments for Latinx community college transfer students in their ability to begin college at 4-year institutions (Rendón, Dowd, & Nora, 2012).

An additional impediment can be perceived limited English proficiency like the remaining two students in our sample: Claudia and Rebeca.

In explaining why she began postsecondary education at a community college, Claudia, a 22-year-old woman, stated the following: "I decided to go to [community college] because I didn't have the English level required for university." This is a powerful perception on behalf of Claudia and when asked to elaborate, she said the following:

> I was afraid, I was new to the country…I was new to the city, I was new to everything so it was my second year when I arrived in the States and then I graduated from high school and…I didn't feel comfortable going straight to university. I tried. I applied at a couple of schools and I got admitted, but I decided to not to do that because I didn't feel my English was enough for university level.

Despite applying and being admitted to 4-year institutions, Claudia decided to attend her local community college because she held self-doubts about her English-language ability. Similarly, Rebeca, a 21-year old woman, mentioned her perceived limited English-language proficiency as related to her enrollment at a community college:

> When I graduated from high school I didn't know the application process for a 4-year university, so I just followed my sister's steps and I went to the community college… I didn't know how to attend a 4-year university and then I didn't feel ready because of my English, so I went with her and because I got this really nice scholarship.

Claudia and Rebeca's doubts compliment previous research that identifies limited English-language proficiency as a barrier to vertical transfer among Latinx students (e.g., Alexander, Garcia, Gonzalez, Grimes, & O'Brien, 2007). However, both Claudia and Rebeca are referring to their *perceptions* of their own English-language proficiency, which grow out of a complex set of sociocultural and economic arrangements among home, school, and community. It is likely that their perceptions were not solely based on formal diagnostic tools administered by their high schools (if, indeed, they took those tests), but by a combination of factors that influence an individual's belief in their capacity to proficiently speak, understand, and communicate in English.

Students' reasons for enrolling in a community college varied, but general misinformation and/or lack of information about college, inability to afford university tuition, and a perceived lack of English-language skills were strong factors in their decision-making processes. Understanding the reasons why Mexican students begin their postsecondary educational journeys at community colleges provides important insight into learning the kinds of lived experiences that students bring with them to 4-year institutions. For example, learned insecurities about one's English-language proficiency do not simply leave once a student enrolls in a 4-year institution. Those perceptions, understandings, and experiences stay with students, as do concerns about paying for college.

The role of family

All of the students expressed that their families played a role in their transfer process. From giving rides to campus to providing housing, to offering emotional and financial support, each student mentioned a significant context in which family support was key to their ability to be successful. For some students, like Claudia, her family helped in very tangible ways by paying the application fee to the receiving institution and driving her to orientation sessions. For other students, familial support took the form of important emotional and motivational encouragement. For two students, Rebeca and Jaime, the influence and support of family was a bit more complex, particularly because they are first-generation college students who have different experiences than their parents.

Rebeca is a 21-year-old woman majoring in geography. In describing the kind of support that her family provided her at the beginning of her college journey, she stated that her family did not know a lot about how to help her. She said: "[They] didn't know anything about the school system at that time. But now they are starting to know." As a first-generation college student, Rebeca's experience with her parents is not uncommon. Because her parents were unable to attend postsecondary education, they do

not have first-hand experience in navigating the university. As Rebeca gained more familiarity with the community college, she said that she eventually felt more comfortable asking people about finding the resources she needed to be successful. However, in reflecting back to when she first started at the community college she said: "At that time I just didn't know where to start. And I think they [my family] were more lost then I was." Rebeca acknowledged that her parents were not in a position to help her at the beginning, and that the feeling of lost was shared among them. She went on to describe how her family supports her while enrolled at the receiving institution, but moved in a slightly different direction when elaborating on their relationship. Rebeca highlighted the potential paradoxical influence that family can have in the lives of first-generation college students when she responded to a question asking her to talk further about the role that family played in her transfer process:

> My dad has always been like "oh whatever you do is fine," but my mom was like "why are you moving?" Because I moved to live here [close to the university] and then if I don't go back that weekend, [she asks] "Why are you staying there? School is only Monday through Friday." So, that kind of like didn't help me to get involved in school. Because even if I go back home just the weekends, I mean I still have homework. But I do it, but it's just being with my family and she starts like, "Help me here, take me here, oh I need to go over there." She kind of takes time from me, which is fine, it's family time, but still. If I had to stay some weekends here [close to the university], I feel that I would be more involved in school.

