"… you don't come to this school… to show off your hoodies": Latinas, Community Cultural Wealth, and an Early College High School

Leslie A. Locke
University of Iowa, lalocke77@gmail.com

Gerri Maxwell
Texas A&M University--Kingsvile, geraldine.maxwell@icloud.com

Maria Tello
South Texas College, mtello@southtexascollege.edu

Recommended APA Citation

"… you don't come to this school… to show off your hoodies": Latinas, Community Cultural Wealth, and an Early College High School

Abstract

Early College High Schools (ECHS), recent school reforms in the U.S., were designed as social justice, equity-oriented interventions to increase educational opportunity for students from traditionally marginalized and underserved groups. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to understand and examine the perceptions and experiences of eight Latina students, regarding their motivation and persistence in an ECHS. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framed the analyses. Findings demonstrated the students relied on several forms of CCW to support their motivation and persistence. However, observations and prolonged engagement in the ECHS setting revealed deficit perspectives held by some teachers and incidents of racist mocking occurring between some teachers and students. Resultantly, the students' CCW was undermined as well as the school's social justice imperative. Recommendations relevant to the early college context are provided.

"… you don't come to this school… to show off your hoodies": Latinas, Community Cultural Wealth, and an Early College High School

Leslie Ann Locke
University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Gerri Maxwell
Texas A & M University-Kingsville, Kingsville, Texas, USA

Maria Tello
South Texas College, McAllen, Texas, USA

Early College High Schools (ECHS), recent school reforms in the U.S., were designed as social justice, equity-oriented interventions to increase educational opportunity for students from traditionally marginalized and underserved groups. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to understand and examine the perceptions and experiences of eight Latina students, regarding their motivation and persistence in an ECHS. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framed the analyses. Findings demonstrated the students relied on several forms of CCW to support their motivation and persistence. However, observations and prolonged engagement in the ECHS setting revealed deficit perspectives held by some teachers and incidents of racist mocking occurring between some teachers and students. Resultantly, the students' CCW was undermined as well as the school's social justice imperative. Recommendations relevant to the early college context are provided. Keywords: Latinas, Community Cultural Wealth, Early College High Schools, Social Justice

Purpose

Early College High Schools (ECHS), recent public secondary school reforms in the U.S., were designed to address populations of students who have been historically underserved by the comprehensive, traditional high school model and concomitantly are underrepresented in colleges and universities. Research has shown that college attainment can be the primary "pathway in which low-income students of color [and other students from historically underserved groups] can access life opportunities that are otherwise few and far between" (Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009, p. 535). Relatedly, ECHSs recruit students from underserved groups who may not have had access to necessary academic preparation, students for whom the cost of college is prohibitive, students of color, students who are first-in-the-family college bound, and English learners (Berger, Adelman, & Cole, 2010; Edmunds et al., 2010). Such efforts align with the definition of social justice embraced by Theoharris (2007), which "centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools" (p. 223). Thus, ECHSs represent an educational reform intended to disrupt the stratified educational status quo (Oakes & Lipton, 2002). Thus, per our view, ECHSs can be considered social justice reforms aimed at increasing equity for all students and reversing historic apathy toward some student groups.

ECHSs[1] are small schools (about 100 students per grade level, 9-12) and offer a restricted and rigorous curriculum, multiple academic supports, small classes, early exposure to college, and few extracurricular activities (i.e., sports, band, choir)—all intended to boost achievement and educational mobility. Unlike past social justice reforms and interventions in education such as AVID[2], GEAR UP[3], and TRIO[4], ECHSs combine high school completion with the attainment of significant transferrable and tuition-free college credit (Berger, Adelman, & Cole, 2010), through unique partnerships with institutions of higher education. As students move through the early college program, they take progressively more college courses.

