

The Parent-Teacher-Student Triad in Mexico

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Project Purpose

This study examines the norms, roles and expectations of teachers, parent and students in the education system in Irapuato, Mexico. This research will provide contextual information to educational stakeholders in the US to better accommodate to the needs immigrant students from Mexico.

Project Importance

The demographic shift of Mexican immigrants within the public school system in the US has created a great need for teachers to understand the norms, roles and expectations that immigrant families bring with them from their education system in Mexico. The contextual information on the parent-teacher-student triad in Irapuato, Mexico will contribute to this needed information and will be of great value to teachers when working with Mexican immigrant students.

According to J. H. Chrispeels, parent-teacher-student relations in Mexico differ from that of the US (2001). This can cause adjustment issues for families immigrating out of Mexico to the United States. For example, Chrispeels found that the difference in the expectations placed on parent caused them to feel confused, intimidated and unsure about the precise steps they should take to participate in their child's education (2001). Some studies reported that such misunderstandings have led teachers to perceive Mexican parents as indifferent about their children's education (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991).

One study articulated why the expectations of parental involvement may differ between Mexico and the US. The research indicated that because the Mexican parents had an absolute trust the teachers, they made less of an initiative to get involved (Carrasquillo & London, 1993). To prevent misunderstandings, educational stakeholders need to be aware of the differences in the norms, roles and expectations found in the parent-teacher-student relationships between Mexico and the US.

The scholarly research done on this topic is over 10 years old and is often based off immigrant families already established in the US. These secondhand studies do not provide the contextual information needed to fully understand the differences in the norms, roles and expectations of parents, teachers and students in Mexico and the US.

Project Profile Body

From May 1st to August 6th 2012, I conducted inductive research through a BYU fields study program in Irapuato, Mexico. I spent over 130 hours in Mexican high schools doing classroom observations and interviews with teachers, parents and students. My data collection methods were approved by the IRB and overseen by Erin Whiting, a BYU professor in multicultural education. The time I spent in Mexico was very successful but it only accounts for a small portion of the total research project.

The three months I spent in Mexico were personally financed. I have since had to work to support myself through school and time has not permitted me to finish my

research. The ORCA grant will allow me to focus on the analysis of already collected data in order to prepare a manuscript for publication.

To analysis my data I will use a systematic approach of open coding to identify emergent themes. I have already translated and transcribed 9 of the 27 interviews I conducted. After the transcription process is complete, I plan to code each group separately, starting with teachers, parents, and then students, to identify emergent themes tied to their role in the education system. Next I will be able to cross examine the different groups to identify other themes. My preliminary finding will be reviews by a few of the same teachers I interviewed in Mexico via email. I will report my findings in an article using quotes from each of these groups to illustrate the norms, roles and expectations in Mexican education system.

Anticipated Academic Outcome

I anticipate presenting at my research at UCUR in February, 2014 as well as the MSE mentored research conference in April 2014. I also plan on submitting a research paper to teaching journals such as: AERA and Journal of Latino Education.

Qualifications

Before going to Mexico I completed 45 hours in High schools in Utah County observing the parent-teacher-student triad. This prepared me to notice the differences between the educational systems. I strengthened my inquiry skill though the BYU fields study preparation course and a graduate level inquiry methods course. Erin Whiting was my mentor throughout my Mexico experience and is very familiar with my research topic. She has published her own research on Latinos and education and from her experiences has been able to familiarize me with inductive research methods.

Project Timeline

December through March will be used to analyze the data and prepare for conference presentations in February and April. The final project will be submitted for publishing in June 2014.

BYU Mission

My project complies with the three main goals of the McKay school of education: To strengthen the youth, prepare educators and extend the benefits of research. My research will strengthen Mexican immigrant youth by providing contextual information so teachers know how to better help immigrant students and collaborate with their parents.

Scholarly Sources

- Chrispeels, J. H., & Rivero, E. (2001). Engaging Latino families for student success: How parent education can reshape parents' sense of place in the education of their children. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 76, 119-169.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C., & Trueba, H. (1991). *Crossing cultural borders: Education or immigrant families in America*. London: Falmer.
- Carrasquillo, A. L., & London, C. B. G. (1993). *Parent and schools: A source book*. New York: Garland.