Rebeca's experience underscores one of the difficult tensions that first-generation college students can face in attempting to be successful in postsecondary education. Rebeca's words reflect the difficulty of navigating familial and institutional norms alongside recognition that the demands and desires of both can sometimes present conflict. This is particularly so when dominant notions of engagement in postsecondary education reflect White middle-class assumptions and values.

Jaime faced a similar experience with his family and shared the following when describing how his family supported him throughout the transfer process:

> I think they were there to support me because I'm the youngest in my family and the first one to ever attend a university or a college for that matter. It's kind of been like, I bring my stuff home and you don't really get that support from your father or mother and say "hell yeah I remember that class, maybe I can help you out a little bit" or [they] ask you. "Hey, have you done your homework?" It was never really supportive. It was more like, "Jessie, I need help doing this. I need help doing that." You don't understand, I have a 15-page paper. I can't help you out. I'm all stressed out. I think if anything they supported me, but added to the stress in some ways without even realizing it.

Like Rebeca, Jaime felt some of the difficulty in navigating college as a first-generation college student. These kinds of experiences can be difficult for parents and students alike, and Jaime's emphasis on his parents not "realizing it" is important to keep in mind as first-generation college students are oftentimes embarking on a journey in which it may be difficult for parents and guardians to relate.

Gerardo described his desire to see his family on the weekends, too, but explained a different kind of experience in relation to family. Gerardo is not the first child in his family to attend college, and in discussing family support he said:

> They played a big role actually. Part of the problem, when you move here you have to, you have more expenses than when I was back in community college because I was living at home and was driving back and forth. And here I have to pay my own rent and tuition is more expensive and stuff. So economically my family supported me. I try to do part of it myself by working, but you can never cover yourself unless you work like an animal. They helped me a lot with that [money]. . .It was also kind of hard because I'm very family attached and so I had to go back every weekend and see them in order to feel satisfied. They will also drive down here at times and that made it a lot easier. . . Also, my brother has already had gone to 4-year university so he was also a pretty big resource I can use when I had questions as far as things go at bigger schools.

The way that Gerardo described his experience was slightly different than Rebeca's and Jaime's, but it is clear that all three found value in remaining connected to family while enrolled at the receiving institution. Sam's discussion of his family echoes this desire, too. Sam underscored the critical role that family can play in providing emotional support and motivation during the transfer process when he said:

> I know that my dad would have been part of it but he passed away in November of 2000, but my mother, she couldn't be more proud. When I graduated with honors from [community college], I think it must have been one of the happiest days for my mom, ever. . .When I started to second-guess myself. . .she told me that stopping was not an option pretty much. "You are not going to stop. You are going to get your education, don't let anything get in the way of that, not even money. Just go and you do it" and she would tell me too, "if your dad was here he would be so proud of you."

In describing the support of his mother, Sam focused on the essential motivational and emotional encouragement that helped him when he began having doubts about his ability to persist. He continued talking about his mother and the support she provided him by connecting an increased awareness of her role in the family to a course he took in women's studies. Sam had learned to see his mother in new ways and said:

> And to be honest man my mom, not to take anything away from my dad, was the rock in my family. She was the anchor. She kept everybody together. She worked two-three jobs and made sure she cooked. So I read all these books now and I appreciate her even more, especially taking all these women studies and stuff like that. Because women, we don't even know what they go through until we read about it, we hear about it. We don't really acknowledge them. My mom worked two-three jobs, bro. She wouldn't get home until late. Hurry home, man, she wouldn't even take a shower and just go right into the kitchen, wash up a little bit, and start cooking. She cooked for me and my two brothers my two sisters and my dad. And then she wouldn't eat with us and then she would serve everybody and made sure everybody had their servings and that everybody would eat and after everybody would eat, she would come to the table and eat. Hey, I'm talking about 8 or 9 o'clock at night. I'm very grateful for my mom.

