Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

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Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Israel Velez, EdD

University of Connecticut, 2020

Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

This qualitative study used Youth Participatory Action Research and Community Cultural Wealth Framework (Yosso, 2005) to understand how Vamos a La Universidad (VALU), a high school bilingual college preparation program, impacts first-generation Latinx ninth grade students’ community cultural wealth and understanding about college. This study expands our understanding of how Latinx students interpret the college preparation process after participating in a college preparation program and emphasizes the importance of students’ cultural background and social contacts in their college readiness process. This study proposes new initiatives to add to Latinx students’ college learning process and increase the students’ interest in continuing a college career.
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

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Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

The education system marginalizes Latinx students (Henry & Stahl, 2017; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), perpetuating “the enduring inequities that undermine student achievement” (Larson, 2010, p. 327), and limiting access to an equal college preparation process (Mitchell, Tienda, National Research Council, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences Education Committee, & Committee on Transforming Our Common Destiny, 2006). Schooling structures offer a curriculum based on standards that place Students of Color as low-ability and non-college-bound students (Smith-Maddox & Wheelock, 1995) and marginalizes Latinx students where they do not have the same access to college and career information as White middle-class students (Castro, 2013). As a result, Students of Color are less likely to enroll in rigorous college preparation courses necessary to acquire the content knowledge and higher order thinking skills required to be college ready (Bryant, 2015).

Many schools are not providing an equal education that prepares Students of Color with the college-level work needed to earn a college degree (Venezia, Kirst & Antonio, 2004). Latinx students face multiple barriers during the pre-college phase such as poor curriculum (Deil-Amen, 2015; Taningco, Mathew & Pachon, 2008), under-funded schools (Nieto, 2004), and inexperienced or noncertified teachers that limit access to an equal college preparation process (Barnes & Slate, 2014; Hispanic Students - ACT Center for Equity in Learning, 2015; Mitchell, et al., 2006; Taningco, Mathew & Pachon, 2008). Because of these limitations, Students of Color are not prepared to meet the job market demands that require a postsecondary education to obtain high-paying jobs (Gándara, 2010; McArdle, 2004; Murray, 2012; Cates & Schaeffle, 2011).

Unequal college preparation creates an achievement gap and reduces Latinx students’ opportunities for a postsecondary education, better job opportunities and social mobility (Barnes
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& Slate, 2014; Mitchel et al., 2006). The education system discriminates against Latinx students, providing an education based on low expectations in regards to Latinx students’ potential to continue a college career that discourages Latinx students from continuing a postsecondary education (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002) and creates discrimination patterns that limit resources for Latinx students and families (Hill, 2008). Some of these discrimination patterns are an inefficient college-going culture, an unequal curriculum, and poor learning skills that interfere with Students of Color’ college preparation (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011; Murray, 2012). Roderick, Coca and Nagaoka (2011) indicate that a college-going culture promotes norms for college attendance and provide the resources to navigate the college preparation process. Despite the fact that Students of Color aspire to a postsecondary education, many do not have the knowledge and skills needed to success in college (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013).

This study provides new perspectives on how Latinx students’ participation in a college preparation program can provide the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them for college. This research made use of a preexisting college preparation program to offers Latinx students the opportunity to experience a college orientation at a college campus, participate in focus groups to reflect on their college experiences, and provide feedback to propose new initiatives to improve their college readiness process.

Purpose of the Study

As it stands, our current schooling system is not providing an equal college preparation process for Latinx students (Schneider, Martinez & Ownes, 2006). Issues of limited access and inequity have long affected the educational experience of Latinx students (Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004). Students of Color do not receive an equal education that provides the knowledge and
skills necessary to be college ready, detaching them from their education (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Because of these segregated experiences, a learning opportunity gap has been created - one that reduces the opportunities for a postsecondary education for Students of Color (Steele, 2011). The learning opportunity gap is the result of cultural conflicts between Students of Color and White teachers, teachers’ low expectations and assumptions, and exclusion of Students of Color from the curriculum (Milner, 2012). Moreover, the education system does not offer an inclusive learning environment to facilitate access to college information for low-income and first-generation Latinx students (Hill, 2008; Deil-Amen, 2015). The lack of academic knowledge, learning skills, and the insufficient information students receive about college requirements and financial aid contribute to the lower rates of college enrollment for low-income and first-generation Latinx students (Kane, 1999; Perna, 2004; St. John, Musoba, Simmons & Chung, 2002; Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, 2004).

Latinx students are educated in a segregated system that alienates them from receiving an equal college preparation (Mitchel et al., 2006). Schools do not offer an equal curriculum and a college readiness process to prepare Latinx students with the knowledge and skills to continue a postsecondary education (Cates & Schaefle, 2011). Every Student Succeeds (ESS) law (Act, 2015) requires that every student receives an equal education, but the school practices oppress Latinx students denying an equal education that meets their educational needs (Roderick, Melissa, Coca, Vanessa, & Nagaoka, Jenny, 2011; Taningco, Mathew & Pachon, 2008). Schools use selective college tracking practices based on teachers and guidance counselors’ assumptions about what students are college material (Sablich, 2016). These practices reduce Latinx students’ opportunities to continue a college career because they do not have the content knowledge needed to meet college demands (Sablich, 2016). For this reason, there is a need to find ways to
identify how Latinx students interpret the college readiness process and what is missing in Latinx students’ college preparation so we can meet their individual college learning needs.

The purpose of this qualitative youth participatory action research is to explore how Vamos a La Universidad (VALU), a bilingual college preparation program at Justice Technical High School (JTHS), influences Latinx students’ understanding of the college readiness process. The purpose of this non-traditional college preparation program where Latinx students learn about college from 9th to 12th grade was to influence Latinx students to continue a postsecondary education and persist in college once there (Karp & Hughes, 2008; Hill, 2008). This study expands our understanding of how Latinx students interpret the college preparation process after participating in a college preparation program.

VALU was created in 2014 to help Latinx students and their families learn about postsecondary education. VALU address the lack of access to information and learning opportunities in Latinx students’ college readiness process. As a teacher at JTHS, I designed this program to introduce first-generation Latinx students to college students, faculty, and administrators. This program creates a collaborative process among school administration, staff, colleges and community members to introduce Latinx students and their families to college life and to provide information about college requirements. Every year, all Latinx students and their parents are invited to participate in this program to learn about college.

**Research Questions**

What are the college aspirations, cultural connections, and college learning experiences for first-generation Latinx ninth grade students participating in a college readiness program?

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1 Pseudonym
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How does VALU, a bilingual high school college preparation program, influence ninth grade Latinx students' community cultural wealth and their college readiness process?

**Literature Review**

To have a better understanding of Latinx students’ college preparation process, I divided my review of the literature into three sections. The first section presents what college readiness means and the requirements needed to be college ready. The second section discusses how school practices affect Latinx student’s education. The third section explains what college readiness programs are currently offered to Latinx students.

**What is College Readiness?**

In this section, I discuss what college readiness is, and what is needed to be college ready. College readiness is “the level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing, general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfers to a baccalaureate program” (Conley, 2007, p. 5). College and career readiness ensure that students will be prepared for college-level courses and for jobs, as required by many employers (Mills, 2012).

Conley (2014) identifies four keys necessaries to be college ready: cognitive strategies, content knowledge, learning skills and techniques, and transition knowledge and skills (see Appendix 1 for further explanation). According to Conley (2007), students need these four keys in order to have mastery of knowledge and skills in academic courses, to internalize academic behaviors, and successfully participate in postsecondary opportunities through advanced coursework and work-based learning. Although academic knowledge and learning skills are needed to be college ready, schooling structures do not provide advanced-level courses and
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teacher support to prepare Latinx students for college (Hill, 2008; Martinez & Deil-Amen, 2015; Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011; Taningco, Mathew & Pachon, 2008).

Latinx students need an equitable K12 curriculum and qualified teachers to meet students’ college learning needs (Bailey & Finney, 2011). The school structure is responsible for providing learning opportunities that prepare students with the knowledge and strategies necessary to graduate from a postsecondary institution (Center, 2011, p. 9), but these learning opportunities are limited for Students of Color (Cates & Schaefle, 2011; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). College readiness requires high content knowledge and learning skills to meet college work demands (Conley, 2007). Without an advance-college preparation process and educators’ support, students cannot demonstrate college readiness (Hill, 2008; Deil-Amen, 2015; Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011; Taningco, Mathew & Pachon, 2008). As part of my study, I wanted to further investigate how Latinx students make sense of the college readiness process using their college learning experiences.

School Practices

In this section, I will show how school practices do not provide an equal education with the intention of limiting access to college knowledge and learning skills for Students of Color (Cates & Schaefle, 2011; Sablich, 2016; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Under ESS (Act, 2015), every school district is responsible to ensure that all students be taught to high academic standards to prepare them for college and careers. Under section 1003(f) of ESS, every school district must “demonstrate the strongest commitment to using funds to enable the lowest-performing schools to improve student achievement and student outcomes” (Act, 2015, p.17). Not all school districts adhere to this mandate and Students of Color are educated in educational patterns where middle- and upper-income White students are more likely to meet college requirements and attend
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college than low-income Students of Color (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). The school structure creates educational patterns based on a poor curriculum and tracking practices that exclude Students of Color from advanced-level courses needed to be college ready (Sablich, 2016). As a result, Students of Color’ college aspirations are not translating into college enrollment (Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011).

School practices create patterns that link Student of Color to the labor market and limit resources that help them and their parents prepare for college (Hill, 2008). The school structures’ ineffective college-going culture (Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011) and an unequal curriculum reduce the possibility for Latinx students to meet college requirements (Cates & Schaefle, 2011). For example, the 2017 ACT scores show that only 9 percent of low-income Students of Color have an equal college preparation compared to White students (Anderson, 2017; Santiago, Galdeano, & Taylor, 2015). Because of school segregation practices, only a small number of Latinx students are ready to enroll in college-level courses (Reeves & Halikias, 2017; Tierney, Sablan, & Strayhorn, 2014).

