

Latino history and culture

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Historians are still unclear on when the first Latinos appeared in North America. The most prevalent theory is that they were nomadic hunters who came from the Asia mainland and across the then frozen Bering Strait into Alaska. Regardless of their origins their main region is now the Americas, both North and South and it is expected that the Latino population in the United States will increase by 40% in the next ten years (US Census 2010). Their culture and society is steeped in tradition and understanding and appreciating their culture is imperative for any person working in the social services field.

Latino Traditions and Culture The Latino culture contains many diverse sub-cultures, however there is a common theme and religion that run through all Latino cultures. An important cultural trend that is prevalent among many Latinos is the closeness of the society; the lack of personal space in their culture is very important as they are more open to physical contact and showing affection. **Social Expectations** Time orientation tends to be different for Latinos who are generally more concerned with the present than with the future or planning ahead.

Due to this trend, it is often helpful to remind Latino's the day before an appointment or activity. This also relates to why many Latinos tend to focus more on work than advancing their education. Latino's see work as a way of receiving money now which is a way they can improve their lives now and if needed have enough to send money to relatives back in their countries of origin. However, advancing their education would mean that they make more in the future but less in the short term where their focus is.

The Latinofamily, including extended family, is the primary social unit, and source of support. Often Latino men who are in the United States come looking for a way to support their family's back in their home town. Even makingminimum wageor less here the amount that these Latino's send home can make a significant change for the families in their home country. This support of family also extends to those who come to the United States. Often when Latino's migrate to the United States they stay with family or friends who have previously immigrated. Respectand Interpersonal Relationships

Respect is important in Latino culture as it indicates appropriate behavior towards others based on age, gender, social and economic position and authority. Formality is seen as a sign of respect, including the use of suffixes such as Senor/ Don, Senora/ Dona. Another sign of respect in Latino culture is avoiding eye contact with authority figures. This is often confusing to Americans who see maintaining eye contact as a way of showing several things including respect, listening, understanding, and honesty. Latinos tend tostressthe importance of personal rather than institutional relationships.

Interpersonal contact is very important to develop trust when interacting with a person of Latino culture. It is common that Latino clients find it uncomfortable to leave messages in office voicemails for this reason. Trust is built on mutual respect over time. Showing personal interest in Latino individual may help establishing trust. Latino families are characterized by traditionalgender roles. Men are expected to have machismo or prominently exhibited masculinity this means men should be rational, strong, authoritarian, and independent.

Women are expected to be submissive, dependant, as well as take care of the children and the household. Many Latino's believe that events are meant to happen because of fate, a power that they cannot control. Many Latino clients will say " It's my cross to bear", or " If God wishes so". This fatalism may prevent them from seeking help. Because of this fatalism, spiritual healers play an important role in helping people with physical as well as mental concerns. Some Latinos believe that bewitching is often the cause of a change in behavior or illness.

Bewitching involves the use of magical acts and supernatural powers either by humans or supernatural beings. This may simply involve the casting of a spell. Religion and Traditions In general Latinos are very religious, 90% of Latinos are Catholic or Protestant. The church serves as a guide for perceptions and behaviors, influencing decisions and judgments. The church is often an important source for social support and interaction. Latino churches also teach the value of family and are often a place where there are Spanish language masses.

The communal nature of Latinos is represented by the use of food in the culture, sharing and offering food to guests is important and often relates to the holidays that Latino's often celebrate. Holidays are an important part of Latino culture, some holidays relate to the religious, while others relate to anniversaries of major battles in Mexican history. All the major catholic holidays are celebrated by Latinos such as Christmas, Lent and Easter as well as the Catholic rites of passage Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. The Day of the Virgin Guadalupe is December 12.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is Mexico's most popular religious and cultural image, with the titles " Queen of Mexico", " Empress of the Americas" and " Patroness of the Americas", both Miguel Hidalgo (in the Mexican War of Independence) and Emiliano Zapata (during the Mexican Revolution) carried flags bearing the Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Guadalupe Victoria, the first Mexican president changed his name in her honor. The shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City is the most visited Catholic shrine in the world. (Elizondo, 1997) The Day of the dead is another holiday celebrated by Latinos which is connected to the Catholic church.