Sam is a first-generation high school graduate, with his brother being the first one in the family to earn a high school diploma. His two sisters became pregnant at young ages and left high school. One of his brothers was close to graduating, but left high school in the 11th grade and his older brother graduated from high school with honors. When Sam was asked to expand on his relationship with his brother, he said:

> It's funny because when I wasn't sure about what I wanted to be, I told my brother, "I think I want to be a physical therapist assistant." He was like, "that's cool, but why an assistant? Why not be a physical therapist and have an assistant?" and it never really came to my mind before that. It was true. Why not be a physical therapist? Why am I putting myself down? Why am I seeing myself of an assistant, not a physical therapist? So my brother, he would tell me things like that, "brother don't be hard on yourself, don't look down on yourself. If you are going to do anything you reach high, you do that."

Like Sam, Jaime also referenced a sibling being supportive of him during the transfer process. In further expanding on the role of family, Jaime explained how his sister supported him pretransfer. After being incarcerated, Jaime did not have a place to live. His sister let him live with her and Jaime described how he understood the support of family as follows:

> To me my family supported me because I was homeless. I didn't really have a place to stay. My sister was there for me because she let me stay there with her. She has four kids and a husband, I'm sure he was mad about this and that, you know. . .To me, that was support. There isn't too many people that would do that. They will, but they are gonna, in my group, they're just going to use you. They will try to get as much money as they can out of you and my sister never did that to me. . .The stress of having to pay rent everyday or bills and not having the money was never on my shoulders in my junior college. I felt like I was really free to just go off and do whatever I wanted. Go work anywhere or study anywhere I needed to go, and that's just what I did. I used all my resources.

Once Jaime transferred to the university, he no longer lived with his sister and while at the university, he rented a room from his father. Jaime described a change in support after transferring to the university that is related to the sometimes-difficult relationship he has with his father:

> My support was always over there at [community college]. Since I been here I haven't had that support at all from my family except from my father, which we never really gotten along anyways. I would describe it as a support because, you know, I did have a roof over my head, I did have a place to sleep, I did have a place to put my food. I don't want to say that it was completely no support at all.

Jaime's response reveals uncertainty regarding the role of his father as it relates to providing support. His ambivalence is likely, at least partially, the result of their relationship.

The role of family in the lives of students encompassed emotional and motivational support as well as material resources. Family influence was strong and for two of the students, Rebeca and Jaime, complicated when familial expectations and norms misaligned and detoured from dominant expectations of the receiving institution. In the following section we hold onto this complexity by turning to intersectionality as a way to enhance understanding of Latinx students' experiences throughout the transfer process.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality of identity and experience is complex, and students bring with them a range of layered experiences that position them in unique ways with institutions of higher education. When asked to talk about their experiences as Mexican community college transfer students, participants emphasized aspects of ethnoracial identity, age, and class. Ana, for example, highlighted feelings of racial isolation in her department when asked how she experiences the university as a Mexican transfer student. She said:

> I felt like the only Latina in my classes, there is sometimes where I still feel like the only Latina in my classes.
>
> Interviewer: What are your thoughts about that?
>
> A little awkward I guess at first. I guess at my community college I was already around Latinos and coming here not really. There are no Mexicans here. I feel kind of out of place, I guess. I mean, I have friends that are Latinos, but they're not in my major so it's kind of difficult to get homework done unless it is like the required general biology and chemistry. Other than that, I don't know that many Latinos that's in my major, only a couple.

Expressing a similar sentiment, Rebeca recalled feelings of discomfort in her classes when she was the only Latina in her classes:

> I just feel like kind of uncomfortable sometimes because in my classes I was the only one [Latina], but that doesn't really bother me. In a way it kind it helps me because my teacher remembers me because I'm the only one with a different color—the only Latina in the department.

Both Ana and Rebeca emphasized feeling like the only Latina in their academic department at the receiving institution. Similarly, Gerardo also expressed feelings of discomfort because of ethno-racial isolation. He said:

> Myself in computer science, you don't see a lot of Hispanics. I'm like one of two, so having that [another Hispanic student] made me feel a little bit more comfortable. I can see that I'm not the only one here.

Feelings of racial isolation are not uncommon for students of Color at predominantly White institutions, and it is worth noting that these feelings exist in stark contrast to the students' experiences at the sending institution.

