The Border Walking Journal

Borderlands Center for Educational Studies (BoCES)

New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM
2008
The Border Walking Journal has evolved from a conference proceedings periodical to a more formal community of authors desiring to address educational issues of the borderlands. The range of contributors and topics is wide, crossing ethnic, national, and international borders. Importantly, this juried volume also crosses discipline borders providing theory and research which have the potential of a more professional response to all learners.

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THE BORDER WALKING JOURNAL

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BORDERLANDS CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES (BoCES)
NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
MSC 3SPE, P.O. BOX 30001
LAS CRUCES, NM 88003-8001
575-646-5973

Direct all inquiries to: The BoCES office at the above address.

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Welcome to New Mexico The Land of Enchantment
Deaf Education in a Rural State: Concerns Regarding Teacher Training and Cultural Diversity

Kathleen M. Chinn, Ed.D.
Eric J. López, Ph.D.
Loretta Salas, Ed.D
New Mexico State University

Abstract

This survey gathered information regarding degree, licensure, and ethnic status of teachers serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children in New Mexico. Information about characteristics of the children being served was also gathered. Findings indicated that 9 (18%) of teachers polled had training in deaf education. Those teachers were in larger cities. In rural school programs, 25 (52%) of teachers had Bachelor’s degrees and 23 (48%) had Master’s degrees. Only 16 (33%) had majored in Special Education; 23 (48%) had majors other than Special Education. The predominant culture of the teachers was non-Hispanic, White 43 (90%); while 131 (72%) of the students were of diverse cultures. Student placement varied from inclusive to self-contained. A list of multicultural classroom activities to be incorporated into the deaf student’s curriculum was also provided.

Concerns Regarding Teacher Training and Cultural Diversity

The state of New Mexico currently certifies all teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing children under a generalist special education licensure. This generalist special education certification allows the state of New Mexico to hire teachers with Special Education degrees to teach any child in special education regardless of disability. This procedure works well in responding to the demand for teachers in rural areas. However, because the education of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing is a uniquely specialized field, this generalist special education certification may be inappropriate for teachers serving the needs of those children. In this paper, the capital “D” in Deaf refers to the Deaf Culture whereas deaf with a lower case “d” indicates a condition of hearing loss.

Little information is known about the training and skill levels of teachers serving rural deaf and hard-of-hearing children in New Mexico. Data was gathered using a questionnaire-survey approach.

Chinn (1999) reported a lack of information regarding skill levels of teachers serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children in New Mexico. Specifically, there was little information about ethnicity and training levels of New Mexican teachers who are serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Nationally, White, non-Hispanic teachers of the deaf tend to comprise about 91% of the teachers of the deaf and hard-of-hearing (Andrews and Jordan, 1993). It has been suggested that teachers of Anglo origin tend to use less cultural emphasis in their teaching methods (Lummer, 1999; Chinn & Poel, 2002; Poel & Chinn, 2004). This may be distressing as cultural emphasis has been established as an important aspect of curricula for instruction of deaf and hard-of-hearing children (Christensen & Delgado, 1993). Further, non-English speaking children are often over-referred for other disabilities such as learning disabilities, mental retardation and emotional or behavioral disabilities (Hammam, 2004; Mastroperri and Scruggs, 2004).
In addition to the ethnic minority issues above, Deaf culture issues must be addressed. Children in rural areas have the same needs as deaf and hard-of-hearing children in large public schools. In fact, they may be more isolated due to the smaller number of Deaf adults in rural communities. Andrews and Jordan (1993) reported only seven percent of teachers for deaf and hard-of-hearing children are deaf or hard of hearing themselves. Furthermore, a larger percentage of children in rural areas have hearing parents. Most deaf adults prefer to live and raise their deaf children in metropolitan areas where there is a better chance of meeting and socializing with other Deaf community members. Therefore, deaf children in rural areas may have parents who are unaware of the Deaf Community and other isolating factors regarding their children’s deafness. Thus, it is imperative that teachers who work with children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing be trained in programs that have a deaf education focus.

The purpose of this investigation was twofold. First, the characteristics of deaf and hard-of-hearing children being served in rural public schools in New Mexico were to be obtained. Secondly, the characteristics of teachers serving these children were to be obtained. The results of this investigation provide teacher-training institutions with data that allows them to focus training in areas of weakness within the state. The results once disseminated, would allow school districts the opportunity to provide professional development for their special education and emergency hired teachers working with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Investigation findings, indicative of shortages of skilled teachers for the deaf and hard of hearing, would suggest to the New Mexico State Department of Education that changes are required in order to meet the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in rural New Mexico.

**METHODS**

This study was qualitative in design. Demographic data were acquired through a survey that contained a two-part questionnaire. This project investigated the types of services available to children who are deaf and hard of hearing in rural New Mexico. Demographic data obtained through the investigation provided information regarding the needs of rural programs serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services reported the number of deaf and hard of hearing school-age children in New Mexico for the 2003-2004 school as 516 deaf and hard of hearing school-age children being served in New Mexico public schools (OSEERS, 2004). At the time of this study, 410 of 456 children were hard of hearing while 94 were deaf (NMSDE, 1999).

**PARTICIPANTS**

New Mexico State Department of Education data at the time of the survey consisted of 456 deaf and hard of hearing school-age children served in 50 public schools. The 50 public schools serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children were surveyed via mailed out questionnaires. Of the 50 public schools targeted, 48 teachers from 25 of the targeted schools responded to the survey. Forty-eight teachers reported data on themselves (Table 1) and reported data on 183 students (Table 2).

**TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS**

Hearing Status and Ethnicity. Forty-three (90%) of the teachers were Anglo, 3 (6%) were Hispanic, and 1 (2%) were African American. Forty-seven (98%) of the teachers who responded were hearing; one was hard of hearing.

**DEGREES**

Forty-eight teachers reported their “Education level.” Responses from teachers serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children indicated that, 25 (52%) had only bachelor’s degrees; while 23 (48%) had at least a master’s degree. Five (10%) of those teachers had degrees in deaf education. Four (8%) had special education majors with a deafness emphasis. All of the teachers with deaf education majors and deaf-education-area-emphasis majors were working in non-rural areas such as Albuquerque or Las Cruces. Sixteen (33%) had degrees in Special Education. Twenty-three (48%) had degrees in other fields.

**TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

Teacher certification questions for teachers serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children indicated that, 4 (8%) had specific Deaf Education certification; 17 (35%) had Special Education teaching certificates; 17 (35%) had teaching certification in areas other than special education; and 8 (17%) either had no certification or did not respond to the question.
Results from the national licensure and professional affiliation questions revealed that, 7 (15%) of teachers had national licensure in a professional teaching field such as Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) while 2 (4%) had Council for the Education of the Deaf (CED) licensure. Only 9 total respondents reported to have memberships in professional organizations (7 or 14% in CEC; 2 or 4% in CED). See Table 1 for teacher education characteristics. The mean number of years teaching experience was 15 with a range from 2 years to 38 years.

**Research Design and Analysis**

This study was qualitative gathering demographic information through a survey sent to 50 public school administrators. Generally, the questionnaire follows that reported in Poel and Chinn, (2004).

**Instrument**

Questionnaires for the survey were developed in two sets. The first set of questions related to characteristics of students and academic placement. The second set of questions related to characteristics of the teachers serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Questions varied in type and scope. Some questions required numeric answers, such as “How many deaf children do you serve in your classroom?” Other questions presented choices, such as the ethnicity question: “What is your ethnic group? African American_____ American Indian_____ Hispanic_____ Anglo_____ Other (specify).” Some questions were open ended, such as, “What teaching certificate(s) do you hold?”