November 2 is the Catholic holiday of All Souls Day, for Latinos it becomes The Day of the Dead. The holiday focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. Shrines and food are prepared and often brought to the cemetery where loved ones are buried. The flower type Marigold also play a part in the celebrations. Cinco de Mayo is a holiday held on May 5 that commemorates the Mexican army's unlikely victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

Mexican Independence Day had its bicentennial on September 16, 2010. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest, known for his progressive ideas, declared Mexican independence in the town of Dolores on September 16, 1810. History andImmigrationWaves of migrants came into the Americas starting around 50, 000 B. C. during the Pleistocene Ice Age, and the migration ended when a melting trend came about around 9, 000 B. C. The first Mexicans were hunter-gatherers until around 8000 B. C. when they started to breed Maize plants. In 1800 B. C. the most intensive Maize farming

began. Maize or corn, along with squash and beans were a staple of the early Mexican diet and are still a major part of Mexican diets today. ((Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999)). Between 1800 B. C. and 1521 A. D. complex cultures began to form, some becoming very advanced, such as the Maya, and the Aztec. These cultures along with others made significant technological, cultural, and scientific advances, such as building pyramid-temple complexes, sophisticated mathematics and astronomy, and the creation of the Long Count Calendar.

These civilizations had large cities and militaries and ruled over the Valley of Mexico until the Spanish Conquest began in 1517 A. D. ((Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999)). The Spanish Conquest Fifteenth century Spanish explorers discovered what we know today as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In the following years, Spain expanded its empire into the “new world” by force. The conquistadores had more advanced weapons and were thought to be gods by the indigenous people because they were unstoppable.

Spain claimed Mexico as part of its empire, although it took 200 more years to complete the conquest. Spanish culture spread from Mexico to Central and South America, and over what is now the southwest United States. Early Spanish settlements were established in what became Florida, New Mexico and California. ((Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999)). Conquistadores claimed treasures for the Spanish crown and brought Catholic missionaries to forcibly convert indigenous inhabitants. Some indigenous populations became extinct during this period.

Over the three centuries of Spanish rule less than 700, 000 Spaniards, mostly men settled in Mexico, this led to intermarriage of Spaniards and

indigenous natives that produced persons of mixed blood which the term Mestizos represents. The Spanish also brought diseases such as small pox which the indigenous peoples had no immunity to it and eventually died in the hundreds of thousands. (Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999). The Colonial Period: 1650-1810 During this period Mexico was a part of the much larger Viceroyalty of New Spain, which included Cuba, Puerto Rico, Central America, the south eastern United States, and the Philippines. Colonial law was destructive and unfair to the natives, as no Mexican native, even one with pure Spanish blood, could hold an administrative office. From an economic point of view, New Spain was administered not to compete with Spain in terms of exports, such as grapes and olives. Only two ports were open to foreign trade, one on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific. Foreigners had to obtain a special permit to travel in Mexico and few Mexicans were permitted to travel abroad. Few books were available and education was discouraged.

Mexican natives live in serfdom. ((Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999). Mexican Independence: 1807- 1910 In 1807 Napoleon I invaded Spain and placed his brother on the Spanish throne. Mexican conservatives and rich landowners who supported Spain's royal family objected to the liberal policies that Napoleon favored. Mexican liberals who wanted a democratic Mexico allied with the Mexican conservatives who wanted a Spanish monarch rather than Napoleon's brother, these two sides agreed only that Mexico must achieve independence. ((Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999).

Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest, known for his progressive ideas, declared Mexican independence in the town of Dolores on September 16,

1810. This declaration started a drawn out war that lasted 11 years, with liberating troops entering Mexico City in 1821. The Treaty of Cordoba, signed August 24, 1821 verified that Mexico was now a sovereign nation. After achieving freedom from Spain, Mexico struggled with the decision to be an empire or a republic. The Mexican government went through many changes often by co-ops during this period of instability.

One example of this is when federalists asked General Santa Anna to overthrow the current president, Bustamante. Santa Anna did this and later went on to serve as president 11 times, including when Texas declared itself a sovereign nation and later during the Mexican-American War. The Mexican-American war was when The United States occupied California and attacked Mexico City. The war ended with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which stated that Mexico must sell its northern territories to the United States for 15 million dollars. However, after war with The United States, Mexico's political unrest continued (Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999). The Mexican Revolution: 1910-1929 Many Mexican were unhappy with their government, so after blatant election fraud, from an incumbent president, riots broke out and the revolution began.

The revolutionary forces led by, among others, Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and Venustiano Carranza defeated the Federal Army, but later disagreed on how to organize the government. These disagreements became a political standoff that led to a violent struggle for control that lasted for more than 20 years. The Constitution created in 1917 still governs Mexico today. (Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999) The PRI and the rise of Contemporary Mexico: 1929- present In 1929 the National Mexican Party was

formed by the president, General Plutarco Elias Calles. The National Mexican Party convinced most of the remaining revolutionary generals to hand over their personal armies to the Mexican Army, this act ended the Mexican revolution. Later renamed Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) this new party ruled Mexico for the rest of the 20th century. The PRI is referred to as the three-legged stool, in reference to Mexican workers, peasants, and bureaucrats.

The PRI did not lose a senate seat until 1988 or a gubernatorial race until 1989. It was not until July 2, 2000 that Vicente Fox of the opposition, National Action Party, won the presidency, ending the PRI's 71 year hold on the presidency (Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999). The PRI achieved economic growth and prosperity until the late 1960s when the party's management of the economy led to several crises and political unrest that led to the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968. More economic crisis in 1976 and again in 1982 led to the nationalization of Mexico's banks.

In 1994, Mexico became a full member of the North American Free Trade Agreement, this strengthened Mexico's economy. Mexico now has a free market economy that has entered the trillion dollar class (Meyer, Sherman & Deeds, 1999). Mexico is a major drug producing nation, an estimated 90% of the cocaine smuggled into the United States every year moves through Mexico. Mexico is also a major supplier of heroin, ecstasy, and the largest foreign supplier of marijuana and methamphetamines to the US market. Major drug syndicates control the majority of drug trafficking in the country.

The Mexican government conducts the largest independent illicit crop eradication program in the world, however, Mexico continues to be the

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primary shipment point for U. S. bound cocaine from South America. (CIA. gov, 2010). On the other hand there are also many negative adjustments for Latinos who migrate to the United States. Stigmatization of Latino immigrants is common in the United States; Americans often assume that anyone who is Latino and doesn't speak English perfectly is an illegal immigrant and look down on them. Institutionalized racism is another negative adjustment factor as well.

Laws are being passed in Arizona that require Latinos to carry documentation of their citizen status at all times. Latinos are often segregated from other parts of the community because they live in the poorer neighborhoods with many other immigrants. The language difference often hinders communication and keeps Latinos in lower class communities, where others speak Spanish. Because Latinos are oriented on the present time they focus more on work and education which could increase their socio-economic status and help their adjustment to The United States.

There is a lack of support for education that would help immigrants learn English or would help Latino children prepare for higher education. Because of this lack of education many Latinos have low level or under skilled jobs. Latinos: Oppression and Marginalization Latinos are one of the largest minority groups in America. The number of Latinos has steadily increased over the last forty years in the United States (Bergad & Klein, 2010). Census data from the year 1970 indicates that there were 9. million Latinos in the United States, and it is estimated that the census data from 2010 will indicate that there are 48. 7 million Latinos living in the US. Census projections for the year 2050 indicate that there will be 102. 6 million Latinos

in America (US Census Bureau, 2010). Although the numbers of Latinos has steadily increased and are expected to continue to rise, the level of marginalization and oppression they endure on a regular basis has not changed substantially over the years.