Sam and Jaime both focused on their age as posttraditional students returning to school amid a younger population. Additionally, Sam mentioned some of the financial stress he faced that he perceives other students do not experience. He said:

> My past is very complex, I'm 34 years old here in college. My age difference also makes me insecure at times. I look all around and I'm seeing all these young faces. Also, a lot of these people have the privilege of their parents' paying for their school or their apartment. They drive nice cars and they don't pay for their apartment, some do, but a lot of them don't. I don't have that. I work. I come to school. I also have a family, but I rent. I take out loans. These are the factors that I deal with and they are stressful. I think that is an on-going issue. . .It's been good, but my age makes it difficult sometimes interacting with younger students. . .sometimes I feel like an outsider among my peers or other Mexican-Americans because of the generation gap. It's complex. There are so many things that go into my experience here at [the university].

Feeling like an outsider among his peers, Sam held anxiety about his age as an older nontraditional student. Sam's reflection speaks to the salience of intersectionality and complexity of lived experience, which influences a student's ability to feel connection to an institution and sense of belonging in higher education (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Strayhorn, 2012).

In describing his experience as a nontraditional student, Jaime also emphasized feelings of isolation. He said:

> I think the first year was a lot of that fear. I feel that now that I figured out what's more my comfortability, in terms of a major, I feel that I'm going to do a lot better. Because I did have a really hard major, I mean, construction engineering competing with kids that are just smart and naturally smart. And then me being a nontraditional student 30 years old trying to compete with this kids. I felt like that was the biggest worry right there, trying to keep with kids that were a lot smarter and then doing something that I want to do now, versus this year…I mean, not having no friends, not having, I mean people were probably in study groups, I wasn't. There were a lot of things missing that I was used to at [the community college], which was the resources.

Jaime's emphasis on students who are naturally smart provides insight into some of the insecurities he held about being an older posttraditional student. Jaime also understood how important it was to form social connections with his peers and like Sam, his remarks indicate feelings of disconnection from the broader student community.

Critical problems of exclusion on behalf of receiving institutions—both historically and contemporarily—produce a climate that can be unwelcoming and unsupportive for underrepresented students of Color, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and/or older student communities. Unwelcoming and/or unsupportive experiences negatively influence all students' ability to persist. Acknowledging students' lived realities and intersectionality between community and family requires that institutional agents understand the complexity of student experience and the varying ways that students' positionalities shift in response to and in combination with the receiving institution.

Discussion

Our second research question asked how the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students can inform conceptual and practical thinking toward building a transfer receptive culture at receiving institutions. The students' narratives analyzed through the foci of lived experiences, the role of family, and intersectionality push us to ask similarly difficult questions: what does it mean to be receptive of Mexican community college transfer students? How do institutions acknowledge the lived realities and intersectionalities of Mexican community college transfer students in meaningful ways? The identities and characteristics of students–including experiences with incarceration, homelessness, financial limitations, insecurities surrounding perceived ability, balancing the expectations of family with the normative demands of college, and other situations, interlock with ethno-racial identity and coalesce to produce specific subjectivities for Mexican community college transfer students at predominantly White receiving institutions.

Accordingly, it is not simply the lived experiences and intersectionality that students bring with them into the receiving institution, but it is also the spaces in which those identities and experiences are enacted. Spaces, in this sense, extend beyond physical and structural descriptions to encompass dominant thinking and normative patterns of the institution. Mexican transfer student experiences at the receiving institution are a response to the ways in which the university is organized, which is a reflection of larger patterns of power and hierarchy in society. Ana felt out of place like the "only Mexican here" because she was at a predominantly White institution, but she did not feel the same way at the community college where there were greater numbers of Mexican students, staff, and faculty. Thus, acknowledgment of lived experiences cannot simply be an awareness of what individual students bring with them into the institution, but an insight into what these experiences mean as well as what they produce. And an enhanced awareness and understanding of the broader strokes of learned insecurities about one's English-language proficiency, for example, do not materialize in a

vacuum and do not simply leave once a Mexican student enrolls in a predominantly White 4-year institution. Using the lens of intersectionality to understand the lived realities of Mexican community college transfer students elevates the broader context in which those experiences occur. Certainly, the reasons why students attend community college and their ideas about the role of family throughout the transfer process are important things to learn, but gaining awareness about the reasons those experiences occur, particularly in academic spaces, is critical to changing inequity.