School practices limit relationships between students and educators (Milner, 2012) that can increase the number of Latinx students continuing a postsecondary education. School practices create a communication barrier that disengages Latinx students from their college aspirations (Acevedo-Gil, 2017). These practices also limit learning opportunities to develop inclusive trusting relationships that value Latinx students’ social and cultural background and provide the college knowledge and skills necessary to support students’ college preparation (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Cates & Schaefle, 2011; Fránquiz, Salazar & Denicolo, 2011). Students need relationships and educational learning experiences where they can share their community wealth, learn from others, and make them part of their education (Yosso, 2005). Relationships
create social ties to transmit resources and knowledge that benefit students’ learning process (Monkman, Ronald, & Theramene, 2005). Teacher-student relationships are key to understand and appreciate the students’ culture and college aspirations and motivate them to continue a college career (Monkman, Ronald, & Theramene, 2005). Research indicates that teacher-student relationships provide a learning environment that supports and prepare students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to meet college requirements (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Gándara, 2010; Fránquiz, Salazar & Denicolo, 2011; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez & Cooper, 2009). For this reason, there is a need to establish relationships of trust and supportive programs to prepare Latinx students for college.

**College Readiness Programs**

In this section, I will explain what college readiness programs offer to Latinx students. College readiness programs are an important part of Students of Color’ education that offer resources and learning opportunities missing in their education. College readiness programs support students with limited access to resources to succeed in a conventional educational setting (McElroy & Armesto, 1998; Percy-Calaff, 2009; Tierney, 2004). The school practices are not equitably distributed to help Latinx students understand their college preparation (Monkman, Ronald, & Theramene, 2005). For this reason, the school authorities need to provide innovative programs and policies that support young people’s educational pathways (Hooker & Brand, 2010, p.76). As a response to an unequal college preparation process, the federal government created the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), Public Law 89–329, to make higher education more accessible to low-income Students of Color (U.S. Department of Education, 1978). The HEA provides grants to institutions to create initiatives to improve students’ education, support teacher preparation, and offer financial aid opportunities (U.S. Department of Education, 1978).
With this in mind, educational institutions have created college readiness programs to provide a comprehensive and systematic learning environment that includes Students of Color’ culture and family in the learning process (Percy-Calaff, 2009; Tierney, 2004). After HEA, Federal TRIO programs such as Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (Gear Up) were created to prepare first-generation and low-income students to become college ready (U.S. Department of Education, 2011; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). These programs aim to promote college readiness and encourage underrepresented students to pursue a postsecondary education by providing academic and counseling supports in a learning environment that appreciate and value students’ bilingual skills and cultural background (Cates & Schaefle, 2011).

For instance, Upward Bound college preparation programs were the first programs to serve high school students who have less college learning experiences (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). Upward Bound programs are multi-year programs that provide academic, counseling, and tutoring services along students’ cultural background to enhance their regular high school education (Cahalan, Curtin, Research Triangle Institute & United States. Office of Postsecondary Education. Office of Federal TRIO Programs, 2004; McElroy& Armesto, 1998). These programs provide support with college enrollment by helping students with the college admission process and college entrance examination (Cahalan et al., 2004; McElroy& Armesto, 1998). In addition, these programs expose students to full-time summer college experiences where they continue their college preparation (Cahalan et al., 2004). These college experiences prepare students with mathematics and science knowledge to help them with the college admission process and pursue them to continue postsecondary careers in these fields (McElroy & Armesto, 1998).
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Talent Search, on the other hand, is a college preparation program that focus on “students who have academic potential for college, but who may need extra information and help in navigating the financial aid and college application process” (Constantine, Martin, Silva & Myers, 2006). Talent Search provides academic, career, and financial counseling to students from similarly disadvantage backgrounds to be college ready and continue a postsecondary education (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). In addition, it helps students with the high school course selection process and financial aid to pay for college through applications for grants, loans, and scholarships, and orients students to different types of colleges and the college application process (Constantine, Seftor, Martin, Silva & Myers, 2006).

GEAR UP college preparation program focus on academic performance improvement, resulting in decrease behavior-related problems and reduce truancy and absenteeism (Yampolskaya, Massey & Greenbaum, 2006). The program educates parents and students about opportunities for postsecondary education, builds intervention to identify students’ strengths and needs, and tailors services to address them (National Council for Community and Education Partnership, 2018). The program used “various strategies, including ongoing recruiting of students at risk for low academic performance; offering a variety of services including tutoring, conflict resolution sessions, social activities; and seeking parent, teacher, and school staff involvement” (Yampolskaya, Massey & Greenbaum, 2006, p.459). This program creates a collaborative process between K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, local and state education entities, business and community-based organizations (National Council for Community and Education Partnership, 2018; Yampolskaya, Massey & Greenbaum, 2006).

The literature review shows how unequal school practices affect Latinx students’ college readiness process and limit students’ opportunities to continue a postsecondary education. In
addition, the literature review helps to understand the role TRIO programs have on Students of Color’s college preparation process. Trio programs offer new initiatives to provide equal content knowledge, skills and learning experiences missing in Students of Color’s education because of unequal school practices. These programs provide information and knowledge necessary to be college ready, but it is important to learn how Latinx students are using knowledge and skills learned to prepare for college. This study engages Latinx students in a collaborative learning process among students, educators, and a college where we can learn about the college readiness process from the students’ standpoint. This collaborative process can help explore how Latinx students understand the college preparation process after participating in VALU. For this reason, my study adds to the already established line of inquiry on Latinx’s college readiness to bring new perspectives about how students’ college learning experiences can help to provide better college preparation services and resources to support Latinx students’ college preparation process and improve VALU.

**Theoretical Framework**

I used Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) (Yosso, 2005) to understand how VALU influences Latinx students’ college aspirations, understanding about college, and community cultural wealth. As part of my research, CCW was used to support my argument that Latinx students can have a better understanding about college if they have an active role in the decision-making process. CCW helped me learn how Latinx students use previous college knowledge and experiences to understand the college preparation process. In the next two sections, I describe the role of CCW in Latinx students’ education and how storytelling is used to explore the students’ learning experiences.
Community Cultural Wealth

CCW was used in my research to analyze how Latinx students obtain college information and how they use this information to be college ready. CCW is an extension of CRT that centers on students’ capital wealth. CCW studies the cultural knowledge of Student of Color, their social skills, and their social contacts that often are ignored by the education system (Yosso, 2005). CCW helps researchers visualize how multiple forms of cultural wealth influence Students of Color (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) divided CCW into six types of capital: aspirational, referring to student’s hopes and dreams; linguistic, referring to the student’s language and communication skills; familial, referring to personal and social resources; social, referring to peers and social contacts; navigational, referring to student’s skills to maneuver within social institutions; and resistance, referring to the empowerment to fight for equal rights. Researchers show that student’s hopes, dreams, language and communication skills, personal and social resources, peers, and social contacts provide content knowledge and skills necessary to be college ready (Pérez & McDonough, 2008; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000).

Storytelling. As an extension of CRT, CCW uses storytelling to center subordinated groups and create a dialog that illustrates concepts, ideas, and experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Storytelling gives the opportunity to view into the reality of marginalized groups “by showing the possibilities beyond the ones they live and to show that they are not alone in their position” (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 328). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) show that storytelling engaged students in an open discussion where they can listen to other biographies similar to theirs. Daisey and Kampfner (2002) indicate that “biographies help students understand that things can be other than they are, thus providing them with expanded possibilities and the ability to imagine new stories and endings for themselves” (p. 581). Storytelling helps students visualize
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the world around them and within them (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002). I used storytelling in my study to interpret and understand how Latinx students’ community cultural wealth and college experiences influence their college preparation.

I used CCW and storytelling to explore what college knowledge and skills Latinx students have before participating in VALU. I searched for what forms of cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) Latinx students use to prepare for college. In addition, I used CCW to understand how Latinx students made sense of the college readiness process after participating in a college preparatory event organized by VALU.

Methodology

I selected Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to expand my understanding of how CCW support first-generation Latinx students’ college readiness process. I created a collaborative action plan that gave Latinx students an active role in their college readiness process. The students participated in focus groups and a photovoice activity to reflect on their college learning experiences. I used students’ reflections to learn how their participation in VALU contributes to their college learning process. YPAR and CCW helped me explore how students make sense of the college readiness process, what issues affect their college learning process, and how VALU influence Latinx students’ community cultural wealth.

Youth Participatory Action Research

I conducted a qualitative study using YPAR to understand how VALU impacts Latinx students’ community cultural wealth and understanding about college. YPAR is an extension of Participatory Action Research (PAR) where students actively participate in the research process (Cammarota & Fine, 2010). PAR is used by researchers to search for ways to improve the student’s educational needs (Sherwin, 2011; Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez, & Morgan, 2010), but the
students do not have an active role in the decision-making process (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010). YPAR differs from PAR because the researcher develops a collaborative action plan where students participate in the decision-making process (Cammarota & Fine, 2010). As researcher and coordinator of VALU, I used YPAR to create a closer relationship with Latinx students, have an open discussion with them about college, and develop an action plan that can include students’ perspectives into the college readiness process. The students’ voice brought an authentic reflection on how VALU influences their college readiness process and their community cultural wealth. The students’ voices were present in the searching and developing of solutions that could be used to improve their college preparation process and VALU’s services.

YPAR creates a progressive and public learning process by doing, and making mistakes, to adapt to changing situations that can improve students’ education (Livingstone, Celemencki & Calixte, 2014). YPAR findings provide informational resources that educational institutions, community organization, and researchers can use to create changes in Latinx students’ education. This progressive learning process can help to implement new practices based on students’ previous experiences to provide an equal college preparation for Latinx students.

YPAR is a transformative research method where educators, students, parents, and the community collaborate to provide an equal education for Latinx students (Bertrand, 2016). YPAR provides learning opportunities that increase students’ leadership skills and community cultural wealth, and enhance knowledge to promote social change (Livingstone, Celemencki & Calixte, 2014). YPAR empowers students with skills necessary to excel (Phillips, Berg, Rodriguez, & Morgan 2010). Students have an active role in the research, giving them a voice in the investigation process (Bertrand, 2016). The students create a sense of belonging where their learning experiences can lead them to continue a post-secondary education (Molina, 2012). This
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approach helped me create a cyclic learning process in collaboration with students, educators, college, and a community organization that seeks to identify issues in Latinxs’ college readiness process, develop an action plan, and provide for reflective analysis to improve students’ college preparation (Sandaunet & Trondsen, 2008) (see Figure 1 for further information).