**Student-Related Questions**

Student-related questions consisted of requests for number of students served by the teacher, hearing status of children, (i.e., deaf or hard of hearing), grade level, language of home environment, parental hearing status, use of sign language in the home, communication mode used in the classroom, educational placement (i.e., inclusion information), interpreter information, use of assistive listening devices, and ethnic group.

**Teacher-Related Questions**

Teacher-related questions consisted of requests for information regarding college degree(s), college degree major, teaching certification, national licensure, professional associations, years experience, hearing status, and ethnic group. Responses were recorded into a computer database on CRUNCH4 software (CRUNCH, 1992). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

**General Procedures**

Questionnaires were developed and the standard protocol was followed regarding the Institutional Review Board application for use of human subjects in research. The Institutional Review granted permission for the survey. Surveys were sent to the special directors of each of the 50 school districts. Special education directors were asked to distribute the questionnaires to teachers in charge of educational plans for children who were deaf or hard of hearing. Teachers were requested through a cover letter to fill out the information regarding students and themselves and to return the questionnaire in the enclosed business reply envelope.

**Results**

In order to determine what type of services rural New Mexican deaf and hard of hearing children are receiving, 50 public schools were surveyed with the following results. Fifty percent of the survey forms were returned. Data from those returned forms provided the following information on 183 children (43% of the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing children reported by the state department to be receiving services in New Mexico public schools). Of the 183 students, 127 were hard of hearing while 56 were deaf. See Figure 1.
Table (1)
Respondent’s (Teacher) Demographics (N=48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/Factor</th>
<th>Levels/Conditions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Sp. Ed Deaf Emphasis</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Education</td>
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<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did not Report</td>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Memberships</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CEC</td>
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<td>15</td>
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</table>

Proportion of Deaf to Hard of Hearing Students Reported From Survey

Students

Legend: The proportion of Deaf to Hard of Hearing Students
56 (31 %)  Deaf; 127 (69%) Hard of Hearing
Figure 1
One hundred twenty of the teachers’ sources for information on their pupil(s)’ hearing capabilities came from diagnostic evaluation reports while 63 sources came from word of mouth sources such as; parents, speech language pathologists, interpreters and supervisors. Ten sources were reported as unknown.

**STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS**

*Ethnicity:* Student ethnicity was requested through the questionnaire. Results indicated that 52 (28%) were Anglo, 74 (40%) of the students were Hispanic. Two (1%) were African American, 54 (30%) were American Indian, and one (.5%) was Asian or other. Reports of home language of the children served indicated that 101 (55%) of the children’s home language was English, 28 (15%) was Spanish, and 3 (2%) was American Sign Language (ASL), and 48 (27%) was Navajo. The parental hearing status question revealed that 5 (2%) of the families had hearing loss in at least one parent.

**GRADE LEVEL**

Forty-three (23%) children were served in preschool. Fifty-nine (32%) of the students served were in elementary schools; 42 (23%) were served in middle schools; and 39 (21%) were served in high schools. Three (2%) were home schooled.

**ACADEMIC PLACEMENT**

Placement information for students who were deaf results indicated that 22 (29%) of the deaf students were fully mainstreamed with 18 having interpreters. Twenty-nine (39%) of the deaf children were partially mainstreamed and almost all of them had interpreters. Ten (13%) of the deaf children were placed in self-contained classrooms for the deaf and hard of hearing. All of those children were from non-rural areas such as Albuquerque or Las Cruces. Eleven (15%) of the deaf children were self-contained in a general special education classroom; five of those children who were deaf had interpreters.

Seventy-three (64%) of the hard-of-hearing students were fully mainstreamed with five having interpreters. Twenty-three (21%) of the hard-of-hearing children were partially mainstreamed; seven of those had interpreters. Two (2%) of the hard-of-hearing children were educated in self-contained classrooms for the deaf and hard of hearing. All of those children were from non-rural areas such as Albuquerque or Las Cruces. Sixteen (14%) of the hard-of-hearing children were self-contained in a general special education classroom; five of those hard-of-hearing children had interpreters. Three children were home schooled. Data in section appears inflated due to double reporting by teachers.

**HOME COMMUNICATION MODE**

Twenty-eight (50%) of the parents of children who were deaf were reported to use sign language at home albeit in limited amounts for some families. Only 9 (7%) of the parents of children who were hard of hearing used any sign language at home.

**COMMUNICATION MODE**

Information regarding communication in the academic setting was elicited via the questionnaire. Communication mode information was requested for conversation and instructional purposes. Findings indicated that for deaf students: speech was used for 5 (9%) percent of the students, Total Communication or, Signed English was used for 17 (30%) of the students, a pidgin sign language was used for 9 (16%) of the students, and ASL was used for 25 (45%) of the students. For hard-of-hearing students: speech was used for 74 (61%) of the students, Total Communication or Signed English was used for 43 (36%) of the students, and ASL was used for 4 (3%) three percent of the students.

**AMPLIFICATION**

Fifty-four (96%) of the children who were deaf used amplification either in the form of hearing aids or FM units. Sixty-three (50%) of the children who were hard of hearing used some form of amplification either hearing aids or FM units. See Table 2.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This project surveyed teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing school children in rural New Mexico. The purpose of the study was to investigate the services provided to deaf and hard of hearing students and to ascertain characteristics of those children and their teachers. Information from the study provides the State Department of Education and teacher-training programs with information regarding the need for teachers and professional growth programs in the state of New Mexico.
Table (2)
Student’s Demographics (Deaf N = 56 HH N = 127 = Total N 183)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/Factor</th>
<th>Levels/Conditions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Status</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
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<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Academic Placement</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Partial Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing Aids/FM Units</td>
<td>Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results revealed that 16 or 33% of the teachers surveyed who were serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children in public schools have professional training in the area of special education. Furthermore, only 9 (18%) of the teachers had specific degrees in deaf education. New Mexico licenses teachers for the deaf under a Generalist Special Education certificate. A generalist special education certification allows more school districts to hire from a larger pool of teachers for children being served under IDEA. A negative aspect for New Mexico deaf education trained teachers is that, although he or she may be deaf education trained, the certification never indicates deaf-education qualifications. A possibly more disheartening aspect is that, any teacher with special education certification may teach deaf and hard-of-hearing children in New Mexico regardless of having no deaf education course work. For that reason this survey asked for information regarding specific college degree and major.

It is of great concern that the majority of teachers serving children with hearing loss are not trained in deaf education, a very special area.
Seventy percent of the states in the U.S. require a separate certification, different from Special Education, for deaf educators (Chinn, 1999). Deaf education is considered by most states as a very specialized field usually requiring a master’s degree for national licensure. This investigation found that 25 (52%) of the teachers surveyed had only Bachelor’s degrees and only one of them was in Deaf Education.

In addition to training concerns, the ethnic distribution of teachers serving children who are deaf and hard of hearing is skewed when compared to the population they serve. In this study 3 (6%) of the 48 teachers were Hispanic, whereas 74 (40%) of the 183 children served were of Hispanic ethnic origin. Further, there were no Native American teachers compared to 48 Native American students. Multicultural focus has been mandated for deaf education curricula. Moreover, according to Lummer (1999), Anglo teachers tend to place less emphasis on cultural education. This suggests that the children in New Mexico may not be receiving the culturally enriched education mandated not only by best practices but by IDEA.

American Sign Language is an integral part of the Deaf Culture. To that end, the majority of hard-of-hearing children served in this study were communicated with via speech mode, while most deaf children used some form of sign system. The majority of children in this study (approximately 90%) were also mainstreamed; of these, 86% of the deaf had interpreters in the inclusion setting. This supports that sign language is being used where needed. One should be cautioned however, that many hard-of-hearing children can do well academically and socially when they communicate via a sign mode. Therefore, they should be given this option.