If the desire is for underrepresented and systemically disempowered students to experience the institution differently, then institutional reorganization is required. Working for transfer equity with a framework of intersectionality requires that institutional agents learn how the processes of categorization and inclusion position Mexican community college transfer students via various material landscapes, such as policies and programs, as well as discursive regimes that promote commonsensical thinking about who they are, what they need, and the experiences they bring with them into receiving institutions. An emphasis on intersectionality should prompt institutions to understand that the lived experiences of students always occur within a contextualized space. That space is the receiving institution.

Implications for practice

The first step in responding to the Latinx transfer student success models highlighted here is for institutions to critically analyze their own assumptions regarding Latinx community college transfer students. The fourth tenet of transfer receptive culture necessitates reflection on the part of any institution wanting to more equitably serve transfer students—particularly, Mexican community college transfer students. Culture is not simply about designing an academic or social program that seeks to include a distinct group of students who do not comprise the majority, but something much broader. Culture includes the collective practices and norms of an institutional environment as well as the discursive habits and narrative logics that drive institutional thinking about Mexican community college transfer students. Programming aimed at students cannot be the sole response to the lived experiences analyzed in this study because that kind of programming fails to address the *culture* of the institution. In this sense, cultivating a receptive culture is about turning the gaze inward toward the institution and away from individual students and student communities. There are many programs throughout higher education that are designed to assist Latinx transfer students, and these programs may be culturally-relevant and/or race-conscious. These are important strength-based programs, but alone—they are simply not enough. Using a framework of lived experience and intersectionality holds promise for receiving intuitions so that the broader campus context becomes the site of organizational change, not individual students themselves.

Building institutional cultures that affirm and support Latinx community college transfer students requires that the very obstacles they face are identified and removed by the receiving institution. Four-year institutions share a significant responsibility in ensuring the successful transition of students and the academic and social success at their new institution (Bahr et al., 2013). Institutions can work toward this goal by reflecting upon their own culture and how minoritized and marginalized students interact with and experience the institution. There are no easy fixes—and the challenges we highlight here cannot be solved with finite program interventions and/or facility changes because the problems are deeply rooted. Segregation, exclusion, microaggressions, inequity, and underrepresentation are compounded with characteristics of identity that are systematically devalued within the larger society. The ways that individual students are subjugated via structures and policies play-out in higher education contexts and students are an embodiment of these experiences. By working through and toward culture, the goal should be to first examine dominant culture of the institution and work toward a restructuring that values the diverse experiences of Mexican community college transfer students. Capacity building efforts should reflect these principles.

For institutions aiming to build a transfer receptive culture, then, they must have accurate information about the ways Mexican community college students experience the entire transfer process, with particular emphasis on posttransfer transition processes. The following questions may provide a useful starting point for institutions:

(1) How do Mexican community college transfer students describe the culture of the receiving institution?
(2) How would Mexican community college transfer students describe the institution to someone else?
(3) If Mexican community college transfer students spend time on campus, where do they go and for what reasons?
(4) What are the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students with administrative offices on campus such as financial aid or the registrar?
(5) What are the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students with faculty, staff, and administrators of the institution?

In addition to qualitative data regarding the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students, program of study, time-to-degree, completion data, and other academic markers should be gathered and analyzed through a lens of equity.

One of the challenges highlighted in this essay is that Mexican community college transfer students can feel racial isolation at predominantly White institutions. Racial discrimination and bias on campus can merge with dominant stereotypes about community college transfer students as being academically underprepared and/or incapable of the work required to be successful at 4-year institutions. Universities will need to proactively address the combination of biases that emerge when students, staff, administrators, faculty, and other institutional agents subscribe to damaging and erroneous ideas about community college transfer students. Increasing the number of faculty, staff, and administrators on campus who are themselves community college transfer students and/or identify as Mexican, particularly in key leadership positions, may help with feelings of isolation on behalf of students. Ongoing, sustained initiatives targeting implicit bias on behalf of institutional actors may also decrease feelings of racial isolation on behalf of Mexican community college transfer students and help to create more equitable programs and processes at the receiving institution.

Conclusion

The recent growth in practical and theoretical models aimed at increasing the success of Latinx community college transfer students at 4-year institutions is a good thing. The prominence of asset-based perspectives holds potential for each of the frameworks highlighted here: Latina/o Transfer Culture, Transfer Affirming Culture, and Transfer Receptive Culture. The emphasis in each of these frameworks on culture has the potential to lessen deficit based perspectives and institutionalized obstacles for Mexican community college transfer students.