Figure 1. Cyclic Learning Process

This study adds to previous research that focuses on the importance of early college preparation processes to access college knowledge (Deil-Amen, 2015; Cates & Schaefle, 2011). The use of YPAR and CCW showed how Latinx students interpret the college readiness process and how college preparation activities influence Latinx students’ community cultural wealth.
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This study proposes new initiatives to add to the cyclic college learning process and increase the students’ interest in continuing a college career.

**Design**

This study was designed to provide college learning experiences to prepare Latinx students for college. These learning experiences help us to understand how Latinx students make sense of the college preparation process. Kolb (2014) indicates that learning experiences help students acquire knowledge and create meaning from these experiences. The students’ learning experiences were studied using an initial focus group session, a photovoice interview, and a final focus group session.

**Sample.** I selected Latinx first-generation, ninth grade students, who were participating in VALU. The participants attend JTHS. JTHS is a technical high school that offers a high school graduation diploma and a trade certificate. This school serves four hundred and thirty students. The students come from urban and suburban towns. The school’s student population is 69 percent White, 0.5 percent American Indian/Alaskan, 2 percent Asian, 9 percent Black, 12 percent Latinx, 0.5 percent Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 12 percent Multi-Race. There are ten English Language Learners in the school. Additionally, JTHS offers ninety days of trade instruction and ninety days of academic instruction. Each student has a specific trade area and takes the main academic courses required by the school district. The school schedule rotates every ten days from academics to trade instruction. There is a 94 percent graduation rate. This is important to understand because technical school operates differently from other schools. The school schedule is very rigorous and it makes it difficult to implement college activities during trade cycle because the students are in production. For this reason, VALU offers college learning activities during the academic cycle to avoid taking students out of trade education.
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To initiate the student selection process, I contacted the school guidance department to send an announcement and parental permission form to fifteen Latinx ninth-grade students’ parents in VALU explaining the purpose of this research. A one-page study announcement (see Appendix 2 for further information) was sent home showing what the study offered to students and where it would take place. In addition, I sent a parental permission form (see Appendix 3 for further information) explaining why their child was selected to participate in the study. As coordinator of VALU and researcher, the students had to return their parental permission form to me. The parental permission form indicated that the children would be named with a pseudonym to protect their identity. In addition, I told parents that the students’ answers would be recorded and transcribed. The information was submitted to an online transcription company following a confidential agreement. All 9th grade Latinx students in VALU had the opportunity to participate in a college orientation, but only VALU students with parental permission participated in this research. I focused on ninth-graders because these students do not have the same opportunities to attend the same college preparatory events as junior and senior students.

If a parent gave permission for his/her child to be in the study, and later changed his/her mind, the parent could withdraw his/her child at any time. There were no penalties or consequences of any kind if a parent decided to withdraw a child from the study. The student did not have to answer any question that he/she did not want to answer. The students were reminded of this before each research activity. The students could be withdrawn at any time if he/she missed research activities, non-adherence to procedures or disruptive behavior.

**Data collection plan.** The students selected to participate in this study were interviewed in a JTHS classroom using an initial focus group session, a photovoice interview, and a final focus group session. Fifteen families were invited to participate in the study, but only five
parents returned the permission for participation forms. There were five students participating in the study: three girls and two boys. To schedule focus groups and interviews, I contacted the students during the school day to schedule the meeting times and an email was sent to their teachers to inform them about the research purpose, the names of students participating in the study and the meeting times. All the research activities took place during the school day to avoid transportation issues.

After the initial focus group interview, I organized a college preparatory event at the University of Connecticut (UConn) to provide college learning experiences for ninth-grade Latinx students. I contacted the Puerto Rican/ Latin American Cultural Center (PRLAC) at UConn, Dr. Anne Gabelien, associate director at El Instituto: The Institute of Latino, Caribbean and Latin American Studies at UConn, and college tour staff to organize the college event. PRLAC is a cultural center at UConn that provide cultural events, academic and social services, and final aid opportunities for Students of Color. In addition, PRLAC provides professional development for students and staff on issues of diversity, inclusion, and pluralism. I organized a session panel with PRLAC and Dr. Gabelien’s support where Latinx college students shared their college stories and tour students’ around campus. These activities gave our students the opportunity to participate in a learning process where they learned about college life and what UConn could offer them. This college orientation event was open to all ninth-grade students in VALU. Ten students attended the college orientation event. A similar event occurred at UConn in 2016 as part of VALU. The students’ learning experiences and knowledge were used to create a reflective process to find out what works or does not work to improve VALU and increase students’ understanding about college.
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Prior to the college preparatory event, I sent a field trip request form to be approved by the school administration. The school was informed about this field trip in advance. After the field trip approval, I sent a field trip permission form (see Appendix 5 for further information), an agenda of the college event (see Appendix 6 for further information) and a photo/media release form (see Appendix 7 for further information) for parental approval. The photo/media release form was necessary because this study requires to take pictures. All the research participants had photo/video release permission from their parents.

**Initial focus group: Knowing Each Other.** I used focus group interviews to answer my first research question on students’ college aspirations, college knowledge, and college learning experiences. The focus groups helped me create an open discussion where students shared college aspirations and experiences. The students met in a classroom at JTHS and sat at a table facing each other to share their college experiences. This climate facilitated the interview process and helped me gain a sense of what Latinx students know about college (Jayanthi & Nelson, 2002). The interview questions were designed to allow students to reflect on college aspirations, college learning experiences and knowledge about the college readiness process.

I conducted an hour-long interview in my classroom using open-ended and semi-structured questions (see Appendix 8 for a list of questions) to study students’ previous college knowledge using CCW. The interview included questions on students’ aspirations and perceptions of the benefits of a postsecondary education. Students had the choice to answer questions in English or Spanish. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

**Photovoice.** I used photovoice to answer my second research question on how does VALU influence Latinx students’ community cultural wealth. Photovoice is a research technique that helps visualize and understand students’ experiences (Kim, 2016). Photovoice creates a
reflective process where individuals share their expertise and knowledge using photographs to represent cultural ways of thinking and feeling about places and experiences (Power & Dupré, 2014; Wang & Burris, 1997). This technique empowers youth to create change in their life and the community (Power & Dupré, 2014; Wang & Burris, 1997). This process invites students to “become advocates for their own and their community’s well-being (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 374). Wang and Burris (1997) indicate that photovoice acts as a “Freirean process of discussion and action and on the ability to facilitate dialogue” (p. 376) about issues that affect individuals’ life. Photovoice serves as a tool to prioritize individuals’ concerns and discuss problems and solutions (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice was appropriate for my research because it gave students a role in the research and created a reflection process where students felt confident to share their college experiences, discuss issues that affect their college preparation process, and search for ways to improve their college preparation.

Photovoice began at students’ arrival at UConn. First, I explained to students the college event agenda and provided a school camera for each to take pictures of the college visit. The students were told to take five to ten pictures of their various experiences on campus. I explained to the students to avoid taking pictures of individuals without their consent. The names of students without photo/video release permission were shared with the group. The students were informed that any picture showing students without photo/video release permission would be deleted. Second, Latinx students attended a college class to experience college instruction. After the college class, Latinx college students shared their college experiences with the purpose of creating a connection between college students and high school Latinx students. As the final activity, the students participated in a college tour guided by Latinx college students to learn about college programs, services, and facilities. The students had the opportunity to ask
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questions to college guides, students, professors, and other college staff they encounter. I checked the students’ pictures at the end of the college visit to delete any photo that includes students without photo/video release permission. Transportation and food were provided.

The photovoice individual interviews occurred between one to three days after the college visit, I asked students to share five photos of their experiences throughout the day that impacted their thoughts related to college and the college readiness process. This gave me the time to schedule interviews during the school day. I designed photovoice interview questions guided by the students’ photos to obtain Latinx students’ college experiences after their participation in a college preparatory event organized by VALU. I included two examples of pictures taken by my students (refers to photographs 1 and 2). This helped to have an easy transition between students’ photos and their answers. The individual interviews were approximately forty minutes long and took place in my classroom at JTHS. I used open-ended questions and semi-structured questions (see Appendix 9 for a list of questions) to record students’ responses. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

Photograph 1. UConn’s College Dorms
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Photograph 2. UConn’s stadium

**Final focus group: What did I learn?** After the individual photovoice interviews, I used a second focus group interview session to understand how Latinx students’ college learning experiences influence their community cultural wealth and understanding of the college readiness process. The focus group opened a discussion on students’ college learning experience after the college preparatory program and what new initiatives could be added to VALU. The students met in a classroom at JTHS and sat at a table facing each other to share their college experiences. I conducted an hour-long interview in my classroom using open-ended and semi-structured questions where students shared their college experiences using their photographs (see Appendix 10 for a list of questions). I printed their pictures so they could see each other’s pictures. The interview questions were designed to reflect on students’ college experiences and their role in YPAR. This reflection process helped me explore how students’ college knowledge and experiences influence their community cultural wealth using CCW. The findings helped to identify what things can improve Latinx’s college preparation process in VALU. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

**Data Analysis**

I did a thematic analysis of what are the first-generation Latinx students’ college aspirations and understanding about college and how VALU influence their community cultural
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wealth. Researchers use thematic analysis for scaffolding students’ cultural wealth and analyze how school practices influence students’ education (Johnson & Castrellon, 2014). Researchers use thematic analysis to create a comprehensive picture of the individual’s experiences (Aronson, 1995; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis, storytelling, and CCW helped me identify themes related to Latinx students’ college learning experiences and community cultural wealth. For example, I used cultural connections to understand how students’ interactions with college students and staff influenced their understanding of the college readiness process. This analytical approach was used to code interviews. I used theme coding to categorize pieces of text according to deductive codes based on CCW lenses and inductive codes that came from data findings (Creswell, 2013; Punch & Oancea, 2014; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This helped me to use CCW to integrate “the process of deductive thematic analysis while allowing for themes emerge directly from the data using inductive coding” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 83).