Only about 117 or 64% of the children reportedly used some form of amplification. Specifically, 96% of the deaf children used amplification while only 50% of the hard-of-hearing children used some sort of amplification. That 50% of amplified hard-of-hearing children is a concern, considering that they benefit more than deaf children do from amplification. Therefore, this study suggests the need to provide the teachers of these children with professional development regarding the use and trouble shooting of hearing aids and FM units in classrooms for children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

A limitation of this study is that survey response was disproportionate to the State Department’s report of percentages of children who were deaf as compared to those who were hard of hearing. Specifically, the state of New Mexico statistics suggests a deaf to hard of hearing ratio of respectively 20% to 80% (NMSDE, 1999). However, survey respondents suggest a ratio of respectively 31% to 69%. It is likely that the differences herein are due to unreturned surveys. It is also possible that some hard of hearing children may not have been recognized by teachers and administrators. It is possible that in New Mexico many hard of hearing children are not being served or are minimally served (Jacob Pino, Outreach Coordinator for New Mexico School for the Deaf, personal communication, October 22, 2004).

Other limitations of this study include the manner in which teachers serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing are certified. That is New Mexico provides a generalist Special Education certification. This certification allows any teacher with a special education degree to teach deaf education. It is up to the school district to decide on qualification. Thus this study was unable to evaluate teaching skills related to deaf education. Another limitation to this study is that surveys were sent to school principals. Therefore, it is unknown as to how many teachers received the survey versus how many supervisors filled out the information. Further, the researchers failed to include gender on the questionnaire. Although not critical, gender information would have given a better overall picture of the group. In general, New Mexico is a unique state with ethnic group proportions and teacher education certification different from numerous other states. Therefore, generalization to other states is limited. For future studies, gender should be added as well as a question that elicits information on sign language and deaf culture training of the teachers surveyed. In addition, perhaps only a survey of teacher information should be conducted rather than teacher and student information survey.

In conclusion, results of this study indicate that for the most part, teachers in New Mexico are not specifically trained to work in the field of deaf education, yet many are doing just that.
The concern is that Deaf Education is a specialized field which usually requires a Master’s degree to acquire enough knowledge to work with children with hearing loss. These children have special communication needs and language delay that affect reading, writing and other academic areas. Further, ethnic differences suggest that teachers may not be familiar with the culture of the indigenous Native American populations and Hispanic culture so prevalent in the Southwest as well as the Deaf Culture. Without a solid background in multicultural aspects of deafness, a teacher may not provide enough cultural focus in the education process for deaf and hard-of-hearing children who have multicultural backgrounds. In short, New Mexican children who are deaf and hard of hearing may not be receiving adequate services. It may be of benefit to children and teachers of children who are deaf and hard of hearing for the state of New Mexico to move to a specialized teaching certificate for individuals wishing to teach in the area of Deaf Education.

Finally, the following items are suggestions that teachers may use to add ethnic and cultural diversity teaching to the educational curriculum. The implication being that multiculturalism is not a specific day but a way of living and teaching.

• Teach holiday traditions from the perspective of different cultures: i.e. Christmas from Hispanic, Asian, and European traditions.

• Relate traditional season festivities of all cultures. i.e., December - Christmas, Chanaka, Quanza, Ramadan. Spring - Easter, Passover, Feast of Abraham (Haj), Powwows.

• Have students present their home cultures and various traditions and foods through class language activities.

• Choose a variety of reading literature in the classroom that covers diversity of cultures and countries.

• Do language units on world cultures and countries. Incorporate foods, dress, holidays, language phrases, and geographic areas. Invite a diversity of world people to come talk to the class.

• Expose children in the classroom to different languages by teaching them to say greetings and short useful phrases in several different languages, including sign language.

• Include Deaf Culture in the curriculum. Invite Deaf role models to come tell stories and visit. Use Deaf folktales in reading and ASL signing. Teach about Deaf Universities, Deaf Olympics, Famous Deaf people, and careers popular with Deaf individuals.

Results of this study suggest that, it may be appropriate for the state of New Mexico to move to a specialized certification for deaf education separate from special education. This change would ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing children in rural New Mexico are served more appropriately. Further suggestions were made for incorporating ethnic and cultural diversity items into the curriculum.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

A college educated workforce is considered an essential element in improving economic development (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004). Conversely, an undereducated workforce results in decreased earning ability, thus lower economic status, and the inability to meet the demands of a technology-based workplace (Barro & Sala-i-Martin, 1995; Bello, 2000; Kochhar, 2005). For these reasons, access to college is a very important investment especially for Latinos/as whose population has increased substantially nationwide (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). Access to college for Latinos/as is even more pressing in U.S. states like New Mexico, where there is a large concentration of Latinos/as.

Despite, the connection between economic development and education, Latinos/as had the lowest educational attainment nationally compared to all other ethnic groups as of 2004 (Chapa & De La Rosa). Because of the low educational attainment, researchers have attempted to identify the barriers that have contributed to Latinos/as’ low participation in college. Studies have recognized that finances are a chief problem for Latinos/as to gain access to college. For example, in 2004, the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education found that poverty adversely impacted access (Chambers, Hauptman, Longanecker, & Landrum). The effect of poverty is especially critical when its rate for Latinos/as in New Mexico was 23% compared to 10% of Whites (Sierra, 2004). Additionally, researchers found that poverty impacted access in a number of ways including full-time attendance and attrition rates (Chambers et al., 2004). That is, low-income students were less likely to attend college full-time, but more likely to drop-out.

To maximize the full potential of a state’s economic development, college enrollment should reflect a state’s racial and ethnic make up. However, in New Mexico, while the Latino/a population was estimated to be 44% in 2005 (United States Census Bureau), the Latino/a college enrollment rate in the fall semester of 2005 was 37% (New Mexico Department of Higher Education). While the difference may not seem large, it is important to note that the state’s average annual attrition rate for full-time Latino/a college students between 1997 and 2002 was just over 42%, leaving a low percentage that persist in college (Chambers et al., 2004). Nationally, while Latinos/as made up approximately 14% of the population in 2004 (United States Census Bureau) they represented 10.5% of college students the same year (United States Department of Education, 2006). Although Latino/a enrollment is projected to increase by 73% by 2015 (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2005), that may not come to bear if the following problems are not addressed.

THE PROBLEMS: ACCESS, FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY, AND HIDDEN OBSTACLES

Attempts have been made to increase access to college for traditionally underrepresented students including Latinos/as. However the issue remains, as considerable change has yet to occur as noted above. One of the obstacles to college access for Latinos/as is the lack of financial resources (Chambers, et al., 2004). The lack of resources is compounded by the growing trend of states using merit rather than need-based scholarships which has reduced the funds for students with economic need (Heller, 2000). The trend is particularly problematic for Latinos/as, who historically have had lower family income levels. Studies have demonstrated the negative impact of merit-based scholarships on minority populations and individuals with low socio-economic status (Redd, 2003; Heller, 2000). There has been a decline in low-income enrollment in the states that have adopted merit-based scholarships (Redd, 2003). Also, the trend towards merit-based scholarships is disconcerting because as of 2005, these scholarships had expanded to close to 20 states, including New Mexico (Singell, Wadell, & Curs, 2006). The increase in merit-based scholarships has been due to their popularity with policymakers and middle-class voters.
An important contrast is that Latino/a students qualify at a higher rate, 11% greater, for need-based grants and scholarships in comparison to White students (Heller, 2000). This statistic indicates that the movement toward merit-based scholarships adversely impacts Latinos/as compared to other ethnic groups. Contributing to the problem is the finding that overall, individuals from lower income families and ethnic minorities are reluctant to take out student loans (Millet & MacKenzie, 1996). Moreover, students relying on other sources of aid such as loans, savings, or personal assets are not as likely to complete their education in comparison to students receiving grants (Nevarez, 2001). It is because of the above situation and problems that we set out to analyze the impact of the Legislative Lottery Scholarship (LLS) on Latinos/as at New Mexico State University (NMSU). The following describes the methods we used for our study.