The particular call for acknowledgment of lived experience and intersectionality has the potential to expand dominant understandings of what those obstacles are and why they persist. Institutions must learn their own institutional culture and how, specifically, Mexican community college transfer students are positioned via cultural norms, expectations, habits, and policies. If institutional receptivity is going to push beyond token gestures and short-lived diversity efforts, then institutions must do some difficult soul-searching and push the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students to the forefront. The experiences expressed by students in this study show that students' reasons for attending community college, the role of family in transferring, and their multiple intersectionalities are productive and not simply something they bring with them into the receiving institution. Their subjectivity is shaped by the organizational culture of the receiving institution, and efforts to address

the Mexican community college student transfer gap must acknowledge and then work to change this reality.

Acknowledgments

We are indebted to the participants in this study. We extend a special thank you to Parthiban Muniandy, Stephanie Reider, Patrick Dilley, and Sandra Dika for their thoughtful and constructive feedback on early drafts of this manuscript. We are also appreciative for comments provided from an anonymous reviewer in the revision process. Any errors or oversights that remain are our own.

References

Alemán, E. (2009). LatCrit educational leadership and advocacy: Struggling over whiteness as property in Texas school finance. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *42*(2), 183–201. doi:10.1080/10665680902744246

Alexander, B. C., Garcia, V., Gonzalez, L., Grimes, G., & O'Brien, D. (2007). Barriers in the transfer process for Hispanic and Hispanic Immigrant students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *6*(2), 174–184. doi:10.1177/1538192706297440

Anthias, F. (2012). Intersectional what? Social divisions, intersectionality and levels of analysis. *Ethnicities*, *13*(1), 3–19. doi:10.1177/1468796812463547

Bahr, P. R., Toth, C., Thirolf, K., & Massé, J. C. (2013). A review and critique of the literature on community college students' transition processes and outcomes in four-year institutions. In M. B. Paulsen (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 459–511). New York, NY: Springer.

Bensimon, N., & Dowd, A. C. (2009). Dimensions of the transfer choice gap: Experience of Latina and Latino students who navigated transfer pathways. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(4), 632–658. doi:10.17763/haer.79.4.05w66u23662k1444

Bensimon, N., & Dowd, A. C. (2014). *Engaging the race question: Accountability and equity in U.S. higher education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Castro, E. L. (Ed.). (2015). *Understanding equity in community college practice* (p. 171). *New Directions for Community Colleges*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey/Bass.

Chase, M. M., Dowd, A. C., Pazich, L. B., & Bensimon, E. M. (2014). Transfer equity for "minoritized" students a critical policy analysis of seven states. *Educational Policy*, *28*(5), 669–717. doi:10.1177/0895904812468227

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cooper, B. (2015). Intersectionality. In L. Disch & M. Hawkesworth (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of feminist theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Cortez, E. (2013). *The transfer process of Latina/o students from community college to the university: What are their experiences?* (Unpublished master's thesis). Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon. Retrieved from http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/handle/1957/39701

Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), Article 8, 139–167.

Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299. doi:10.2307/1229039

Crisp, G., & Nuñez, A. M. (2014). Understanding the racial transfer gap: Modeling underrepresented minority and nonminority students' pathways from two- to four-year institutions. *The Review of Higher Education*, *37*(3), 291–320. doi:10.1353/rhe.2014.0017

Dowd, A. C., & Melguizo, T. (2008). Socioeconomic stratification of community college transfer access in the 1980s and 1990s: Evidence from HS&B and NELS. *The Review of Higher Education*, *31*(4), 377–400. http://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.0004

Frye, R. (2002, September 5). Latinos in higher education: Many enroll, too few graduate. The Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/11.pdf

Gándara, P., Alvarado, E., Driscoll, A., & Orfield, G. (2012, February 14). *Building pathways to transfer: Community colleges that break the chain of failure for students of Color*. The Civil Rights Project. Retrieved from http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/college-access/diversity/building-pathways-to-transfer-community-colleges-that-break-the-chain-of-failure-for-students-of-color

Gloria, A. M., Castellanos, J., & Orozco, V. (2005). Perceived educational barriers, cultural fit, coping responses, and psychological well-being of Latina undergraduates. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *27*(2), 161–183. doi:10.1177/0739986305275097

Hagedorn, L. S., Chi, W., Cepeda, R., & McLain, M. (2007). An investigation of critical mass: The role of Latino representation in the success of urban community college students. *Research in Higher Education*, *48*(1), 73–91. doi:10.1007/s11162-006-9024-5.