Thematic analysis, storytelling, and CCW helped me analyze how students experience a college preparatory event at a college campus based on college dynamics and what they learned (Guariso, Paloma, Arias, & Garrido, 2016). CCW was used to analyze how UConn’s staff and Latinx college students influenced the students’ college views, what college knowledge Latinx students acquired after the college preparatory event, and how VALU influenced their community cultural wealth. The use of thematic analysis, storytelling, and CCW helped me search for patterns in Latinx students’ college preparation process, and determine how these patterns influence students’ aspirations and understanding about college. I used a meta-matrix approach to organize and analyze findings. Meta-matrix incorporates information on the relationships between cognitive ability measures, performance factors and individuals’ behavior...
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(Bobko & Potosky, 1999; Roth, Switzer, Van Iddekinge & Oh, 2011). Meta-matrix (see Appendix 1) helped me understand the relationships among students’ college knowledge and CCW. In addition, meta-matrix helped me to examine VALU’s influence in Latinx students’ community cultural wealth and patterns of students’ college experiences in a more meaningful way (Creswell, 2013; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

After I examined my findings using a meta-matrix, I decided to analyze the data separately using CCW lenses and storytelling. This process helped me analyze inductive codes that were separate from predetermined codes (Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The thematic analysis, CCW, and storytelling helped me relate the dataset to provide a logical and interesting account of the story the data tell within themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, this helped me illustrate how the students’ community cultural wealth reflects their unique college readiness experiences. Although all the students attended the same college orientation, their unique experiences revealed their different positioning in relation to each other (Santoro, 2014). This thematic analysis helped me to go beyond of what cultural oriented college learning experiences provide to Latinx students.

Findings

The initial focus group, photovoice interviews, and the final focus group were subdivided using theme coding to categorize pieces of text according to deductive codes, based on CCW lenses, and inductive codes, based on students’ college learning experiences, that came from data findings. This process allowed me to integrate a deductive and inductive thematic analysis to compare the student’s understanding of college.
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Initial Focus Group

The five students participating in the study are Puerto Ricans: Aracelis, Marta, Thalia, Isidro, and Luis. They all come from urban areas in Connecticut. They are in different trade programs: Aracelis and Maria are in criminal justice; Thalia and Isidro are in hairdressing, and Luis is in culinary arts. After their introductions, I asked them about their college aspirations and what they knew about college. I coded the students’ answers using three common themes that came across their responses: college aspirations, college life knowledge, and college requirements knowledge.

College Aspirations. After the introduction, I asked the students about their college aspirations and what college career they would like to pursue. All of them had an idea about what college career they wanted to study after high school. Aracelis wants to be a behavioral analyst. She wants to investigate crime scenes. Marta wants to do something in the field of crime investigation. Thalia wants to continue her hairdressing education. Isidro plans to work at a salon for a few years to get experience, learn about business, and open a hair salon. Luis wants to continue his culinary arts education and be a sous-chef to be in charge of the kitchen. The students’ interest in continuing a college career reflects the influence of their trade programs. They want to continue a college career that follows their trade education.

Next, Latinx students shared college knowledge and college learning experiences. I asked the students what they knew about college and what was needed to be college ready. The students showed previous college knowledge. They demonstrated social capital and navigational capital. They talked about the college life, number of years needed to complete a college career, college requirements, and financial aid.
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**College Life Knowledge.** The students’ comments showed previous college knowledge represented as social capital. Luis described college as a place of higher expectations than high school and stressful. He said, “college professors do not care what other work you have, they want their work done”. The students recognize the importance of commitment and responsibility to achieve a college career. Isidro said, “people go to college for something they love and want to pursue it in their future life. You need a goal and a good attitude to have a positive mindset”. Marta said, “you need maturity, so you can be responsible for your classes”. The students’ comments showed some understanding of college life and the challenges of pursuing a postsecondary education.

**College Requirements Knowledge.** Most of the students demonstrated navigational capital used to understand the college readiness process. The students’ answers showed knowledge required to navigate the college enrollment process. The students’ comments indicated some understanding about college programs, requirements, the cost of college, and how to pay college tuition. Aracelis knew that college offers bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. She recognized the importance of a college preparation in the workforce. She said, “some jobs need certain certifications and you could get those in college”. Marta mentioned that it is necessary to focus on one college program to become an expert in it. She said, “you will be more reliable if you have a college degree”. Luis indicated that takes another four years after high school to earn a college career and student loans are used to pay for college. He said, “a college student can pay for college and tuition, then get a student loan if necessary”. Also, he knows that college programs offer internship opportunities. Justin indicated that college students need a lot of money to buy books and pay for college. The students’ comments indicated how they are using their previous knowledge to interpret the college preparation process.
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The initial focus group findings showed how Latinx students use their community cultural wealth to prepare for college. The students were confident in sharing their college aspirations and knowledge. They demonstrated social capital by highlighting the importance of commitment and responsibility to achieve a college career. Also, they showed navigational capital by talking about college requirements, internship opportunities, and how to pay for college.

Photovoice

The photovoice individual interviews and the students’ photographs evidenced the influence of a college orientation event on Latinx students’ community cultural wealth. The students’ photovoice answers provided an insight into students’ feelings about their college experience and the college knowledge acquired in the college orientation. I coded my findings using common themes that represent students’ community cultural wealth: cultural connections, family, college life knowledge, college admission knowledge, aspirations, and perceptions.

Cultural Connections and Family. The college preparatory event supported students’ sense of belonging, helped them understand how UConn supports Latinx students, and valued their cultural background. The college event created cultural connections among Latinx students, college staff, and Latinx college students. The students felt appreciated by the college staff and Latinx college students. This created a sense of belonging that engage Latinx students in their college readiness process.

The students felt sincere support from UConn’s college staff and students. Luis mentioned that even though Dr. Gebelien was a “gringa” she understood them. Aracelis said, “Dr. Gebelien was actually trying to give us the best advice instead of trying to seem like just a voice for the school”. Marta took a photo of the Ryan Building where El Instituto is located
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(references to photographs 3). She reflected on Dr. Gebelien’s instructional session. She said, “Dr. Gebelien was really nice and helped us understand how they accept people at UConn. She is like a guidance counselor for Latinx college students”. The students’ comments showed the impact cultural orientated instruction has on the students’ understanding of the college admission process.

Photograph 3. El Instituto

The students mentioned that UConn shows culture appreciation for everybody connecting people from the same culture. Isidro selected a photograph of El Instituto (refer to photograph 4). He described El Instituto as a cool place where Latinx students can show their cultural background. He reflected on the cultural and familial connection between the picture in the photograph and Latinx college students’ cultural background. He said, “this picture represents Hispanic culture, their hometown, how they see it, and where they grew up”. His reflection demonstrated how he conceptualizes Latinx college students’ culture and familial experiences. He seems to relate the picture with his own cultural experiences.
Photograph 4. College students’ cultural background

The visit to PRLAC had an impact on students’ cultural identities. The students’ learning experiences created a sense of belonging that supports their aspirations to continue a post-secondary education (Molina, 2012). Luis shared that PRLAC made him feel more comfortable with the display of the Puerto Rican flag. He mentioned that people showed respect for racial and ethnic differences. He said, “everybody has respect for others, respect for themselves”. These feelings represent a cultural connection that relates family values and cultural background to college life.

The cultural connections with UConn staff and Latinx college students influenced the Latinx students’ college learning process. The students indicated that Latinx college students wanted them to know more about UConn’s student support services and college life. Aracelis said, “the college students and staff help people from other countries so they can get adjusted to college”. Marta said, “they like to help people who are Latinos”. Isidro said that the Latinx college students’ stories were motivational and he appreciated that he could ask questions about how they feel going to UConn. These inclusive relationships validate Latinx students’ cultural background and add to their social and navigational capital to support their college readiness process (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Cates & Schaefle, 2011; Fránquiz, Salazar & Denicolo, 2011).
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**College Life Knowledge.** The Latinx college students’ experiences impacted the students’ understanding about college life. The Latinx college students’ experiences gave students a view into the reality of marginalized groups in the college campus and how UConn provides services to create a sense of belonging in college (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 328). Luis said that he learned about college social life and how PRLAC helps Latinx students feel comfortable in their own society. The students learned about rules to follow in college dorms and how Latinx college students get really close to each other. Thalia selected a photograph of UConn’s student dorms at the Ryan building (refer to photograph 5). She reflected on the college students’ living space and UConn’s dorm rules. She said, “the college students share a room with another student and there are rules on the time all students should be in their dorm at night”. Her reflection showed how Latinx college students’ experiences helped her understand about living on a college campus.

Photograph 5. Students’ dorms

Latinx college students taught the students about college support services and recreational facilities. Aracelis selected a photograph of Gampel Pavilion (refer to photograph 6). She reflected on UConn’s student support services, sports facilities and student activities. She said, “the tour guide showed us the place where you could get help and sports areas. We went to a stadium where they play volleyball and practice games”. Her reflection showed interest in how UConn supports their students academically and socially to adapt to the college life.
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Latinx college students’ stories taught to the students how to react against microaggressions and prepare themselves for college. Latinx college students’ stories showed them how to shield themselves against discrimination to protect their college aspirations. Isidro said that a Latinx college student tour guide told them that White people at college could make bad comments about Latinxs and he advised them to not let that get under their skin. Luis said, “whatever somebody else looks like, or however else they sound, it shouldn't matter to you”. He learned that he should focus on managing his time on what he has to do in college. Thalia said that after this college event she will prepare herself for a life in college. The college students’ advices helped the students focus on what really matters, their college education.

College Admission Knowledge and Aspirations. Latinx students’ appreciated the opportunity to learn about the college admission process. Dr. Gebelien’s presentation about college programs and the transfer process from community college to UConn helped Aracelis’s college preparation plan. Aracelis said that instead of trying to go to a university for four years, she probably will go to a community college first and then go to a university to finish her college career. She was the only one interested in following the community college-to-university pathway.
Perceptions. I found that student’s perceptions of the college landscape and open spaces helped their understanding of college. The college landscape created a sense of community and a sense of place (Griffith, 1994). The students’ perceptions of the campus landscape created intentional or unintentional learning that influences their overall campus experience (Scholl & Gulwadi, 2015). The students demonstrated a fascination for the open space areas and campus facilities. Luis said, “I like a sign in the Student Union building that said “students activities extend the concept of human rights and appreciation of individual responsibility” (refer to photograph 7). His comment showed an emotional connection between his personal beliefs and UConn’s open spaces.