RESEARCH METHODS

We set out to compare Latino/a enrollment at NMSU from the beginning of the scholarship, 1998 to 2005, the most recent data available when we conducted the study, and compare it to the same number of years prior to the scholarship; that is, from 1991 to 1997. However, because not all the data were available from 1991, we began our analysis from 1993, the year in which the data were available. To shed light on these data, we made comparisons with White students, the majority group of students at NMSU. In addition, we made comparisons based on low income status. Low-income was defined as those students who completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and whose family contribution for tuition was $0.00. Most of the data were collected from the university’s institutional research department. However, the university’s financial aid office provided the low-income data because the office receives the low income classifications through financial aid applications. We tested the following hypotheses to discover whether New Mexico’s Legislative Lottery Scholarship had adversely impacted Latino/a and low-income students at NMSU just as the literature suggests other state funded merit-based scholarships have in other colleges:

1. Since the LLS, Latino/a undergraduate enrollment linearly decreased.
2. Since the LLS, Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment linearly decreased.
3. Latino/a undergraduate enrollment was less than White enrollment before the LLS.
4. Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment was less than White low-income enrollment before the LLS.
5. Latino/a undergraduate enrollment was less than White enrollment since the LLS.
6. Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment was less than White low-income enrollment since the LLS.
7. There were less Latino/a LLS recipients than White recipients.
8. There were less Latino/a low-income LLS recipients than White low-income recipients.

To test the first two hypotheses, Pearson product correlations were used between the two variables of undergraduate enrollment and the years before and since the LLS. Pearson product correlations test what type of relationship exists between two variables. The rest of the hypotheses were tested with t-tests for proportions. These tests determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between two means. We set an alpha level of .05 for significance for both statistical tests as is customary in the social sciences, including education. With an alpha level of .05, we could be 95% confident that our results were not due to chance alone. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) software program. The following presents the results of the hypotheses we tested.

RESULTS

The first two hypotheses which were tested with correlations, were rejected. Although, the first hypothesis reached significance, it was in the opposite direction as hypothesized, that is, Latino/a undergraduate enrollment increased since the LLS ($r(16) = .92$, $p = .004$). The second hypothesis was rejected because Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment increased, leveled off, then decreased since the LLS ($r(16) = -.26$, $p = .49$). Figure 1 is a graph of Latino/a undergraduate enrollment since the LLS.
Figure 1. Latino/a undergraduate enrollment since the LLS

![Latino UG Enrollment graph]

Figure 2 illustrates the Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment since the LLS

![Latino Low-income UG Enrollment graph]
For the remaining hypotheses which were tested with t-tests for proportions, all but hypothesis 7 were accepted. The results for hypothesis 3 showed that White undergraduate enrollment was higher than Latino/a enrollment prior to the LLS, t(14) = 11.39, p<.0001. Hypothesis 4 showed that Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment was lower than White enrollment before the LLS, t(4) = 8.3, p .001. Hypothesis 5 showed that Latino/a undergraduate enrollment was less than White enrollment since the LLS, t(16) = 4.3, p .0005. Hypothesis 6 found that Latino/a low-income enrollment was less than White enrollment since the LLS, t(16) = 44.6, p .0001. Hypothesis 7 showed that there were more Latino/a undergraduate lottery recipients than White recipients, t(16) = 2.0, p.06. Lastly, hypothesis 8 found that low-income undergraduate Latinos/as received less LLS scholarships than Whites, t(16) = 2.7 p 0.16. In the following, we present our analysis of the above results.

ANALYSIS

Enrollment Before the LLS

Before the LLS, results indicated that Latino/a undergraduate enrollment was less than White enrollment and that Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment was less than White low-income enrollment at NMSU. These results confirm that funding and financial aid are primary concerns of minority students, including Latinos/as (Clayton, 1993). The results also verify that Latinos/as face an increased burden in comparison to other racial groups with regard to meeting college expenses. Other research supporting this conclusion includes the Pew Hispanic Center (2004), which found that between 1999–2000, 57% of Latino/a undergraduates had unmet financial need compared to 41% of Whites. In addition, as stated previously, Latinos/as and other minorities are reluctant to take out student loans (Millet & Mackenzie, 1996). Lastly, the results support the notion that poverty negatively affects access, full-time attendance, and attrition (Chambers, et al., 2004).

The type of college being selected by different ethnic groups may also explain enrollment differences and is related to college expenses. Fry (2005) found a significant difference in enrollment between 1996 and 2001 in which Whites tended to increase enrollment primarily in four-year colleges while Latinos/as concentrated on community colleges (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003; Fry, 2005). Another factor that may explain the differences between Latino/a and White enrollment is preparation. A majority of Latino/a students attend schools that are not preparing students for college as well as their White counterparts. As an example, a study conducted by Fry (2005), explained the problems that appear to be systemic in the public schools Latinos/as attend. Specifically, these schools are large, have a high teacher to student ratio with a considerable proportion of the student body coming from a low–socioeconomic background. These variables are significant because schools with a large student body population tend to have higher drop out rates. And, the elevated student-to-teacher ratio has substantial repercussions associated with lower school performance. Furthermore, the prevalence of these problems is found in schools with a higher concentration of low-income families, families who have little political power to pressure schools to improve. For example, in a 2004 report, the Pew Hispanic Center found that although Latino/as students that graduate from high school are just as likely to attend a college as White high school graduates, they are half as likely to earn a bachelor’s degree. Moreover, the same study found that Latino/a students are not as well prepared for college as their White peers. Specifically, the Latinos/as that were best prepared for college fared worse than their White counterparts; by the same token, the least prepared Latinos/as fared worse than the least prepared White classmates (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004).

An additional factor that may have had a detrimental impact on Latino/a enrollment includes the difficulty in navigating financial aid applications and packages (Dynarski, 2002). Students wanting to qualify for need-based aid from the federal government have to complete the Free Application Federal Student Aid form. However, because many Latinos/as are first generation college students, they may have little help from family members or friends that are familiar with completing the form.

Undergraduate Enrollment since the LLS

Although it was predicted that Latino/a undergraduate enrollment would decrease, Latino/a enrollment actually increased since the LLS. We believe that Latino/a enrollment at NMSU increased in pace with the increased Latino/a population in New Mexico. Despite the increase in enrollment, Latino/a undergraduate enrollment was still less than White undergraduate enrollment. Since there is no evidence that the LLS will be terminated, the lag between Latino/a and White enrollment is likely to continue.
The Latino/a population in New Mexico is growing at a much faster pace than the White population (United States Census, 2005). The 2005 American Community Survey reported that the Latino/a population is currently the majority ethnic group in the state with nearly 44% of the state’s population compared to the just over 43% of the White population. As the Latino/a population continues to grow, the Latino/a enrollment at NMSU should reflect New Mexico’s Latino/a population increase. It should be noted that although the results reflect an increase in Latino/a enrollment since the LLS, White student enrollment remains well above Latino/a enrollment. As of 2005, there were over 52% White undergraduate students, in comparison to just over 41% Latino/a undergraduate students at NMSU (New Mexico State University, 2006). The state average for Latino/a undergraduates in 2006 was 37% (New Mexico Higher Education Department) compared to 44% which was the estimated Latino/a population for the same year (United States Census Bureau). Given New Mexico’s ethnic make-up, the results suggest that Latino/a undergraduate enrollment continues to lag behind. The enrollment is evidently inequitable considering the growing Latino/a population and at the same time, the LLS is not benefiting the Latino/a population at the same rate as the White population. These conditions will keep the entire state behind in terms of educational attainment and economic development.