Contributing factors to the oppression and marginalization of Latinos in American society include limited or lack of opportunities in the areas of economic stability, fair access to housing, marginal or no access to affordable healthcare, poor access and quality of education, and limited political representation. Latinos are marginalized based on economic factors, which play a predominant role in their ability to achieve a higher standard of living. Obtaining higher paying jobs, adequate housing and education for themselves and their children is often much more difficult than it is for other populations in America.

As reported above, Latinos often migrate to America with the desire and hope to earn a living wage to support themselves and their families. Unfortunately, Latinos often work in service jobs which offer low wages and few benefits. They are often hired for jobs such as landscaping, janitorial, and various service jobs which require little to no formal training or education. These jobs are considered menial jobs in our society and often fail to meet the basic needs of the workers, let alone offer disposable income that can be used to obtain a greater quality of life.

Our group interviewed two men who are undocumented workers. These are some of the most marginalized and oppressed Latinos in America due to the fact that they have no documents indicating that they are able to work in the United States legally. Economic reasons were cited by both men; one who

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was in his mid-forties and the other who was in his early twenties, as factors for their immigration to the United States. Both men indicated that the job opportunities were far greater for them in America than in their home countries of El Salvador and Honduras.

These men indicated that they are fully aware that they are discriminated against and oppressed here in the United States because of their legal status, and both men reported feeling powerless to change the system without obtaining legal status to work freely in America. They reported subminimum wages and long hours as landscapers. They also reported that they often get taken advantage of by those "hiring" them for the day as laborers, as sometimes they are not paid at all and they feel they have no recourse under the legal system.

The wages they do make are barely sufficient for them to live on, so they find themselves living in large group situations with other immigrants to pool their resources. They report that communal living is their only option for survival at this time, especially during the current economic depression. The few dollars they may have each month after their own basic needs are met are sent to their families in their homelands to assist them in meeting their basic living needs.

They reported that they would need approximately two thousand dollars each to become documented, which is a tremendous and impossible amount of money for them to save considering the meager earnings they have each month. The poor overall economic conditions of Latinos have a severely limiting effect on their ability to purchase a home and enjoy home ownership, which is touted as part of "success" here in America. Research

indicates that Hispanic or Latino households have less than ten cents for every dollar in wealth owned by white households.

Growing wage inequality makes it very difficult to emerge from the cycle of poverty or to accumulate assets and increase their net worth (News Batch, 2008, p. 1). Only one in four Latino households owns no assets other than a car or unsecured debt (Lowery, 2010, p. 1). In 2007, the median non-Hispanic white family reported \$171,200 in net worth versus only \$28,300 for non-white and Hispanic families. Latinos have been far more likely than whites to receive higher-priced loans, when they are given loans, and carry higher debt relative to their incomes.

Loan approval is difficult for most Latinos in good economic times, and almost impossible in recessionary times. Communities of color commonly experience higher crime rates and lower tax bases than predominately white neighborhoods. Latinos are a relatively young group or population. They are not as highly educated, and they tend to be concentrated in high cost regions of the country, such as New York and California, where homeownership can be less attainable, or it forces them into low income neighborhoods. As well, in these areas, Latinos are much more likely to be immigrants (Dugan, 2004).

In the current economic conditions the rates of foreclosures disproportionately impact communities of color. The income gap continues to deepen in America between the wealthy and the poor at an alarming rate, with the poorer class increasing in numbers with each passing year. Research indicates that these economic and social disparities stand to grow worse in the years to come, which further oppresses Latinos and other

people of color. Not only are poor economic opportunities and access to adequate housing real issues for Latinos in America, health care is a serious concern.