Photograph 7. UConn’s Student Union Building

Luis and Isidro said that UConn is like a whole town with a lot of trees, people, roads, streets, and buildings (refer to photograph 8). Luis said, “it is like a whole town”. They showed interest in the college mascot and the sports facilities. They were impressed with the food court facilities. Luis compared it to a mall. They made connections between UConn’s facilities and familiar places that they frequent creating a sense of place. These perceptions taught Latinx students about the college life and influence their interest in continuing a postsecondary education at UConn.
Photograph 8. UConn’s Landscape

The photovoice interviews showed the impact of a multicultural college orientation has on Latinx student’s understanding about college. The students’ responses projected the positive effect of cultural connections in the students’ community cultural wealth. Latinx college students’ experiences helped the students to have a better understanding of what college life is like. In addition, the students’ perceptions demonstrated how the campus physical environment influences their sense of belonging and college aspirations.

Final Focus Group

The final focus group helped to open a discussion on the students’ college experiences. The students were engaged in the discussion process sharing what they learned and experienced during the college event. I coded their answers using two common themes that represent community cultural wealth: college life and cultural connections.

College Life Knowledge. The students reflected on the type of services and support UConn offers to them and what they need to be college ready. Their experiences impacted their views and understanding about college. The students’ assumptions about college changed after the college preparatory event. Aracelis thought that a college was just a building previous to the college preparatory event. She learned that a college is a community that supports each other. Marta indicated that this college learning experience showed her how she should start practicing
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her learning skills in high school to exceed in college. The Latinx college students’ experiences showed Aracelis and Marta the importance of being responsible and efficient at college. Aracelis said, “we have fun and then start our work. The college people would rather get on top of their work so they do not fail their classes and lose their money”. Marta said, “we can start practicing to be more responsible in high school, get our work done faster and on time, and stop procrastinating so we can be ready when we get to college”. The students are projecting themselves as future college students.

Cultural Connections. The students’ cultural connections showed the impact of VALU on Latinx students’ college readiness process. Isidro said VALU gave him the opportunity to see “what college life is like for a Hispanic kid because you don't want to just hop into college not knowing what you want to do”. He said that this opportunity helped him learn about what he wants to do in college. Although the students enjoyed their experience at UConn, they shared that they felt out of place because most of the people at UConn are White. Marta said, “everybody was White and that is not a bad thing, but it makes you feel like you are the odd one”. The students felt uncomfortable in a college campus where most of the students are White. In response to this feeling, Latinx college students’ experiences showed them that are people like them at UConn and support services, like PRLAC, to support them academically and emotionally to excel in college. Isidro said, “you do not feel like you are alone”. Latinx students’ college experiences supported their self-esteem and aspirations to continue a postsecondary education (Molina, 2012). These experiences empowered them with information and strategies to prepare themselves for the college life.

The students’ comments confirmed the importance of students’ cultural background in their college readiness process. Latinx students need college preparation programs that provide
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opportunities to build cultural connections and relationships that contribute to their community cultural wealth and college readiness process. They need role models that can guide them to continue a postsecondary education.

The findings of my study follow CCW framework indicating the importance of students’ cultural background and social contacts in their college readiness process. The cultural connections created between Latinx college students, college staff, and the students impacted Latinx students’ college readiness process showing them what college offers to them and what is college life for a Latinx student (see Appendix 11 for more information). We can see the growth in the students’ college learning process connecting their responses from the initial focus group, photovoice interviews, and final focus group. The students linked their previous college knowledge and experiences with the knowledge acquired in the college orientation event. For example, Aracelis is planning to achieve her college degree following the community college-university pipeline. Marta knew the importance of being responsible at college previous to the college event. After the college event, she learned that responsibility requires better study habits and skills. Thalia did not share any type of college life knowledge previous to the college event, but after the college event she has an idea about behaviors and rules to follow in a college campus. Isidro knew the importance of a positive mindset to continue a college degree and the Latinx college students’ experiences and cultural connections reinforced this feeling. Luis’ cultural connections and perceptions about college gave him a sense of appreciation that supported his interest in continuing a postsecondary education. The Latinx students’ comments showed the importance of college preparation programs that provide opportunities to build cultural connections and relationships that contribute to their community cultural wealth and
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college readiness process. They need social contacts and role models that can guide them to continue a postsecondary education.

**Students’ Suggestions**

YPAR helped Latinx students’ sense of belonging and included them in the VALU’s action plan for the next school year. The students suggested that they want more time for the next college visit to shadow Latinx college students and see what their life is like there. Aracelis said that she wants to see what classes they go to and everything they do at college. Marta said that she wants to see what college life would be like through the Latinx college students’ eyes. They want to attend a college class with college students to experience it.

YPAR helped to engage Latinx students in an open reflection process where they shared college knowledge learned from college UConn’s staff and Latinx college students’ experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As revealed in the photovoice interviews and final focus group, UConn’s staff and the Latinx college students’ experiences helped the students understand college life and how they need to change their learning habits to get ready for college. Latinx college students’ experiences helped them visualize themselves as college students (Daisey and Kampfner, 2002). Isidro said that this college experience showed him “how college life would be if he was to live at a college”. Marta said, “this was my first visit to a college campus and I learned how UConn accepts different cultures, how they try to include everybody”. The college preparatory event gave the students the opportunity to learn about college opportunities and showed them that they are not alone in their college preparation process (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 328).

CCW helped me see how learning experiences are transformed into forms of cultural wealth that prepare Latinx students for college. The students’ comments demonstrated that their
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college experiences added to their community cultural wealth and had a positive impact in their college preparation. They felt confident to share their college experiences, discuss issues that affect their college preparation process, and search for ways to improve their college preparation. The college preparatory event created a sense of cultural connection with Latinx college students and PRLAC (Pérez & McDonough, 2008; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). The students’ active participation in the research process gave me an opportunity to study how Latinx students’ experiences influence their college preparation process.

The learning opportunities provided by VALU created a kind of self-defense mechanism that prepares Latinx students against a system of oppression that can affect their college education. CCW and YPAR helped me understand how Latinx students’ college experiences impact their understanding of college and how these experiences can be used to provide a better college preparation process. The students learned about what college is like and how Latinx college students find ways to fight against microaggressions that affect their college learning process. VALU can use these college learning experiences to integrate new initiatives in Latinx students’ college preparation process. These learning opportunities impact the Latinx college readiness process, promoting knowledge that creates social change to improve the lives of Latinx students (Valdes, 1997).

Limitations

The participant size and the school field trip delay were limitations in my research. From a total of fifteen families invited to participate in the study, only five parents returned the permission for participation forms. Ten students attended the college event, but only five students had parental permission to participate in the study. This could be the result that some parents may not understood the purpose of the study. Also, one student could not attend the final
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focus group due to an illness. These factors limited the opportunity to identify patterns in Latinx students’ college learning experiences.

The delay in the school field trip approval was another limitation in my study. This affected the scheduling of the college preparatory event. This pushed the event close to the end of the school year making difficult to schedule photovoice interviews and final focus group activity. For this reason, I had to postpone some interviews several times because the students were taking final exams at the end of the school year.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that there is a need to hear Latinx students’ voices to have a better understanding of their interpretation of the college readiness process and identify factors that prevent them from an equal college preparation process (Vega, 2017). This YPAR project contributed to the field, showing how Latinx students’ college experiences and community cultural wealth influence their perceptions about college and the decision to pursue a college career. In addition, this research provided an opportunity to understand how Latinx students’ active participation in a college preparatory program helped them to make sense of the college readiness process. This study provided initiatives to improve VALU using the students’ responses and suggestions. In addition, this study contributes to the field by presenting the college readiness process from the Latinx students’ perspective.

This study adds to previous research that focuses on the importance of early college preparation processes to access college knowledge (Deil-Amen, 2015; Cates & Schaefle, 2011). The results of this study show college learning gaps where Latinx students are interested in continuing a postsecondary education, but they have a limited knowledge about college requirements (Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011). The use of YPAR in this study showed how
Latinx students interpret the college readiness process and how a college preparation program influences Latinx students’ understanding of college.

**Implications**

The results of this study can help to propose new initiatives to add to the cyclic college learning process and increase the students’ interest in continuing a college career. The students’ comments demonstrate a cultural connection needed to support Latinx’s college aspirations and their college preparation. The students’ comments confirm the importance of the students’ cultural background in their college readiness process. Their comments show how cultural connections increase their community cultural wealth and understanding about college. At the beginning of the study, the students demonstrated an interest in continuing a postsecondary education and some understanding about college requirements and college life. After the college event, I saw an increase in the students’ community cultural wealth where Latinx students connected their previous college knowledge with the knowledge learned at the college orientation event. The Latinx college students’ experiences and college staff’s advices helped the students link their college aspirations and previous college knowledge with the new college knowledge. In addition, the cultural connections with college students and staff taught them that they are not alone in the college readiness process. These cultural connections helped students understand what college life is for a Latinx student.

Based on the results of my research, I suggest a collaboration between middle and high schools, community colleges, and universities to develop a college preparatory program that provides the knowledge required to understand what college is and what is needed to be college ready. It is important to include middle school students in the college preparatory process to create an interest in continuing a college career previous to high school. The schools can work
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with postsecondary institutions to connect middle and high school students with Latinx college students to guide them based on their own experiences and aspirations. The college students can serve as mentors to support Latinx students’ college readiness process and their college aspirations. This cultural connection can inspire Latinx students to continue a college career.