A student population that ECHSs target is Latinas/os. According to Feagin and Cobas (2014), there are an estimated 51 million Latinas/os in the U.S., and with the exception of Whites, Latinas/os are now the largest student population in public schools nationwide (Pew Hispanic Center [PHC], 2012). Alarmingly, graduation rates for this group are typically below 50%, nearly 30 percentage points below their White counterparts (PHC, 2012; Yosso, 2006). Although research has continued to identify the staggering dropout problem plaguing Latina/o students (Harklau, 2013), little attention has focused on the unique educational needs of Latinas alone—now the largest group of girls of color in the United States (Garcia-Reid, 2007). Moreover, Latinas have the lowest high school completion rates of girls from all other racial/ethnic groups (Riegle-Crumb, 2006), and relatedly lower college completion rates (Kelly, Schneider, & Carey, 2010).

Data included in this article stem from a larger study that evaluated an ECHS, Tackstown Early College High School (TECHS[5]), as a policy solution, and included the perceptions of Latina students that are often missing from the scholarly dialogue. At the time of data collection, TECHS, according to the state education agency accountability system, was ranked an "exemplary[6]" school. Therefore, according to state standards, TECHS seemed to be

---

[1] There are three typical models of ECHS. There are stand-alone schools that typically occupy a single campus. There are school-within-a-school models where the ECHS is a program within a traditional/comprehensive high school. And, there are ECHSs that are housed on the college or university partner campus. TECHS, the early college program discussed here, was a stand-alone model.

[2] AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) was designed for first generation college bound students of mid-range academic achievement—those who were capable of achieving academic success but were underperforming in their classes (Swanson, 2004). This program, funded by individual schools, equips students with social capital by enrolling them in college preparatory courses (with the assistance of school staff) and 'AVID' classes. AVID classes help the students develop positive study habits and academic skills necessary to compete with students who are already enrolled in advanced coursework. The AVID program teaches the students how to study, read for content, take notes, and manage time. Students participate in collaborative study groups or tutorials led by tutors to bring them to a higher level of understanding of key concepts (Dodea Pacific, 2011).

[3] GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded grant program designed to serve low-income middle and high school students. GEAR UP is designed to help students prepare for and succeed in college by providing early college awareness activities, academic support, and information about post-secondary options. Additionally, this program attempts to raise student achievement by assisting teachers in raising their expectations for academic success of their students. Grantees serve an entire cohort of students from high poverty schools beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. Funds may also be used to provide scholarships to low-income students (U.S. Department of Education, 2011a).

[4] TRIO is a federally funded program that started in 1965 under the Higher Education Act. The program provides a range of services to students from low-income homes, who are first generation college bound, or who may have disabilities. TRIO consists of the programs Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Special Services for Disadvantaged Students. These programs provide educational support to youth between 13 and 19 years of age. The program helps students throughout the educational pipeline from middle school through post-baccalaureate (U.S. Department of Education, 2011b).

[5] All given names of participants, locations, and the ECHS have been replaced with pseudonyms.

[6] According to the state education agency, an exemplary rating was awarded to a school or district where 90% of all students from all subgroups passed the overall state mandated exam and passed each of the subject subsections.

doing well at preparing all its students for secondary and post-secondary success. However, academic performance of Latina students at TECHS was the lowest of all student groups. This paradox between Latinas, a target ECHS population, volunteering to attend an exemplary-rated early college program, yet underperforming[7], was an initial phenomenon of interest for the larger study. A secondary phenomenon of interest, reported on here, was the girls' persistence and motivation in this unique academic environment. This secondary phenomenon of interest led us to consider Yosso's (2005) model of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) as a framework to better understand the Latina students' persistence and motivation at TECHS. CCW, defined in greater detail later in this article, refers to the various forms of "capital" or socio-cultural assets that students from underrepresented groups rely on to be successful in some spaces, including schools.

Based on our secondary interest, the following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) How can the CCW framework help us better understand Latina students' persistence and motivation at TECHS and (b) What might these students' perceptions and experiences indicate about ECHSs as a solution for advancing the education of Latina students in particular, and other students from historically underserved groups generally?