Many Latinos work in menial jobs earning minimum wage or less. These jobs often do not offer health insurance benefits and the cost of purchasing health insurance is prohibitive for many Latinos and their families. Often they must rely upon government programs such as Medicaid, which is a needs based health insurance program for the indigent. This in turn leads to negative perceptions of Latinos "draining the system" and further fuels oppressive and discriminatory acts against them. Other contributing factors facing Latinos in the area of health related issues are poor diets and access to adequate nutrition.

Research indicates that there are a disproportionately high number of fast food establishments in economically depressed areas in which predominately people of color reside (Freeman, 2007, p. 2225). This leads to increased health risks, including heart disease, obesity, and diabetes in these populations. Low income families often cannot afford healthy, nutritious foods from grocery stores, and grocery stores are often not easily found in low income areas, whereas fast food establishments are plentiful (Freeman, 2007). This is a marginalizing factor that often goes unnoticed by society.

Between 1991 and 2001, the obesity rate among Latinos has gone up from 11.6% to 23.7% within the United States. 23% of Hispanic men are obese, and 27.5% of women are obese. These statistics are higher than those of non-Hispanics within the U. S. Also, Latinos are twice more likely to have diabetes and to suffer from various diabetes-related illnesses such as kidney and eye

disease. Studies have found that these ailments can stem from poor eating habits, and tend to increase with immigration (Arizona State University, 2010).

Lack of access to quality educational opportunities and support is another contributing factor to the oppression and marginalization of Latinos in American society. The high school dropout rate among Latinos is higher than any other minority group, with only four in ten high school aged students obtaining a high school diploma. The statistics for the Latino high school dropout rate in Nevada is currently one of the highest in the nation with only 42% of Latino students earning a high school diploma (Sitwell, 2010).

Young men still have higher dropout rates than young women, however the gap is closing in this area, and society is seeing more young women exit the school setting without graduating from high school, which sets them up for a life time of menial employment opportunities and low wages. As well, research indicates that by age 26, thirty eight percent of white high school graduates have obtained a bachelor's degree, in comparison to 18 percent of Hispanic high school graduates. The U. S. Department of Education identifies seven undergraduate attributes negatively associated with postsecondary degree attainment.

The risk characteristics are delayed college entry, part-time attendance, financial independent status, single parent status, having dependents, not having a regular high school diploma, and working full-time. The average number of risk attributes for Latino undergraduates is 2.4, in comparison to 2.0 for white undergraduates. Often the level of education individuals obtain is directly related to their quality of life as they are better able to afford a

higher standard of living with increased education. Many Latinos do not have the basic education required to ensure financial security in American society.

One of the major barriers for Latinos obtaining adequate educational levels is in their use and understanding of the English language. For many Latino families, English is often a second language which makes it difficult for learning to take place in the American culture. Additionally, the recent political campaigns here in Nevada offered a clear indication that political discrimination is rampant in our society. The recent negative political ads ran by candidate Sharon Angle were a blatant example of institutional discrimination against Latinos.

The television ads ran by Sharon Angle for Senate showed Latinos dressed up as gang bangers with a narrator warning " waves of illegal aliens are streaming across our borders, joining violent gangs and forcing families to live in fear". These types of negative ads only enforce the long standing stereotypes about Latinos. The Latino population is split over whether immigrant and native-born Latinos are working together to achieve common political goals. About half (45%) say they are, and half (46%) say they are not.