This relationship offers an inclusive learning environment with the intention of providing social and navigational capital to transmit resources and knowledge that benefit students’ learning process (Monkman, Ronald, & Theramene, 2005), and facilitates access to college information. Latinx students need relationships and educational learning experiences to make them part of their education (Yosso, 2005). These relationships value Latinx college students’ voices and send a message that creates a sense of community and place (Griffith, 1994). These learning opportunities give Latinx students a voice in their college readiness process and support their college aspirations. Latinx students’ voices are needed to improve or implement college preparation programs that support the students’ college aspirations and meet their college learning needs. These changes can help reduce the gap in Latinx’s college readiness to provide an equal education for them.
Appendix 1. The Four Keys to College and Career Readiness (Conley, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keys</th>
<th>Students will:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Strategies</td>
<td>Identify a problem, formulate a hypothesis, create an action plan to solve the problem, and collect and analyze data to formulate a conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Use terms, facts, ideas, and concepts to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Skills and Techniques</td>
<td>Use their study skills, goals, self-awareness, persistence, and collaboration to take ownership for their learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Develop knowledge about college enrollment, financial aid, behavioral norms of college, of contextual (opinions), and learn how to advocate for themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Study Announcement

Principal Investigator: Erica Fernandez

Student Investigator: Israel Velez

College Learning Opportunity

Dear student,

You were selected to participate in a college research study from the University of Connecticut (UConn) because you are a Latino/a ninth-grade student and member of Vamos A La Universidad (VALU) college preparation program. We are looking at how Latino/a students make sense of the college readiness process, what issues affect their college learning process, and how college experiences influence their college readiness process.

You will have the opportunity to learn about college life, college programs, and financial aid opportunities. You will participate in focus group activities to meet and interact with other students with similar college aspirations. Also, you will attend to a college visit at UConn.

If you are interested in be part of this research study, you must attend to four activities: two one-hour long collaborative focus group discussions, an UConn college event and a forty-five minutes interview. This research will be done at Vinal Technical High School during school hours beginning in March and ending in May, 2019.

Please contact the principal investigator, Erica Fernandez at (860)486-8998 or student investigator, Israel Velez at (860) 344-7100 or israel.velez@uconn.edu if you have any questions.
Oportunidad de Aprendizaje Universitario

Fui seleccionado para participar en un estudio de investigación de la Universidad de Connecticut (UConn) porque eres un estudiante latino de grado once y participas del programa de preparación universitaria Vamos A La Universidad (VALU). Estamos investigando cómo estudiantes latinos entienden el proceso de preparación para la universidad, qué problemas afectan su proceso de aprendizaje y cómo las experiencias universitarias influyen en su proceso de preparación para la universidad.

Tendrás la oportunidad de aprender sobre la vida universitaria, los programas universitarios y las oportunidades de ayuda financiera. Participarás en actividades de grupos focales para conocer e interactuar con otros estudiantes con aspiraciones universitarias similares. Además, asistirás a un evento universitario en UConn para conocer y aprender sobre la vida universitaria.

Si estás interesado en formar parte de este estudio de investigación, debes asistir a cuatro actividades: dos discusiones de grupos de enfoque colaborativo de una hora de duración, un evento universitario de UConn y una entrevista de cuarenta y cinco minutos. Esta investigación se llevará a cabo en Vinal Technical High School durante el horario escolar y comenzará en marzo y finalizará en mayo de 2019. Si tiene alguna pregunta por favor comuníquese con la investigadora principal, Erica Fernández al (860)486-8998 o con el estudiante investigador, Israel Velez al (860) 344-7100 o israel.velez@uconn.edu.
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Parental Permission Form for Participation in a Research Study

Principal Investigator: Erica Fernandez

Student Investigator: Israel Velez

Study Title: Inequity and Resistance: Latino/a students and the College Readiness Process

Overview of the Research

You are being asked to provide permission to allow your child to participate in a research study. Participation is voluntary. You can say yes or no. If you say yes now you can still change your mind later. Your child may say yes or no. Your child may change his/her mind later. Some key points to consider are summarized in this overview, but you should consider all of the information in this document carefully before making your decision.

Introduction

Your child is invited to participate in a research study to explore how he/she makes sense of the college readiness process, what issues affect his/her college learning process, and how college experiences influence his/her college readiness process. Your child is being asked to participate because he/she is a Latino/a student who is interested in continue a postsecondary education.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this research study is to explore how your son/daughter participation in a college preparation program impacts his/her college readiness process. Your child will have the opportunity to learn about college life, college programs, and financial aid opportunities. The
students will participate in learning group activities where they share his/her college knowledge and experiences to prepare for college. This research will be done during school hours.

**What are the study procedures? What will my child be asked to do?**

Your child was selected to participate in this study because he/she is part of Vamos A La Universidad (VALU) college preparation program. The student investigator asked the school guidance counselors to mail to you an announcement and parental permission form.

Your child will complete four activities in this research study:

**First: Knowing Each Other.** Your child will participate in collaborative focus groups to meet other students and share his/her college experiences and knowledge. The student researcher will interview your child in a classroom at Justice Technical High School (JTHS) with other students. This is a group interview where the students will sit on a table facing each other to share their college experiences. The interview is an hour-long interview using open-ended and semi-structured questions. His/her answers will be audiotaped and transcribed.

**Second Activity: College Event.** Your child will have the opportunity to participate of a college event at University of Connecticut where he/she will learn about college. The students will travel to UConn on a school bus and lunch will be provided. At the beginning of the event, your child will attend a college class taught by a college professor. Then, Latino/a college students will share their college stories so your son/daughter can understand what college life is. All students will have the opportunity to ask questions to Latino/a college students. After this activity, college staff will offer a campus tour where the students will learn about the facilities and services offered. During this event, the students will take pictures of the activities using a

---

2Pseudonym
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

school camera. The photos will be evaluated at the end of the college event by the student researcher to verify that students without permission to be photographed appear in the pictures.

Third Activity: Photovoice. Your son/daughter will be interviewed on his/her college experiences and what he/she learned at the college event using his/her pictures. Photovoice creates a reflective process where your child will share his expertise and knowledge about college using photographs. The student researcher will interview your child in a classroom at JTHS. The interview will be approximately forty minutes long using open-ended and semi-structured questions and will take place in a classroom at JTHS. Responses will be audiotaped and transcribed.

Fourth Activity: What did I learn? Your son/daughter will be part of an open group discussion to share his/her college experiences and what did he/she learn about college after the college event. The student researcher will interview your child in a classroom at JTHS with other students. This is a group interview where the students will sit on a table facing each other to share their college experiences. The interview is an hour-long interview using open-ended and semi-structured questions. Your child will talk about what things work and did not work as part of the college preparatory program with the purpose of providing better services to prepare Latinx students for college. Responses will be audiotaped and transcribed.

This research will start in November 2018 and end February 2019. All focus group and photovoice interviews will take place during the school day. These interviews will be recorded using a personal computer and transcribed using an online transcription company. The information will be submitted to an online transcription company following an agreement of confidentiality. After the research study, your child will be contacted to continue his/her college preparation process.
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Your child may be withdrawn from the study at any time because he/she missed research activities, non-adherence to procedures or disruptive behavior. The students who become uncooperative during the research study will be reminded of the purpose of the investigation and how they can benefit from this study. If a student behavior becomes an obstacle for this research, he/she will be withdrawn from the study and parents will be notified. Parents will not be allowed to stay with or watch their child during experimental study procedures because it can interfere with the study procedures.

What are the risks or inconveniences of the study?

We believe there are no known risks to your child because of his/her participation in the research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

What are the benefits of the study?

Your child may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your child’s participation in the study may help to create new initiatives that can improve the college preparation process of Latino/a students.

Will my child receive payment for participation? Are there costs to participate?

There are no costs to you and your child for participating in this study. Your child will not be paid to participate in this study.

How will my child’s information be protected?

The following procedures will be used to protect your child’s confidential records. The student investigator will keep all study records in a secure location. All participants will be named with a pseudonym to protect their identity. The audiotapes will be transcribed and destroyed after three years. The students’ answers will be transcribed using an online transcription company after a
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

confidential agreement gets approved. All electronic files containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will meet UConn’s electronics use requirements and have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only researchers will have access to the passwords. The data will be shared with school officials and administrators at JTHS to propose new initiatives to improve Latino/a students’ college preparation process. At the conclusion of this study, the researchers may use their findings for educational purposes. We will do our best to protect the confidentiality of the information we gather from your child but we cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality.

You should also know that the UConn Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Research Compliance Services may inspect study records as part of its auditing program, but these reviews will only focus on the researchers and not on your child’s responses or involvement. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Can my child stop being in the study and what are my and my child’s rights?

Your son/daughter does not have to be in this study if you do not want him/her to participate. If you give permission for your child to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may withdraw your child at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want your child to participate. He/she does not have to answer any question that does not want to answer. The students will be reminded about this before each research activity.

Whom do I contact if I have questions about the study?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this research study or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the student investigator, Israel Velez at
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

(860)344-7100 ext.359 If you have any questions concerning your child’s rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802.
Parental Permission Form for Participation in a Research Study

Principal Investigator: Erica Fernandez

Student Investigator: Israel Velez

Study Title: Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Documentation of Permission:

I have read this form and decided that I will give permission for my child to participate in the study described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of my child’s involvement and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw my child at any time. My signature also indicates that I have received a copy of this parental permission form. Please return this form to the child’s teacher by October 31st, 2018.

__________________________  ____________________________  __________
Child Signature:                     Print Name:                         Date:

__________________________  ____________________________  __________
Parent/Guardian Signature:               Print Name:                        Date:

Relationship to Child (e.g. mother, father, guardian): ___________________________

__________________________  ____________________________  __________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Print Name:                             Date:
Investigador Principal: Erica Fernández

Estudiante Investigador: Israel Velez

Título del estudio: Inequidad y resistencia: Estudiantes Latinx y el proceso de preparación universitaria

Descripción general de la investigación

Se le solicita que proporcione permiso para permitir que su hijo participe en un estudio de investigación. La participación es voluntaria. Puede decidir sí o no. Si dice que sí, aún puede cambiar de opinión más adelante. Su hijo/a puede decidir sí o no. Él/ella puede cambiar de opinión más tarde. Algunos puntos clave a considerar se resumen en este resumen, pero debe considerar toda la información en este documento cuidadosamente antes de tomar su decisión.