**Low-income Undergraduate Enrollment since the LLS**

We found that since the LLS, Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment initially increased, leveled off, and then decreased. Additionally, the data demonstrated that since the LLS, White low-income undergraduate enrollment linearly decreased. Finally, the data showed that Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment was less than White low-income undergraduate enrollment since the LLS. We confirmed that at NMSU declining enrollment for low-income Latinos/as is evidence that affordability is a fundamental concern. We also found that since the LLS, Latino/a low-income undergraduate enrollment was less than White low-income undergraduate enrollment, which suggests that low-income Latinos/as have to overcome more obstacles than low-income Whites. Factors such as language barriers, job discrimination, and *de facto* segregation are but a few of the issues that may explain the difference (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Another possible factor is that for the most part; Latinos/as enroll in community colleges (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003). And, although community colleges have an “open door” policy (Cohen and Brawer, 2003); they have been associated with low percentages of degree attainment (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004). Therefore, this study suggests that Latinos may be limiting themselves by attending community colleges and thereby decreasing their chances of student success. The lack of student of success in the end, will be felt economically in communities across the nation.

**Latino/a and White LLS Recipient Rates**

Latinos/as were not found to have significantly lower LLS recipient rates compared to White recipients. However, previous studies have found that Latinos/as are not qualifying for merit-based scholarships at the same rate as Whites (Finken, 2004; Redd, 2003). On the other hand, Latino/a low-income LLS recipient rates were significantly lower than White low-income recipient rates. We conclude that due to New Mexico’s trend of a growing Latino/a population, more Latinos/as may be benefiting from the LLS. However, low-income Latinos/as are not benefiting from the LLS at the same rate, demonstrating an inequity in the scholarship. Yet, as previously mentioned, merit-based scholarships are very popular with voters and policymakers. It is possible that their popularity stems from their primary funding which are state supported lotteries, lotteries which tend to be disproportionately played by low-income individuals. However, as we have shown, low-income people are not the main beneficiaries of the scholarships.

Many of the variables previously discussed also help explain the findings between the low-income groups. For example, Farrell (2004) noted that a lower percentage of first year college students from high poverty levels were less likely to receive a scholarship. Binder and Ganderton (2001) found that more affluent, White students benefited more from the LLS at the University of New Mexico. They pointed out that “the program disproportionately attracts wealthier and less able students;” additionally, they noted that “less capable students among the middle and upper classes will comprise the bulk of new enrollments” as a result of the LLS (p. 22). Based on the ACT (American College Testing) and GPA (Grade Point Average) data, the researchers found “less capable” students enrolling at the University of New Mexico because of the LLS. Although it may be argued that these findings may be a function of the university rather than the LLS, further research may help clarify the issue.
In light of the current findings and other evidence, changes can be made to the LLS that may result in increased enrollment of low-income and traditionally underrepresented students, including Latinos/as.

**Recommendations for the LLS**

Based on our research we recommend that a number of changes be made to the LLS. First, need-based aid should be increased by allocating a portion of the scholarship to be based on economic need. Second, the full-time enrollment requirement currently in place to maintain the scholarship should be eliminated. Third, the immediate enrollment clause after high school graduation in order to be awarded the scholarship should be removed. Fourth, the administrative costs to run the scholarship should be decreased to increase the award to cover student fees as well as tuition. Fifth, allow students to re-qualify if they fail to meet the scholarship requirements in a semester. Lastly, redirect some administrative costs to better promote the scholarship in English and Spanish to potential students in schools with high percentages of Latinos/as and low-income families.

**Conclusion**

If we are committed to the common good, then more people need access to college. It is with this goal in mind that we make the recommended changes to the LLS. The recent trend of states creating scholarships to increase merit-based aid is a serious concern because traditionally underrepresented groups, such as Latino/a and low-income students are not benefiting from these scholarships at the same rate as more traditionally represented groups. In fact, research suggests that merit based scholarships such as the LLS, are not helping a large sector of the population that needs the aid. The issue is an especially critical one for New Mexico, a state where Latinos/as are the majority in terms of population, but are not enrolling in college in a way that reflects the state’s population. And so, a concerted effort must be made to increase access to Latinos/as and to low-income students. By doing so, New Mexico policymakers will significantly improve college access and increase the possibility of greater economic development. Otherwise, we will continue to make an incomplete investment in ourselves, not only as a state, but also as a nation.

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The Leadership Academy
An Alternative Pedagogical Model at John Adams Middle School

Abe Luján Armendáriz, Ph.D.
New Mexico State University

Abstract

This research provides an in-depth review of an educational leadership model that is being implemented in a middle school setting. The school uses an academy approach derived from the school-within-a-school concept and design. The Leadership Academy concept is collaborative in nature and is based on the idea of shared governance and the creation of empowerment among staff and student populations. This paradigm shift has positively affected the at-risk student population, drop-out rates, low scores on achievement tests, and parental involvement and engagement in the educational process. Components of academy model variations are reviewed and compared with the John Adams Middle School Academy design. Advantages and disadvantages are presented, as well as practical and theoretical applications.

The United States of America has been, is, and always will be faced with many challenges when trying to create an educational system that is structured to meet the ever-changing needs of our nation’s student populations. The task of providing equitable programs that fulfill the requirements of the educational mandates placed on individual schools while staying within limited, “shoestring” budgets can create a daily burden for today’s educational leaders. This challenge, coupled with the diversity of our student population, creates a need for innovative leadership models. It is time to integrate well-balanced, collaborative educational leadership models into our nation’s schools. In the words of Paulo Freire (1970), “The solution is not to integrate [minority students] into the structure…, but to transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves” (p.74).

Fortunately, contemporary pedagogical research is focusing on creating and implementing alternative educational administrative models better suited to meet the needs of our country’s diverse student population. These alternative models call for a paradigm shift away from traditional hierarchical administrative modes toward a model that is more collaborative in nature. Theoretically, this pedagogical model will foster shared governance and empowerment among all stakeholders in our respective educational environments. The Leadership Academy model, a school-within-a-school design, is an example of an innovative alternative approach to school leadership.

Increased evidence indicates that downsized school models can improve attendance rates and student behavior. These models are also associated with greater student satisfaction and increased student self-esteem (Dewees, 1999, p.3). Although the downsizing of an entire school is rarely feasible, it is possible to develop within the school a smaller educational unit with a separate educational program, its own staff and students, and its own budget. This model may be “an effective way to capture the benefits of smaller-scale schooling within large school buildings” (p. 4). With the design and implementation of the Leadership Academy model at John Adams Middle School, a group of educational visionaries has joined in a collaborative effort to empower students, parents, staff and community to create a place where students have the opportunity to learn and be successful.
A massive restructuring of our educational framework is needed if we, as educators, ever hope to provide a solid and meaningful education for all of our nation’s students. In *Paradigms: The business of discovering the future*, Joel Barker (1992), promoted a cognitive process known as “strategic exploration.” Educators must always look toward the future, anticipating possible paradigm shifts. It is critical that educational leaders be not only aware of but also prepared for these shifts in order to fulfill their leadership obligations.

Perhaps Richard F. Elmore (2000) stated the current school leadership dilemma best: Public schools and school systems, as they are presently constituted, are simply not led in ways that enable them to respond to the increasing demands they face under standards-based reform. Further, if schools, school systems, and their leaders respond to standards-based reforms the way they have responded to other attempts at broad scale reform of public education over the past century, they will fail massively and visibly, with an attendant loss of public confidence and serious consequences for public education (p. 2).

Elmore has suggested that throwing more resources into an old leadership style is futile since many of these traditional leaders cannot adequately explain how they are using the resources they already have (2002, p. 22). Grubb and Flessa (2006) have suggested that leadership restructuring is necessary because of the overwhelming number of duties that challenge today’s administrators. These duties include, but are not limited to, “hiring and perhaps firing teachers, coordinating bus schedules, mollifying angry parents, disciplining children, overseeing the cafeteria, supervising special education and other categorical programs, and responding to all the ‘stuff that walks in the door’” (p. 519). The authors have argued that it is time to stop relying on one “hero-principal” and begin examining non-traditional, collaborative approaches to school leadership (p. 521).