Both the native born (who comprise 47% of the adult Latino population) and the foreign born (who comprise 53%) are roughly equally divided on their perceptions of political solidarity. On every level, from the micro, mezzo and macro levels, Latinos face inequities as a result of our social system that supports it. As social workers we must be aware that the issues of oppression, marginalization and discrimination against Latinos are a result of a social system that promotes and justifies marginalizing others. We must

look oward changing the systems that support oppression, rather than looking to change the people who are victims of the system. Push and Pull factors Latinos travel and migration to the United States can be understood in terms of pull and push factors, these factors that would pull Latinos to the United States include the Network theory, those who migrated first would help their family and friends come to US, who would then help others, and so on. The United States has higher living standards than some places in Mexico where some places the water is not safe to drink among other factors.

The United States has higher wages, even those who make less than minimum wage make more than they could make in some areas of Mexico. Factors that push Latinos out of their native country include shortage of jobs, unemployment, and low wages. Political conflicts are common in some areas of Latin America as well as government conflicts with drug rings, Latinos do not want to be caught in the middle of a conflict or have their family caught and so they migrate to the United States. These conflicts can also lead to forced displacement, especially in Central America where there is insufficient lands.

Some countries in Latin America violatethehuman rights, have high levels of corruption and crime. In Latin American countries there is often persistent poverty and parts of the population go hungry at times. Positive-Adjustment Factors Latinos have some positive adjustment factors for migration, such as a strong desire for a better life for their family. They have supportive families, especially when some family members have previously migrated. These family members help in many ways including lodging, food, networking, finding jobs, and financially.

Friends also help in the ways mentioned above. With Latino's becoming one of the largest minorities in the United States they are beginning to have a significant political voice. Negative- Adjustment Factors One the other hand there are also many negative adjustment for Latino's who migrate to the United States. Stigmatization of Latino immigrants is common in the United States; Americans often assume that anyone who is Latino and doesn't speak English perfectly is an illegal immigrant and look down on them. Institutionalized racism is another negative adjustment factor as well.

Laws are being passed in Arizona that require Latino's to carry documentation of their citizen status at all times. Latino's are often segregated from other parts of the community because they live in the poorer neighborhoods with many other immigrants. The language difference often hinders communication and keeps Latino's in lower class communities, where others speak Spanish. Because Latino's are oriented on the present time they focus more on work the education which could increase their socio-economic status and help their adjustment to The United States.

There is a lack of support for education that would help immigrants learn English or would help Latino children prepare for higher education. Because of this lack of education many Latino's have low level or under skilled jobs. Society looks to place blame on individuals and groups in hard economic times rather than examine and blame hard times on a dysfunctional systems which is inherently imbalanced and discriminatory. A profound example of "blaming" can be witnessed with the recent passage of the Arizona law against Latino immigrants.

These types of laws justify institutional discrimination and oppression against minorities (Goodwin, 2010). The vast majority of Latinos-79%-disapprove of the first-of-its-kind Arizona law enacted this year that gives police broad powers to check the immigration status of people. By contrast, the general population approves of the measure by a ratio of two-to-one. This amounts to racial profiling, and would not be tolerated by other ethnic groups. Research further indicates that 25 more states may try to pass similar anti-illegal-immigration laws next year (Goodwin, 2010).

Misunderstanding of Cultural Values There are several misunderstandings of cultural values. This is due to a lack of bilingual staff in agencies and organizations which lead to misunderstandings of cultural beliefs and values in our society. Language barriers: Lack of interpreters or bilingual staff available, Legal Status and Fear of deportation are many causes of lack of communication from Hispanics to service providers. Many of the Hispanics will be not be eligible for services for being undocumented, Lack of knowledge on how the US health care system works.

They may think it's cheaper to go to the ER than to a PCP, Many of the Hispanic families won't have access to health insurance coverage. Latino children who are not US citizens or legal residents will not be eligible for the health insurance state programs, Lack of knowledge on how the US educational and legal system works. Hispanics may think they can't file for protective orders or custody, Lack of information that leads to misconceptions about resources in the community. Many Hispanics may think that they are not eligible for WIC, Food Stamps, etc. This is another misunderstanding but for many Hispanics a large majority who have children born in the United States or what is known by

many as “ Anchor Babies” may be eligible for government related services and assistance. Practice Issues As a service provide it is important to incorporate a positive environment to all cultures. Any and all services such as written materials and audiovisual tools should be presented in Spanish when available. When working in the Latino Culture it is important to follow a set of guidelines that focus on what makes the Latino Culture and those within it comfortable.