Introducción

Se invita a su hijo/a a participar en un estudio de investigación para explorar cómo le da sentido al proceso de preparación universitaria, qué problemas afectan su proceso de aprendizaje universitario y cómo las experiencias universitarias influyen en su proceso de preparación para la universidad. Se le pide a su hijo que participe porque él/ella es un estudiante latino/a interesado en continuar una educación postsecundaria.

¿Por qué se está haciendo este estudio?

El propósito de este estudio de investigación es explorar cómo la participación de su hijo/a en un programa de preparación universitaria afecta su proceso de preparación para la universidad. Su
hijo tendrá la oportunidad de aprender sobre la vida universitaria, programas universitarios y oportunidades de ayuda financiera. Los estudiantes participarán en actividades grupales de aprendizaje donde su hijo/a compartirá sus conocimientos y experiencias de la universidad para prepararse para la universidad.

¿Cuáles son los procedimientos de estudio? ¿Qué se le pedirá a mi hijo que haga?

Su hijo fue seleccionado para participar en este estudio porque él/ella participa del programa de preparación universitaria Vamos A La Universidad (VALU). El GPA de los estudiantes se utilizó como método selectivo porque es parte del proceso de admisión a la universidad. El estudiante investigador solicitó a los consejeros de orientación escolar que enviaran un anuncio y un formulario de permiso de los padres.

Su hijo/a completará cuatro actividades en este estudio de investigación:

**Primero: Conocernos.** Su hijo participará en grupos de enfoque colaborativo para conocer a otros estudiantes y compartir sus experiencias y conocimientos universitarios. Él/ella será entrevistado en un salón de clases en Justice Technical High School³ (JTHS) junto a otros estudiantes. Esta es una entrevista grupal donde los estudiantes se sentarán en una mesa uno frente al otro para compartir sus experiencias universitarias. La entrevista es una entrevista de una hora que utiliza preguntas abiertas y semiestructuradas. Sus respuestas serán grabadas y transcritas.

**Segunda actividad: Evento de la Universidad.** Su hijo tendrá la oportunidad de participar en un evento universitario en la Universidad de Connecticut, donde aprenderá sobre la universidad. Los estudiantes viajarán a UConn en un autobús escolar y se les proporcionará el almuerzo. Al comienzo del evento, su hijo asistirá a una clase de la universidad impartida por un

³ Seudónimo
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

profesor universitario. Luego, los estudiantes latinos/as universitarios compartirán sus historias universitarias para que su hijo/a pueda entender qué es la vida universitaria. Todos los estudiantes tendrán la oportunidad de hacer preguntas a estudiantes latinos/as universitarios. Después de esta actividad, el personal de la universidad ofrecerá un recorrido por el campus donde los estudiantes aprenderán sobre las instalaciones y servicios ofrecidos. Durante este evento, los estudiantes tomarán fotos de las actividades como parte del proyecto de investigación utilizando una cámara de la escuela. Las fotos serán evaluadas al final del evento de la universidad por el estudiante investigador para verificar que los estudiantes sin permiso para ser fotografiados aparezcan en las imágenes.

Tercera actividad: Foto voz. Su hijo/a será entrevistado sobre sus experiencias en la universidad y lo que aprendió en el evento de la universidad usando sus fotos. Foto voz crea un proceso reflexivo donde compartirás tus experiencias y conocimiento utilizando fotografías para representar tus impresiones y sentir sobre la universidad. Su hijo será entrevistado individualmente. La entrevista durará aproximadamente cuarenta minutos con preguntas abiertas y semiestructuradas y tendrá lugar en un salón de clases en JTHS. Las respuestas serán grabadas y transcritas.

Cuarta actividad: ¿Qué aprendí? Su hijo/a será parte de una discusión grupal abierta para compartir sus experiencias universitarias y lo que aprendió sobre la universidad después del evento de la universidad. El estudiante investigador entrevistará a su hijo en un salón de clases en JTHS con otros estudiantes. Esta es una entrevista grupal donde los estudiantes se sentarán en una mesa uno frente al otro para compartir sus experiencias universitarias. La entrevista es una entrevista de una hora que utiliza preguntas abiertas y semiestructuradas. Su hijo/a hablará sobre lo que funciona y lo que no funcionó como parte del programa de preparación para la
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

universidad con el fin de proporcionar mejores servicios para preparar a los estudiantes latino/as para la universidad. Las respuestas serán grabadas y transcritas.

Esta investigación comenzará en noviembre de 2018 y finalizará en febrero de 2019. Todas las entrevistas grupales y de foto voz se llevarán a cabo durante el día escolar. Estas entrevistas se registrarán usando una computadora personal y se transcribirán usando una compañía de transcripción en línea. La información se sumará a una empresa de transcripción en línea después de un acuerdo confidencial sea aprobado. Después del estudio de investigación, su hijo se pondrá en contacto para continuar su proceso de preparación para la universidad.

Su hijo puede ser retirado del estudio en cualquier momento por no asistir a las actividades de investigación, incumplimiento de los procedimientos o comportamiento perturbador. Se les recordará a los estudiantes que no cooperan durante el estudio de investigación el propósito de la investigación y cómo pueden beneficiarse de este estudio. Si el comportamiento de un estudiante se convierte en un obstáculo para esta investigación, se le retirará del estudio y se notificará a los padres. No se les permitirá a los padres permanecer o vigilar a su hijo durante los procedimientos de estudio experimental porque puede interferir con los procedimientos del estudio.

¿Cuáles son los riesgos o inconvenientes del estudio?

Creemos que no hay riesgos conocidos para su hijo debido a su participación en el estudio de investigación; sin embargo, un posible inconveniente puede ser el tiempo que lleva completar el estudio.
¿Cuáles son los beneficios del estudio?

Es posible que su hijo/a no se beneficie directamente de esta investigación; sin embargo, esperamos que la participación de su hijo/a en el estudio pueda ayudar a crear nuevas iniciativas que puedan mejorar el proceso de preparación universitaria de los estudiantes de Latinos/as.

¿Recibirá mi hijo el pago por la participación? ¿Hay costos para participar?

No hay costos para usted y su hijo por participar en este estudio. No se le pagará a su hijo por participar en este estudio.

¿Cómo se protegerá la información de mi hijo?

Los siguientes procedimientos se usarán para proteger la confidencialidad de los registros de privacidad y confidencialidad de su hijo y su familia. El estudiante investigador guardará todos los registros del estudio en un lugar seguro. Todos los participantes serán nombrados con un seudónimo para proteger su identidad. Las cintas de audio se transcribirán y destruirán después de tres años. Las contestaciones de los estudiantes serán transcritas usando una compañía de transcripciones en línea luego de la aprobación de un acuerdo de confidencialidad. Todos los archivos electrónicos que contengan información identificable estarán protegidos por contraseña. Cualquier computadora que almacene dichos archivos seguirá los requisitos para uso de electrónicos exigidos por UConn y tendrá protección con una contraseña para evitar el acceso de usuarios no autorizados. Solo los investigadores tendrán acceso a las contraseñas. Los datos se compartirán con los funcionarios escolares y los administradores de JTHS para proponer nuevas iniciativas para mejorar el proceso de preparación universitaria de los estudiantes latinos. Al final de este estudio, los investigadores pueden usar los resultados para propósitos educativos. Haremos nuestro mejor esfuerzo para proteger la confidencialidad de la información que recopilamos de su hijo/a, pero no podemos garantizar el 100% de confidencialidad.
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

También debe saber que la Junta de Revisión Institucional (IRB) de UConn y los Servicios de Cumplimiento de Investigación pueden inspeccionar los registros del estudio como parte de su programa de auditoría, pero estas revisiones solo se enfocarán en los investigadores y no en las respuestas o participación de su hijo/a. El IRB es un grupo de personas que revisa estudios de investigación para proteger los derechos y el bienestar de los participantes en la investigación.

¿Puede mi hijo dejar de participar en el estudio y cuáles son mis derechos y los de mi hijo?

Su hijo/a no tiene que participar en este estudio si no desea que él / ella participe. Si da permiso para que su hijo/a participe en el estudio, pero luego cambie de opinión, puede retirarlo/a en cualquier momento. No hay sanciones o consecuencias de ningún tipo si decide que no desea que su hijo/a participe. Él/ella no tiene que responder ninguna pregunta que no quiera responder. Todos los estudiantes recibirán un recordatorio antes de cada actividad de investigación sobre esto.

¿A quién debo contactar si tengo preguntas sobre el estudio?

Tómese el tiempo que desee antes de tomar una decisión. Estaremos encantados de responder cualquier pregunta que tenga sobre este estudio. Si tiene más preguntas sobre este estudio de investigación o si tiene un problema relacionado con la investigación, puede comunicarse con el estudiante investigador, Israel Velez al (860)344-7100 ext.359 Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre los derechos de su hijo como participante, puede comunicarse con la Junta de Revisión Institucional (IRB) de la Universidad de Connecticut al 860-486-8802.
### Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Formulario de permiso de los padres para la participación en un estudio de investigación

**UCONN**

**Return Slip**

**Investigador principal:** Erica Fernandez

**Estudiante investigador:** Israel Velez

**Título del estudio:** Inequidad, opresión y resistencia: estudiantes latinos/as y el proceso de preparación universitaria

**Documentación de permiso:**

He leído este formulario y he decidido dar permiso a mi hijo para participar en el estudio descrito anteriormente. Sus propósitos generales, los pormenores de la participación de mi hijo/a y los posibles riesgos e inconvenientes se han explicado a mi satisfacción. Entiendo que puedo retirar a mi hijo/a en cualquier momento. Mi firma también indica que he recibido una copia de este formulario de permiso de los padres. Devuelva este formulario al maestro de su hijo/a antes de 31 de octubre de 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>______________________</th>
<th>______________________</th>
<th>______________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firma del niño:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nombre impreso:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fecha:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firma del padre / tutor:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nombre impreso:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fecha:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relación con el niño (por ejemplo, madre, padre, tutor):</td>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>______________________</th>
<th>______________________</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firma del nombre impreso de la persona que recibe permiso:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fecha:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5. School Field Trip Parental Permission Form

### SCHOOL FIELD TRIP PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**DEAR PARENT/GUARDIAN:**

A group of students, including your son/daughter, is planning to participate in an approved activity. Below is information concerning this event:

1. **LOCATION OF EVENT:**
2. **TYPE OF EVENT:**
3. **SPONSOR:**
4. **DATE AND TIME OF DEPARTURE:**
5. **DATE AND TIME OF RETURN:**
6. **METHOD OF TRAVEL:**
7. **COST (if any) TO THE STUDENT (includes transportation, fees, lunch, etc.):**

---

If you approve of your son/daughter's participation in the above activity, please sign BELOW indicating your knowledge of this activity and your consent.