Handel, S. J. (2012). Increasing higher education access and success using new pathways to the baccalaureate: The emergence of a transfer-affirming culture. New York, NY: College Board. Retrieved from http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/rd/StephenJHandel-IncreasingHigherEducationAccess.pdf

Herrera, A., & Jain, D. (2013). Building a transfer-receptive culture at four-year institutions. *New Directions for Higher Education*, *162*, 51–59. doi:10.1002/he.20056

Hurtado, S., & Carter, D. F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on latino college students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education*, *70*, 324–345. doi:10.2307/2673270

Hurtado, S., Inkelas, K. K., Briggs, C., & Rhee, B.-S. (1997). Differences in college access and choice among racial/ethnic groups: Identifying continuing barriers. *Research in Higher Education*, *38*(1), 43–75. doi:10.1023/A:1024948728792

Jain, D., Herrera, A., Bernal, S., & Solorzano, D. (2011). Critical Race Theory and the transfer function: Introducing a transfer receptive culture. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *35*(3), 252–266. doi:10.1080/10668926.2011.526525

Laanan, F. S., Starobin, S. S., & Eggleston, L. E. (2010). Adjustment of community college students at a four-year university: Role and relevance of transfer capital for student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention*, *12*(*2*), 175–209.

Martínez, M., & Fernández, E. (2004). Latinos at community colleges. *New Directions for Student Services*, *105*, 51–62. doi:10.1002/ss.116

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Motel, S., & Patton, E. (2012, June 27). *The 10 largest Hispanic origin groups: Characteristics, rankings, top counties*. PEW Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/06/27/the-10-largest-hispanic-origin-groups-characteristics-rankings-top-counties/

Nora, A. (2004). The role of habitus and cultural capital in choosing a college, transitioning from high school to higher education, and persisting in college among minority and nonminority students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *3*(2), 180–208. doi:10.1177/1538192704263189

Nuñez, A. M., & Elizondo, D. (2013). Spring). Closing the Latino/a transfer gap: Creating pathways to the baccalaureate. *PERSPECTIVAS: Issues in Higher Education Policy and Practice*, *2*, 1–15.

Nuñez, A. M., Sparks, P. J., & Hernández, E. A. (2011). Latino access to community colleges and Hispanic-serving institutions: A national study. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *10*(1), 18–40. doi:10.1177/1538192710391801

Pérez, P. A., & Ceja, M. (2010). Building a Latina/o student transfer culture: Best practices and outcomes in transfer to universities. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *9*(1), 6–21. doi:10.1177/1538192709350073

Razack, S. (1998). *Looking White people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Rendón, L. I. (2002). Community College Puente: A validating model of education. *Educational Policy*, *16*, 642–667. doi:10.1177/0895904802016004010

Rendón, L. I., Dowd, A. C., & Nora, A. (2012, August). Priced out: A closer look at college affordability for Latinos. A knowledge essay commissioned by the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and presented at the Enriching America through the 21st Century: Increasing Latino Postsecondary Completion Symposium, Los Angeles, CA.

Saenz, V. B., & Ponjuan, L. (2008). The vanishing Latino male in higher education. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *8*(1), 54–89. doi:10.1177/1538192708326995

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Solórzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and latcrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, *36*(3), 308–342. doi:10.1177/0042085901363002

Solórzano, D. G., Villalpando, O., & Oseguera, L. (2005). Educational inequities and Latina/o undergraduate students in the United States: A critical race analysis of their educational progress. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *4*(3), 272–294. doi:10.1177/1538192705276550

Strayhorn, T. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Suarez, A. L. (2003). Forward transfer: Strengthening the educational pipeline for Latino community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *27*, 95–117. doi:10.1080/713838110

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 69–91. doi:10.1080/1361332052000341006

Yosso, T. J., & Solórzano, D. G. (2006). Leaks in the Chicana and Chicano educational pipeline. *Latino Policy & Issues Brief*, *13*: .