As a Service provider using the guidelines below will help to effectively work within this culture. • The effectiveness of word-of-mouth referrals to the center should be recommended. It is not uncommon that referrals are made because a neighbor or family member had been under treatment at the center. Once individuals and families are aware that the center offers low-cost mental-health services in Spanish and that the services offered are respectful of Latino values and beliefs, the good reputation becomes a viable source for future referrals and treatment compliance. validation, generational life reviews, and ceremonies and rituals.

When working within the Latino culture it is important to focus on appropriate ways that incorporate an understanding of another’s culture. There are ways you can promote a comfortable environment using the guidelines below. One can have a clearer understanding of what can be done and what cannot. ? Strive to spell and pronounce names correctly. ? Don’t assume all Latino’s are Mexican ask of origin and recognize differences among Latino culture. ? Avoid asking if a person speaks “ Mexican or” Puerto Rican”. Spanish is Spanish. ? Use qualified interpreters. Children should never be asked to act as interpreters. Try to learn Spanish. Speaking in

Spanish facilitates a greater level of comfort. ? Identify and address the decision-maker or spokesperson, the Patriarch and Matriarch. ? Be formal in interactions with older Hispanic. ? Encourage the family to ask questions. Explain thoroughly and confirm understanding. ? Check to make sure recommendations will fit into the family lifestyle. ? And finally listening is the key ? Use Spanish words you know when comfortable. Latino Education In our current educational system there have been some studies that discuss the differences with Mexican American children and American children.

To better understand these differences one must first identify that Mexican American Children have a different learning style. There are four important aspects that can improve the way that these children learn. These four aspects are; Environmental Learning Style, Emotional Learning Style, Physiological and Sociological Learning Style. They may be homesick for their families, friends, language, and customs. Economic survival is the primary concern for immigrant families. Teachers need to recognize that it is likely that the children of these newly arrived Hispanic families will be motivated, hard-working students.

Their parents have sacrificed their old life to provide a better life for them and their children. Immigrant children might suffer from culture shock when arriving to the United States. They may be homesick for their families, friends, language, and customs. Many times the need for economic survival is the primary concern for immigrant families. Empowering Teachers Teachers need to develop a multicultural curriculum that celebrates Mexican Americans for their Mexican American students. The following contributed to the effectiveness of teaching Mexican American students: ?

Teachers who accepted full responsibility for helping students. ? Teachers who were extremely caring and nurturing to students. ? The encouragement of collaborative learning. ? Student access to a wide variety of learning materials. ? If allowed in a teacher's school district, the utilization of both Spanish and English when needed to enhance learning. Conclusion Latinos are politically marginalized and oppressed in the United States. Inequity is the virtually inevitable result of two powerful forces: prejudice on the level of the individual and political imbalance on the social level.

Through Building Effective Communications, Increase Partnerships between schools and Latino Hispanic Communities, Establish linkages and dialogue, and Seed new initiatives that foster change with immigration reform. We can begin building a better foundation for current and future immigrants. Research indicates that when sources of inequity are built into the social system, resulting differences are neither trivial nor discrete. Such inequities persist over time and space. Often, the inequities and oppression is blamed on the discriminated-against (Power Inequities by M.

Dugan). Mexican American students face many challenges. Many are from poor backgrounds. Their families may lack the communication skills, knowledge, and experience to take advantage of educational, cultural, and social opportunities. Some Mexican American students are newly arrived immigrants who may experience culture shock and limited English proficiency. However, with proper education that includes caring teachers who have high expectations for these students, Mexican American students can become high achieving, successful adults.

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