_________________________ has my permission to go on the school approved activity described above.

I agree that:
- The financial obligations, if any, will be met.
- I am responsible for providing transportation home from the school at the conclusion of the trip.
- This is a school-sponsored activity and the rules of the Student Handbook are in effect for all trips including international travel.

**Health Information: Please check all that apply**

- My child has the following health/medical problems: □ Asthma □ Allergy to: ____________________________
- Diabetes □ Seizures □ Other health problem(s): __________________________________

My child has □ an inhaler □ an EpiPen and/or Benadryl □ Diabetes testing supplies and/or medication □ other: ____________________________, which needs to accompany him/her on this trip.

Teacher: If any of the boxes above are checked, forward a copy of this permission form to the school nurse.

Parent: If any of the above boxes are checked please call the school nurse at _______ ext. _______.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE:**

_________________________

**PRINTED NAME:**

_________________________

**PHONE:**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOME</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>CELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:**

_________________________

**PHONE:**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOME</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>CELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return to: ___________________________ by ____________ DATE ____________

---

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## Appendix 6. UConn College Visit Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Departure from JTHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Overview of the Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The students will be informed about college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities, expectations and photovoice. The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>researcher will explain the rules for taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Arrival to UConn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:35-9:35</td>
<td>Introduction to the event and college class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:36-10:20</td>
<td>Latinx College students will share their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>college experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:21-10:26</td>
<td>Students will have the opportunity to ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questions to college students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:27-11:27</td>
<td>College Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:28-12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:31-12:39</td>
<td>Departure from UConn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:40-1:29</td>
<td>Photo Revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will show taken pictures to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>researcher to protect students with no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>photo/video release permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Arrival to JTHS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Agenda de Visita a UConn

7:30  Salida de JTHS
7:45  Descripción general del evento
  Los estudiantes serán informados sobre las actividades de la universidad, las expectativas y la foto voz. El investigador explicará las reglas para tomar fotografías.
8:30  Llegada a UConn
8:35-9:35  Introducción al evento y participación en la clase de la universidad
9:36-10:20  Los estudiantes Latinx universitarios compartirán sus experiencias universitarias.
10:21-10:26  Los estudiantes tendrán la oportunidad de hacer preguntas a los estudiantes universitarios.
10:27-11:27  Visita al campo universitario
11:28-12:30  Almuerzo
12:31-12:39  Salida de UConn
12:40-1:29  Revisión de fotos
  Los estudiantes mostrarán fotos tomadas al investigador para proteger a los estudiantes sin permiso para ser fotografiado.
1:30  Llegada a JTHS
Appendix 7. Research Study Photo/Video Release Form

Protocol #___________

Principal Investigator: Erica Fernandez
Student Investigator: Israel Velez

Protocol Title: Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

As part of this research study the University of Connecticut and those acting pursuant to its authority ("UCONN") may record your likeness and/or voice on a particular medium ("recordings") including but not limited to audio, photographic, digital, and electronic mediums during your participation in this research study. Please indicate what uses of these recordings you are willing to permit, by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to and signing the form at the end. The choice is completely up to you. We will only use recordings in the ways that you agree to. In any recording, you will not be identified by name. The photo/videos will not be used for commercial purposes.

1.________ The recordings can be studied by the research team for use in the research project
2.________ The recordings can be used for educational purposes

I understand that all such recordings, in whatever medium, shall remain the property of UCONN. My name will not be used in any publication. I agree that I will not be compensated for the use of the recordings.

I have read the above descriptions and give my consent for the use of the recordings as indicated by my initials above. (Youth under 18 years of age must have a parent/legal guardian signature.)

(Name, please print)

(Signature of Subject) (Date: MM/DD/YY)

(Parent/Guardian Signature, if participant is a minor) (Date: MM/DD/YY)

(Signature of Person Obtaining Consent) (Date: MM/DD/YY)
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

Protocol #___________

Investigador Principal: Erica Fernández

Estudiante Investigador: Israel Velez

Título del Protocolo: Inequidad y resistencia: estudiantes de Latinx y el proceso de preparación universitaria

Como parte de este estudio de investigación, la Universidad de Connecticut y aquellos que actúen de acuerdo con su autoridad ("UCONN") pueden grabar su imagen y/o voz en un medio particular ("grabaciones"), que incluyen, entre otros, audio, fotografía, digital, y medios electrónicos durante su participación en este estudio de investigación. Indique qué usos de estas grabaciones está dispuesto a permitir, poniendo sus iniciales junto a los usos que acepta y firmando el formulario al final. La elección depende completamente de usted. Solo usaremos las grabaciones de la forma en que usted acepte. En cualquier grabación, no se identificará por su nombre. Las fotos / videos no se usarán con fines comerciales.

1.________ Las grabaciones pueden ser estudiadas por el equipo de investigación para su uso en el proyecto de investigación

2.________ Las grabaciones se pueden utilizar con fines educativos

Entiendo que todas esas grabaciones, en cualquier medio, seguirán siendo propiedad de UCONN. Mi nombre no se usará en ninguna publicación. Estoy de acuerdo en que no seré compensado por el uso de las grabaciones.

He leído las descripciones anteriores y doy mi consentimiento para el uso de las grabaciones según lo indicado por mis iniciales anteriores. (Los jóvenes menores de 18 años deben tener la firma de un padre / tutor legal).

_________________________________________________________________
(Nombre en letra de molde)
(Firma del sujeto) (Fecha: MM / DD / AA)
(Firma del Padre / Tutor, si el participante es un menor) (Fecha: MM / DD / AA)
(Firma de la persona que obtiene el consentimiento) (Fecha: MM / DD / AA)
Appendix 8. Initial Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me about your college aspirations.
2. Tell me what you know about college.
3. What do you think is needed to be college ready?
4. Tell me how a college career can help you in the future.
Appendix 9. Photovoice Interview Questions

1. Tell me what your pictures represent.
   Prompts:
   - What happened during the college visit?
   - What was your favorite and least favorite part of the college visit?

2. What did you learn?
   Prompts:
   - How did you feel in a college class?
   - How do you plan to use what you learned?

3. How did you interact with the college staff?
   Prompts:
   - What do you remember?
   - What did you ask for? Why?
Appendix 10. Final Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me about your college experiences in the college preparation program.

2. What was the best part of the college preparation program? Why?

3. Tell me how this program help you understand the college preparation process.

4. What did you learn about college?

5. What things do you think we have to improve in our college preparation program? Why?

   How?
### Appendix 11. Students’ College Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>College Aspirations</th>
<th>College Life Knowledge</th>
<th>College Requirements Knowledge</th>
<th>Cultural Connections</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aracelis</td>
<td>Wants to be behavior analyst</td>
<td>“College offers bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees”. “Some jobs need certain certifications and you could get those in college”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marta</td>
<td>Wants to do something in the field of criminal justice</td>
<td>“You need maturity, so you can be responsible for your classes”.</td>
<td>“Focus on one college program to become an expert in it”. “You will be more reliable if you have a college degree”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thalia</td>
<td>Continue her hairdressing education</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isidro</td>
<td>Wants to study business</td>
<td>“People go to college for something they love and want to pursue it in their future”. “You need a goal and a good attitude to have a positive mindset”.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Wants to be a sous-chef</td>
<td>“College professors do not care what other work you have, they want their work done”.</td>
<td>“A college student can pay for college and tuition, then get a student loan if necessary”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photovoice</td>
<td>Aracelis</td>
<td>“I will probably go to a community college first and then go to a university to finish my college career”.</td>
<td>“The tour guide showed us the place where you could get help and sports areas. We went to a stadium where they play volleyball and practice games”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Dr. Gebelien was actually trying to give us the best advice instead of trying to seem like just a voice for the school”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The college students and staff help people from other countries so they can get adjusted to college”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thalia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Dr. Gebelien was really nice and helped us understand how they accept people at UConn. She is like a guidance counselor for Latinx college students”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“They like to help people who are Latinos”.</td>
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</table>
| Room with another student and there are rules on the time all students should be in their dorm at night”.
| “After this college event I will prepare myself for a life in college”.
| “This picture represents Hispanic culture, their hometown, how they see it, and where they grew up”.
| “UConn is like a whole town with a lot of trees, people, roads, streets, and buildings”.
| “Whatever somebody else looks like, or however else they sound, it shouldn't matter to you”.
| “Even though Dr. Gebelien was a “gringa” she understood them”.
| “Everybody has respect for others, respect for themselves”.
| “I like a sign in the Student Union building that said “students activities extend the concept of human rights and appreciation of individual responsibility”.”
| “UConn is like a whole town”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isidro</th>
<th>Luis</th>
<th>Final Focus Group</th>
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</table>
| “This picture represents Hispanic culture, their hometown, how they see it, and where they grew up”.
| “Whatever somebody else looks like, or however else they sound, it shouldn't matter to you”.
| “College is a community” |
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

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<td></td>
<td>that supports each other”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We have fun and then start our work. The college people would rather get on top of their work so they do not fail their classes and lose their money”.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta</td>
<td>“We can start practicing to be more responsible in high school, get our work done faster and on time, and stop procrastinating so we can be ready when we get to college”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thalia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidro</td>
<td>VALU gave him the opportunity to see “what college life is like for a Hispanic kid because you don’t want to just hop into college not knowing what you want to do”.</td>
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</table>
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

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<th></th>
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<th>“You do not feel like you are alone”.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
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</table>

"You do not feel like you are alone".
Inequity and Resistance: Latinx students and the College Readiness Process

References


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