Trends in educational administrative reform point to a shift from a more traditional leadership structure to a more collaborative and cooperative leadership style. This shift is an attempt to address the current needs of our school communities by creating an increased sense of ownership for the school’s stakeholders and to promote shared leadership for parents, students, staff and the community.

One of the most prevalent reform structures is distributed leadership, a system designed to encourage shared leadership and participation among all stakeholders in our communities. This has been brought about due to the many critical issues facing our schools including but not limited to: high drop-out rates, low achievement test scores, at risk students, low teacher morale, poor attendance, large administrative work loads, administrative burn-out, increased identified students’ needs, and parental concerns. One of the biggest barriers to distributed leadership is the entrenched notion that school leadership depends on one leader—generally a principal or a superintendent (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004, p. 4). Decentralization of administration is an idea borrowed from the private sector, and it is a concept not easily embraced in the current educational culture. The premise is that improvement is only possible if those closest to the point at which decisions are enacted become the architects of these decisions (Walker & Dimmock, 2002).

Good examples of distributed leadership, in the form of the school-within-a-school model, already exist. One example is the California Academy Model, where a close family-like atmosphere is created and the use of an academic and career technical education program is implemented (Ravitch 2002). The Academy is a three-year program, and it is voluntary for students who wish to pursue academics relating to a career theme as selected by the Academy. The theme is based upon the local labor market and those fields that offer jobs with career “ladders.” Willing companies also participate in the program. The Academy commits to a partnership with employers, and students will receive a “mentor” to guide them during their junior year. These mentors are volunteer employees from participating companies. If performing well enough at the end of their junior year, students will be allowed to participate in an internship at participating companies to receive training in specified fields (Ravitch, 2002). This program helps prevent at-risk students from becoming drop-outs or dependent upon society for their life needs in the future.
Another program which utilizes this model is Philadelphia Academies, Incorporated. Their model allows 200-250 students within each Academy and operates as a four-year program for grades nine through twelve. Each Academy is assigned a program director/manager responsible for coordination and implementation. The model involves business participation and provides part-time employment opportunities for eleventh and twelfth grade students. Services delivered to the students include; job readiness skills training; career education and exposure; exposure to post-secondary education and training options; development of employment opportunities; job placement counseling for working students; and cultural activities. Since the program was implemented, Academy students have consistently out-performed their peers in measures such as attendance, promotion rates, and senior graduation rates (Philadelphia Academies Incorporated, 2007).

THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY MODEL AT JOHN ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

“Survival” is the one-word response Stan Agustin offered when asked about the reason for changing the administrative structure at John Adams Middle School (personal communication, September 19, 2004). Agustin, the school’s principal, cited many areas for improvement he needed to address, including teacher morale, student discipline, gang activity, and truancy. Realizing that he would not be able to single-handedly deal with all of these issues as he assumed the role of administrative leader at John Adams Middle School (JAMS), Agustin implemented a new leadership model, a “school-within-a-school” model, which took a collaborative approach to educational leadership.

The ultimate goals of the Leadership Academy were to personalize the school experience for students in order to provide them with a quality education in a safe environment, to offer teachers the added support to perform their educational duties, and to promote positive communication with parents. The objectives designed to meet these goals included: 1) defining rigid policies to control gang activity, violence, and general student discipline, 2) fostering the concept of collaborative decision making among the staff, 3) employing strategies to promote student ownership of their academic progress, 4) offering parents an improved and more specific role with regards to school involvement, and 5) restructuring the support services offered to students and parents.

The staff searched for and employed proven strategies and teaching methods to improve student achievement. They then aligned the academy’s curriculum into a plan for school-wide change that emphasized a comprehensive and personalized instructional program in a safe and positive learning environment. JAMS offered many personalized, individual instructional programs for students. The programs were designed to allow students to take responsibility for their actions and learn acceptable social behaviors.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A critical demographic analysis of John Adams Middle School student population was instrumental in the successful implementation of the Leadership Academy concept. Demographic studies helped to predict trends and inform school staff and community members of the needed interventions. This analysis also served to clarify the middle school’s mission and purpose while promoting collaboration.

The John Adams Middle School community is located on the West side of Albuquerque; east of Coors, north of central, south of Interstate 40, and west of the Rio Grande. It is situated in the south region of the Albuquerque public schools. It is a Latino populated community with an influx of immigrants becoming more pronounced.

Between 1994 and 2000, the middle school experienced an enrollment increase of 8.5% growing from 968 students in 1994 to 1050 students in 2000. An analysis of student ethnic distribution indicated a high level of cultural diversity. In 1997, the student body consisted of 4.3% African American, 13.7% Anglo American, 1.0% Asian American, 75.7% Hispanic American, and 4.9% Native American students. Of these students, 22.5% were English Language Learners (ELL). 45.1% qualified for free lunches, 8.46% dropped out of school annually, and the mobility rate was at 54.3%.
Also of importance was the number of students receiving special education services. In the School, 13 students were A-level (minimum service level), 30 were B-level (moderate service level), 83 were C-level (extensive service level), and 61 were D-level (maximum service level). This demographic analysis highlighted the need for an alternative pedagogical approach to help meet the educational demands of a pluralistic student population. Thus, allowing the school administration to personalize services to its student population. This personalization of services allowed both parents and students to actively participate in the educational process.

**Structure of the Academy**

At JAMS, the Leadership Academies were structured as a school within a school. A teacher from each grade level (sixth through eighth) was assigned as an Academy Director who acted as a leader for his or her grade. This person worked hand-in-hand with the school administrator. Along with carrying out the normal duties associated with teaching, Academy Directors took on the added responsibilities of (a) assisting with the opening of school at the start of the year, (b) overseeing the scheduling process, (c) attending regular weekly and monthly meetings, (d) planning and coordinating school activities, (e) monitoring and evaluating academic programs, (f) administering the Accountability Card program, (g) coordinating parent communications and involvement, (h) tracking student attendance and discipline, (i) assisting new teachers, and (j) supporting teacher morale.

Working in collaboration with Academy Directors were Team Leaders. These grade level teachers functioned as liaisons between the Academy Director and the “teams.” They recorded minutes of weekly team meetings and promoted parental involvement. They also kept a file on each student in the team and made in-school suspension referrals to the Academy Directors. Core Team Leaders were those teaching professionals empowered to coordinate the curriculum from one grade level to the next. Also, every Academy grade level had a counselor to personalize the support services to its students and parents.

One of the main components at JAMS was the Accountability Card, a written documentation of a student’s behavior and academic progress that parents had access to on a daily basis. This tool was used not only to place accountability on the student, but it also created accountability for teachers and parents. The students who chose to abide by school policy regarding appropriate behavior and who met satisfactory academic progress received positive recognition for their actions through a reward program conducted every four weeks. Students were empowered with an ownership program that allowed them to make key decisions for their school through a student leadership program.

One of the main goals of the academy was to increase parent and community involvement. A parent support group was established and met with the Academy Directors and the administration once a month. The parents provided input on various school activities and functions, collaboratively defining the direction of the school. Parents were encouraged to volunteer and engage in all aspects of the school. Monthly parent and family education workshops were provided to their community.

Many staff members participated in workshops to assist their students with test taking skills and to meet state content and academic achievement standards. The staff analyzed many critical factors before implementing an Educational Plan for Success (EPSS). Their ultimate goal was to implement an educational plan for each student within six years. The staff actively explored grant opportunities to enhance instructional programs and school-wide literacy programs.