Review of Relevant Literature

Much discussion and discourse surrounding Latina/o underachievement in K-12 schools continues to stem from the archaic "usual" suspects of poverty (Gorski, 2008), lack of familial or cultural interest in or support for education (Ojeda & Flores, 2008), and lack of motivation (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Furthermore, for Latinas in particular, their "low rates of high school graduation . . . are often assumed to be attributable to socialization into traditional cultural patterns of familism, submissiveness, and early marriage and motherhood" (Harklau, 2013, p. 23). These deep-rooted usual suspects and common assumptions help to support and perpetuate a dominant narrative and ideology that predetermines and normalizes failure for Latinas/os, and frames these students as underachievers (Luna & Martinez, 2013).

However, many scholars have presented a counter-discourse focused on the ways schools systematically contribute to low rates of school completion for Latinas/os. For example, some scholars have cited culturally irrelevant or White-centric curricula (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998) that ignore or at best inadequately attend to the educational and/or historical experiences of Latinas/os. In addition, many schools lack teachers and leaders who reflect Latina/o culture and/or speak Spanish (Ochoa, 2010). Relatedly, Latinas/os have historically experienced low-quality schooling throughout the education pipeline including substandard facilities (Rochmes, 2007), tracking into low level coursework (Tyson, 2013) and thus, comparatively fewer and unequal opportunities to learn or receive knowledge in school (Burciaga, Pérez-Huber, & Solórzano, 2010; Chambers, 2009).

To further negatively compound schooling for Latinas/os, some scholars have drawn a connection between the attitudes of teachers and leaders in schools and low student achievement. For example, Valencia (1997) suggests that deficit thinking, which blames students for underachievement, and allows teachers and leaders to see some students as "less than" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2008) is common in our schools. Likewise, low expectations (Menchaca, 1997) and uncaring teachers (Noddings, 1992) are elements that compliment and reinforce deficit thinking. Furthermore, a need to work, and a resultant inability to access resources that support academic success provided by the school (Harklau, 2013; Locke & McKenzie, 2015) have also been found to be contributing factors in low student achievement.

---

[7] Underperforming for the original study was defined as failing three or more classes at six weeks into the term the data were collected.

And finally, segregation, underfunding, and overcrowding are systemic mechanisms that compound low achievement for Latina/o students as they function to restrict flexibility and opportunity in schooling (Kozol, 2012; Tyson, 2013; Yosso, 2006).

Importantly, research has demonstrated that schools in the U.S. (even those with diverse student bodies) largely remain White- and middle-class-normed, or racialized and classed spaces (Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007; Bourdieu, 1977; McLeod, 1987), where the norms and values of the schools conflict with those of the students, and ultimately perpetuate inequality (Bordieu & Passeron, 1990; Giroux, 1983). In these marginalized spaces, hegemonic discourses tend to intersect where White teachers and leaders are likely to ignore or pass off issues of nativism, racism, classism, and particularly how they could be participating and complicit in the supremacist norms and values of the school (Haviland, 2008). And finally, the significant work by Stanton-Salazar and colleagues (e.g., 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2011) suggests that the structure of schooling as it is presented to many students from historically underserved groups, including Latinas/os, makes it very difficult for them to build particular types of connections and relationships (networks) with key institutional agents, primarily teachers and leaders, and relatedly then, it is difficult for these students to access particular resources vital to their academic success and persistence.

Comprehensively, Latina/o students' educational experiences have been plagued by complex issues outside of their control, which have hindered their persistence, motivation, and achievement in schools. The overarching practices in schools as experienced by Latinas/os have been cited as subtractive (Valenzuela, 1999). That is, schooling experienced by Latina/o students take away, or subtract, resources students may traditionally rely on to be successful by dismissing cultural definitions of education, and through assimilationist hegemonic norms and discourses (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002). These norms and discourses embrace the rooted usual suspects described previously, and ignore students' personal, cultural, and familial strengths. Simply, traditional schools, alongside traditional processes have played key roles in reproducing social inequality (Stanton-Salazar, 2000). Alternatively, other scholars have developed an assets-based, counter discourse focused on students' strengths. Our discussion of this counter discourse is fixed within Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth.

Conceptual Framework

A strong piece of the counter discourse includes Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model. This assets-based model is based in Critical Race Theory (CRT), and describes the unique and varied forms of strength (i.e., capital) that students from historically underserved groups foster and depend on within marginalized spaces such as schools (Villapando & Solórzano, 2005). Alongside CRT, the concept of *funds of knowledge* (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) also serves as a foundational pillar of CCW. Funds of knowledge, or the various types of local, cultural, community- and experienced-based knowledge and resources that students (Latinas/os in particular) bring with them to school, influence their academic abilities, habits, ways of knowing, social networks, and so on. Students and families often rely on these funds of knowledge to resist and persist in oppressive environments. Moll et al. (1992), as well as others (Solórzano, 1997), have called for a broader understanding of the use of these forms of knowledge in schools in order to create an effective and inclusive educational culture that draws on the strengths, customs, and knowledge of the communities served. Moreover, enveloped within CCW and funds of knowledge, are aspects of Latina/o culture such as *consejos* (nurturing advice), *confianza* (the role of mutual trust), *familismo* (a set of beliefs that emphasize solidarity, obligation, reciprocity, and authority within the family); and *respeto* (respect), which have been shown in the scholarly literature to be resources that are relied on to persist and stay motivated in educational environments (Grau,

Azmitia, & Quattlebaum, 2009; Valdés, 1996). Another related construct is *confianza en confianza* (trusting mutual trust). Learned early on through family and community relations, this construct "serves as a predominant mode of living and survival as it functions as a vehicle for self-reference, social esteem, and cultural meaning-making" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 27).

Educación, another cultural construct and a term that is conceptually broader and deeper than its English language affiliate, refers to the family's role of inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility, and serves as a base for other learning (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Young, Lakin, Courtney, & Martiniello, 2012). Through integrity, respect, discipline, and social responsibility, *educación* represents both means and ends, such that the end-state of being *bien educada/o* (well-educated and behaved) is accomplished through a process characterized by respectful relations—and being a good person (Jensen & Sawyer, 2013). *Educación* further reinforces CCW and the ways of knowing within funds of knowledge.

CCW, as well as CRT, funds of knowledge, and *educación* center people's experiential knowledge as means to counter oppressive systems that predetermine and normalize low achievement for certain student groups. That is, CCW challenges the rooted usual suspects of poverty, lack of familial or cultural support for education, and lack of motivation that help to frame and normalize Latina/o students as underachievers, and instead includes "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (Yosso, 2005, p. 175). This array manifests in and "reside[s] within diverse communities in general and [Latina/o] communities in particular" (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011, p. 76).

Specifically, Yosso (2006) outlined this array as six forms of capital within the assets-based CCW model:

- aspirational—the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future in the face of real and perceived barriers
- linguistic—communication skills learned through art and language
- familial—forms of knowledge and understanding initiated through culture, memory, and family
- social—trusting relations and networks of/connections with individuals who are able to assist in navigating various social institutions and accessing/attaining various types of support
- navigational—informational and social networks and/or resources that help students maintain resistance and persistence
- resistant—skills and knowledge that challenge oppression and subordination, obtained and fostered through opposition (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009; Pérez-Huber, 2009)

Collectively, these capitals represent a "storehouse of different resources" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 25) that can be called upon when needed—and particularly when structural barriers (i.e., norms and discourses) appear. Moreover, they "challenge dominant perspectives of communities of color and recognize the ways that people of color have historically built on generations of resources to survive, adapt, thrive, and resist within racist institutions and social structures" (Pérez-Huber, 2009, p. 711). That is, they shift the dominant norms and discourse surrounding marginalized communities from deficits and usual suspects to assets, capitals, strengths, and resiliency. Together, the capital within CCW may be "a catalyst for cultural integrity and transformative resistance" (Jayakumar, Vue, & Allen, 2013, p. 553).