Each teacher was required to develop a professional development portfolio. Included in the portfolio was a curriculum for the course, a daily lesson plan that included standards and school district benchmarks. Teachers included in their portfolios statements on technology, test taking strategies, bilingual approaches, and inclusion.

Students were encouraged to step up to the challenge of taking ownership of their own educational experience. Students kept graphs of their progress in class. John Adams Middle School also added a counselor in each grade level to give direct support to their students.
The counselors were housed in the academy and were able to give direct support immediately. Individual counseling, group counseling, and crisis support were provided. The counselors worked closely with youth assistance agencies and the school also had the YMCA provide extra support for its students.

When working with parents, the school had a formal parent meeting once a month. Parents were not solely utilized as fundraising sources; rather, their role was to understand and support the school. The school leadership sought input and implemented voting procedures in regard to proposed changes in the school. The school offered workshops for its parents. There was also a direct line for parents to obtain information and address concerns.

**Students’ Perspective**

The following table represents the results/comments that were taken from a survey given to random students at John Adams Middle School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Student Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. As a student at JAMS, tell us how the Leadership Academy Model of Administration has helped you in your studies/learning?</td>
<td>Helped me because I’m more organized and have more time to study. • Helped me be more responsible for my homework and the work I have to do for class. • Helped me by letting me be more creative, by helping me improve my study habits. • They push you to do your work to the best of your ability • It has made less fighting by separating the grades which has made it easier to learn. • They push you and are always on you to do your work to the best of your ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you find most rewarding about how things are done at JAMS through this model?</td>
<td>• That there is zero tolerance of behavior rules. • We are learning more than other schools. • The clean card parties, honor role, leadership, and enrichment classes. • How things are done for things like school dances, the students get to plan how things are going to be so it is more to our liking. • The school is run very well, the teachers are firm but fair and all students are treated equally, the punishment for student behaviors are handled nicely and the school is very clean thanks to the janitors and staff. • The kids could feel how it feels to take charge of your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you find most frustrating about how things are done at JAMS through this model.</td>
<td>• That when they send someone to the office they sometimes send them back to the class. • I don’t really have something frustrating. • Accountability cards, all the homework, getting lunch detention • I hate the dress code here at John Adams. Computers • The school does really miss what really goes on in the halls during passing period and lunches, teachers seem to other than that the school is great, a well run well functional school that I am proud to attend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Parents’ Perspective**

The following table represents the results/comments that were taken from a survey given to random parents at John Adams Middle School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Parents Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Describe the experience that you as a parent have had at John Adams Middle School through the Leadership Academy Concept of Administration? | • More structure and control over students’ needs and productivity: More planning and goal setting to meet each particular grade’s individual needs.  
• The leadership Academy concept has been a great communication tool between the teachers, students, and parents. The parents and teachers of the Academy meet once a month regarding issues and upcoming events. The concept of the Accountability Card for each student is a great tool for parents to check their son/daughters progress daily. Agenda books are excellent also for organization later on in life.  
• Excellent! I think that the teachers communicate with each other in the academy and coordinate the entire communication with the academy director and the other teachers. The teachers can share information with each other on the student’s progress and target problem areas early on. |
| 2. How has the administrative model facilitated the education of your child?    | • More clearly defined expectations within individual groups. More focus on “attention.”  
• If it wasn’t for the structured activity and schedule, my child would have not achieved the level of education necessary to go to high school with a good comfort level. Her confidence and desire to achieve a good education was instilled in middle school.  
• Teachers are more focused on student success. Teachers are more focused on their own professional development and their roles in making the whole educational process successful. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching and students are enthusiastic about learning. |

**Faculty Perspective**

The following table represents the results/comments that were taken from a survey given to random faculty at John Adams Middle School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Faculty Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. As a teacher, how has the Leadership Academy Model assisted you in being a more effective teacher? | • Peer Support, opportunity to grow professionally, cross-curricular planning.  
• The sixth grade leadership team helps me to communicate with students and parents effectively. The team is very caring, supportive.  
• Support in every aspect. Communication and caring.  
• The ability to communicate openly and freely is amazing. I feel I’m a better teacher now because I collaborate with other teachers and match my curriculum and talk about students and progress.  
• Allowed me to spend more time teaching and not dealing with behavior problems. |
The following table represents the results/comments that were taken from a survey given to random faculty at John Adams Middle School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SURVEY QUESTION</th>
<th>FACULTY RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. As a teacher, how has the Leadership Academy Model assisted you in being a more effective teacher?</td>
<td>• The Academy Model (teaming) is vital to effective teaching. The more teachers work together, plan curriculum together and discipline together, the more smoothly the process goes. I am totally dependent on my colleagues for encouragement, support, inspiration, problem solving, materials, emergency coverage, consistency and in every way presenting a united front to the students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. What are its strengths? | • Collaboration, vertical and horizontal alignment, peer learning, and teaching or coaching.  
• Improved communication and maximizing our potential.  
• Distribution of responsibilities and better communication.  
• Caring, supportive atmosphere--Our academy director is awesome/Very helpful.  
• SUPPORT  
• No bottlenecks for resolution of problems. Central location and contact. It allows administration to focus on administrative duties.  
• End of isolationism. Growth by the adoption of “best practices” learned from other teachers.  
• Provides an efficient vehicle for parent communication. |
| 3. What are some remaining challenges? | • Getting everyone to reach a common vision of such a technique and how it applies to the true enrichment of our students academic and social development.  
• Too many meetings, overcrowded elective classes during common preps, improved communication between academies (can we share agendas, minutes, etc.)  
• Losing teachers, a team that works well together should stay together.  
• Strong Leaders at all levels-getting teachers who are willing to buy in--somehow filtering out teachers who aren’t willing to work with the model.  
• We need better consequences for the few students (maybe 3-5) who need it.  
• Continued communication across grade levels  
• Common planning time, buy-in of all staff, compensation for additional duties, adequate coverage for lunch periods, web site dependability. |

**Principal’s Perspective**

In an interview with the principal, Stan Agustin (2004), he shared many of his personal and professional views on helping to create this change at John Adams Middle School. He said he had once made a comment that he wanted to be a collaborative leader and he had to find a system in which this would be possible. According to Agustin, the Leadership Academy Model provided for this while helping to ensure success of the entire school community at John Adams Middle School. Agustin said that he believes that the success of a school rides on getting more people actively involved in leadership positions.
Agustin said that he had worked at this school for fifteen years as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal, and observed a little bit of everything, including low teacher morale due to discipline, gang issues, school violence, and truancy. He shared that while serving in the position of assistant principal to one of the “greatest principals ever,” it had taken about eight years to develop and implement a very strong policy working with parents and staff to provide a safe environment. He said that even with these changes implemented, it was just enough to “stay above water.” Agustin said that he knew something had to change. He felt that they also needed to provide the students with a quality education, the teachers with the support they needed to do their best in the classroom, and positive communication with parents.

Agustin, along with his school community, began to build an educational environment in which all parties could take pride and claim ownership. He said that it was a long and drawn-out process that required collaboration from all parties involved. He admits that it was not easy, as change usually is not embraced with open arms. Agustin states, “I assured them that this was a collaborative decision-making group. As long as it was not against state or federal guidelines, I would support them, and I have for the most part stuck to that. That is why so many things are happening so quickly now.”

In the interview, Agustin made reference to the fact that he had less to do now. He went on to explain that in reality the amount of work has not changed, just the type and quality. He stated that he was now able to be an instructional leader, providing more support and helping to make a bigger impact in the classroom. He said that improvements came about through trial and error with eager educators who were interested in piloting ideas in their teams as well as their classrooms. He said that this led to shifting the paradigm of the traditional educational hierarchy from a top down approach to a shared leadership role. Finally, he said the process led to the creation of academy directors and assistant academy directors, who also created a professional development team.