Yosso (2005), as well as others (e.g., Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007), have asserted that the various forms of capital in the CCW framework have been historically undervalued and

unrecognized in schools. Furthermore, the various forms of capital, those commonly held by Latina/o students, and present in CCW, historically have not easily transferred into social capital in broader U.S. society (Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002). That is, the forms of capital valued by Latinas/os do not necessarily match with those of the culture of power (Delpit, 2006) present in society and in most schools (Barajas & Ronnkvist, 2007). Due to a cultural mismatch (Carter & Welner, 2013) between students and schools, some students experience challenges with communication of their needs and desires (Orozco, 2008). Moreover, their access to various types of capital (i.e., connections and resources) may be hampered or non-existent. A lack of connections and resources makes it challenging for Latina/o students to build capital in schools. However, this challenge is particularly burdensome when students find it difficult to connect with arguably the most valuable resources in schools, the institutional agents (teachers and leaders).

Importantly, we see CCW with its various forms of capital as a dynamic and flexible framework—one where there are not necessarily rigid boundaries between one type of capital and another. Rather, we believe these types of capital may shift, overlap, and/or influence one another (Locke, Tabron, & Venzant Chambers, 2017). CCW provided us with a scaffolding to discuss and acknowledge the many strengths of Latina students at TECHS as they simultaneously perceived, defined, and reflected on their academic performance, experiences, motivation, and persistence within this rigorous, nontraditionally-structured school environment. As such, we consider ours an effort to challenge the dominant discourse and value the various sources of strength Latinas apply in their schooling.

Context, Data Sources, and Methods

Context: Tackstown Early College High School (TECHS)

TECHS is situated in Tackstown, a mid-sized city in a southwestern U.S. state. At the time of data collection Tackstown had a population of approximately 190,000 individuals. Then, the population demographics of the city were: Hispanic (28%); African American (18%); White (65%); Asian (2%); low-income (22%); and college educated (26%).

The student body at TECHS was made up primarily of traditionally underrepresented student groups: Latina/o (58%); African American (19%); White (22%); low-income (68%); first-in-the-family college bound (85%); and female (69%). Alternatively, the staff at TECHS included a principal (White female), a dean of students (White female), two paraprofessionals (both Latina), twelve teachers (four White males, one Latina, seven White females), and a liaison (White female).

TECHS was categorized as both a public charter school and an early college high school. As a unique program for the district, TECHS was guided, in part, by its own set of institutional policies. It promoted a distinctive mission statement, core values, scholar's oath, and a Student, Parent, Staff Contract that each student and parent had to sign upon a student's admission to the school. As a social justice-oriented program, TECHS also embraced a distinctive vision statement:

> Our vision is to see that every student, especially those traditionally underrepresented in higher education, receive a strong educational foundation and is prepared to be successful in a post-secondary environment. We believe that by working with families, higher education, and community partners, students will not only succeed with our curriculum but will form a strong personal vision as they develop into life-long learners.

Reflective of this vision, TECHS utilized a soft admissions policy whereby students who applied to the program, regardless of past academic performance, were accepted if there was space available.

Since the fall of 2007, a local university and a local community college have partnered with TECHS. The shared partnership permits instructors employed by the community college to teach at the TECHS campus[8] as well as permits TECHS students (upperclassmen) to attend classes at the community college. At the time, the university partner funded a graduate assistant to work with TECHS (the lead author served as the graduate assistant for four years) and a team of undergraduates who served as tutors, as well as provided some classroom equipment. Based on the lead author's role at TECHS, she was afforded many "insider" opportunities to not only observe but also to interact closely and frequently with the students, teachers, and leaders at the school and to build significant relationships (see Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, on the value of insider research). Therefore, we employed a positioned subject approach (Conrad, Haworth, & Millar, 2001), and acknowledge that the lead author's role at TECHS and insider perspectives informed this study.