Agustin said that he now sees his role as an administrator who is there to give support to staff in every aspect necessary. He indicates that this shift has created a system that functions successfully even when the administrator is not physically present, and, in return, this has allowed the principal to focus on academic and instructional issues. He said that they have been able to strengthen and enhance their academic program at all three grade levels, and that JAMS has seen a significant increase in not only daily learning but also in standardized test scores.

In his closing comments, Agustin stated that he wishes every school could have something like this because people generally do not realize the impact it would have on the school community. He emphasized that collaboration is extremely important to the success of a school. “When you empower a staff, miracles happen; they take it so seriously and do the best job possible. All you have to do is mention ideas and they are on top of it doing what is best for our educational community.”

CONCLUSION

The success of the model being implemented at John Adams Middle school was reflected in the reduction of referrals. In 1997-1998, the eighth grade alone had 540 referrals. In 1999-2000, when the Academy model was implemented, the eighth grade had 115 total referrals. Overall, the student referral statistics went from 1558 in 1997-1998 to 338 in 1999-2000. Fighting violations reduced from 72 in 1997 to 48 in 2000. Dress code violations reduced from 53 violations in 1997 to 10 in 2000. The attendance rate increased from 92 percent in 1997 to 93.5 percent in 1999.

Implementation of any model in an educational setting is not without its challenges. In order to be successful you must have faculty and staff coordination and training as well as buy-in from all who have ties to a school community. Being able to come together for the good of all and working as true teams tend to be major challenges, particularly when working with individual personalities. John Adams Middle School faced high teacher turnover, which in turn slowed the school’s momentum as they struggled to maintain staff trained in the new strategies.

The model required a great deal of commitment on the part of all staff members. Teachers in particular had a difficult time “buying in” to the new model.
This lack of teacher buy in and their inability to go through a paradigm shift were great contributors to teacher turnover.

Another challenge faced when implementing this model was attaining and maintaining a common vision. A lack of common vision adversely affects the enrichment of students’ overall academic and social development. As with any model, there is no “silver bullet.” The school-within-a-school concept also means that some students felt that if they were not involved directly in the student leadership academy, they were unable to benefit from the academy concept. Students also noted that the increased structure brought about frustration over increased workloads, the Accountability Cards, and detentions. On the positive side, however, many said that the academy helped them improve their academic progress and organizational skills. Students expressed pleasure over taking responsibility for their own learning. Finally many students felt that there was more individualized, personal instruction and that teachers were able to help them more.

Parents also noted many advantages to the model. They noted that with more structure being provided in school, teachers and directors were able to have more control over the students. Teachers were easily accessible for conferences and guidance. Parents also felt that this model promoted a positive attitude among students and staff.

Faculty and staff evaluations were also positive. Most felt that there was more staff involvement in decision-making. They also hailed enhanced peer support, opportunity for professional growth, and cross-curricular planning as positive outcomes. Others felt that teachers’ potential was maximized and that communication had definitely improved. Teachers also commented that the model allowed for a solid venue to voice their concerns and also lessened disciplinary activities, which in turn allowed the focus to stay on quality instruction.

When compared with the conservative and traditional factory model school, the Academy model is an obvious paradigm shift from the one “hero-leader” paradigm. As schools implement cooperative leadership models, the shift in the school environment and student outcomes looks very promising. When implemented thoughtfully and carefully, cooperatively-led schools increase a sense of community ownership due to the shared leadership role on the parts of parents, students, and staff. Cooperatively-led schools have the potential to foster greater communication and a sense of cooperation, creating a positive and productive learning environment for all stakeholders.

REFERENCES


Acculturation is an observable factor that is often not considered in the educational process in school settings. The following paper discusses the construct of acculturation and how it is an issue that must be addressed by teacher preparation programs, practitioners, and parents.

Traditional western developmental theories are often presented and taught in educational preparation programs, as evidenced in the textbooks used in learning and human development courses (Ormrod, 2004). However, when the issue of culturally or linguistically diverse populations arises, only the most obvious characteristic, language, is addressed as a variable that may impact school age students. Of particular importance with regard to language is its effect on the identification of English Language Learners (ELL) and their ability to succeed in the school environment (Padilla, 2001). Current research indicates that other factors impact development, educational success and programming (Bracken & McCallum, 2001; Padilla; Sciarrà, 2001; Suzuki, Short, Pieterse & Kugler, 2001).

Vázquez (1997) indicated that important factors in the preparation of educational professionals are core multicultural constructs associated with multicultural competency: worldview, ethnic identity and acculturation. Of the three constructs comprising cultural competency, acculturation is critical (Casey, 2001; Horton, Carrington & Lewis-Jack, 2001; Lópe, 2003; López, Ehly & García-Vázquez, 2002; López, Salas, & Flores, 2005; Ortiz & Flannigan, 2002).

However, university teacher preparation faculty, practicing school personnel, teachers, and the community must understand that assessing and understanding acculturation includes, but goes beyond, a focus on language. As stated in Takushi & Uomoto (2001), “… acculturation focuses on the process of psychological change in values, beliefs, and behaviors when adapting to a new culture” (p. 53). Padilla (1980) and Vázquez (1990) suggest that there are variables such as social relationships, exposure to social behaviors, and personal characteristics that may indicate levels and types of acculturation. These factors although very important, but according to should also include considering feelings as well as cognition when addressing acculturation (Kim & Abreu, 2001). Unfortunately, acculturation variables are often not considered in educational decision making or pedagogy (Alfredo Artilles, personal communication, December 2005).
Acculturation may not be recognized nor understood in school environments, and therefore it is not actively observed, measured or addressed (Alfredo Artiles, personal communication, December 2005; López, 2003). Culture is not always visible outside of a particular social/cultural group or it may only be connected to festive/stereotypical “cultural” activities. Teachers and school personnel tend to rely on the most visible characteristic, language, which is evident from the beginning of the educational experience through the use of home language surveys, observations or opinion (López; Meller, Ohr & Marcus, 2001). Specific programs have been developed for Second language learners, such as Bilingual Education or Bilingual Special Education. Professionals who may not be aware of other cultural factors associated with a student’s personal and academic development, the assumption often times is that only language is impacts academic functioning (Padilla, 2001). However, acculturation can have an impact on aptitude results and have long-term implications for assessment and for pedagogy. It may also affect personal perceptions teachers have of culturally/linguistically diverse students (Hammam, 2004).

The majority of bilingual students in today’s classrooms are of Latino decent. According to Salas, López and Menchaca-López (2005), many of the students who are attending schools in the United States may be experiencing issues associated with acculturative stress. What may be happening, however, is that teachers and school staff are not aware of how acculturation is operationalized and how acculturative issues may be brought about due to the stressors associated with the acculturative process (López, 2003).

If cultural factors such as ethnic identity and/or acculturation are mentioned in a school setting, they are often only presented in terms of theory or abstract constructs that are checked off on a checklist. Furthermore, when attempts are made to discuss the construct, it is often equated to verbal language communication. A teacher can easily observe a student experiencing expressive and/or receptive language difficulties in the classroom. Yet, language is only one trait associated with a student’s culture.

Because individuals in training tend to equate language usage to acculturation, other factors are overlooked. As indicated by Padilla (1980) and Kim & Abreu (2001), these may include: generation level, ethnic identity, cultural exposure, ethnic interaction, as well as thoughts and feelings associated with being part of a specific ethnic/cultural group. The consideration of these factors would result in more accurate assessment, curriculum planning and instructional practice.

In conclusion, when evaluating ELLs, school personnel often focus on the more visible characteristic of language because it is easier to describe and measure. They may not look into other variables associated with acculturation because the variables tend to be more personal and unfamiliar. There may even be denial that issues related to acculturation actually exist. However, if school personnel look at acculturation and its effect on clinical diagnosis, academic and educational programming, ultimately school performance and success will be improved (Padilla, 2001).

REFERENCES