Data Sources

Participants

Eight Latina (self-identified) students from TECHS participated in the original study[9]. At the time of data collection, the participants were in the 9th, 10th, or 11th grades, were 14 to 17 years old, were born either in the U.S. or in Mexico, and desired a profession requiring a college degree. All of the participants were first-in-the-family college bound. The profiles of the eight Latina student participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of Participants

Name (pseudonym)	Grade	U.S.-Born	Age at Time of Interview	Desired Profession
Isabel	10	Yes	15	Marine Biologist
Ana	10	No	15	Lawyer
Winnie	11	Yes	15	Registered Nurse
Sea	10	Yes	15	Bilingual Teacher
Bety	9	Yes	14	Teacher
Mari	10	Yes	15	Singer
Rosa	10	Yes	15	Psychiatrist or Psychologist
Leah	11	No	17	Undecided

---

[8] Ninth and tenth grade students began taking very few college-level courses. The few college-level classes they did take, were taught by community college instructors who came to TECHS to teach. Once students reached the upper grades, they took all of their college-level courses on the community college campus.

[9] Participants were selected based on the following criteria: underperformance (see Footnote 7), self-identification as Latina; enrollment as a student at TECHS; and eligibility for subsidized lunch (a proxy for low income). The TECHS administration identified 14 students who met the criteria. These 14 students were invited to participate in the study. Eight of these students returned all the required permissions and agreed to participate.

Insider Perspective

Through the partnership with the university, before, during, and after data collection the lead author served in a unique leadership role at TECHS. Her primary duties were those of a "liaison" assigned to make connections with the community and community organizations, and solicit donations for school events. However, depending on the day and the needs of the school, beyond her primary duties, she also taught, administered tests, met with parents, advised students, organized field trips, and so on. In addition, she worked closely with TECHS administrators and teachers. Her role allowed for multiple observations and prolonged engagement. As a result, she learned most aspects of the school covering the full range of the school day, typical days, untypical days, after school activities, hallway and lunchtime interactions, field trips, as well as teacher and administrator meetings and professional development sessions.

Along with her various duties at TECHS, the lead author also served as the faculty sponsor for the student-initiated, school-sponsored organization, Latina/o Youth Promoting Education (LYPE). The mission of LYPE was,

> … to bring students together to take part in different types of community service and encourage them to further their education beyond high school. While the club was originally geared towards Hispanics, any students looking to fulfill their academic goals are welcome to join.

During the lead author's tenure as the club sponsor, there were approximately 20 students in LYPE at any one time, the majority Latina/o. Five of the students who participated in this study were also members of LYPE.

As the liaison and LYPE faculty sponsor, the lead author was outside of the classroom and had no influence on students' grades or their relationships with TECHS teachers and administrators. However, simply "being there" allowed her to better understand the Latina students' perceptions and school experiences, and gain tacit understanding of the context as well.

Methods

Interviews with eight self-identified Latina students from TECHS served as the primary sources of data. Participants were selected through purposive sampling techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and engaged in an individual semi-structured interview, and a focus group (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Interview data were recorded, transcribed, and originally analyzed with a grounded theory approach. However, for this inquiry the data were reviewed again and deductively analyzed based on the various forms of capital in the CCW framework.

Observations, reflections, and field notes based on the lead author's time at TECHS were also recorded. The lead author recorded most interactions with or observations of students, teachers, and administrators in a notebook while they occurred. However, in some instances when she sensed that notetaking might be intrusive or distracting, she wrote her notes as soon as possible after the interaction or observation (see Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). However, when she could only remember the gist of what someone said, she did not record this as a quote. The quotes from teachers and administrators used in this analysis, although not verbatim, represent a very near approximation. Trustworthiness and credibility were ensured through prolonged engagement, member checking during data collection, and peer debriefing following the interviews and observations and during analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

Regarding the students' persistence and motivation, all forms of capital in the CCW framework were present through analyses of the interviews, however some forms were more frequently identified. Findings are presented here in terms of those most frequently identified forms of capital: aspirational, familial, navigational, social, and resistant. Additionally, we present data derived from the lead author's insider observations and prolonged engagement with the context. These data are presented as deficit perspectives and racist mocking.

Aspirational Capital

The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future despite barriers was clear throughout all the interviews with the Latina students. Importantly, all of the participants made an affirmative decision to attend TECHS in lieu of attending a traditional, comprehensive high school. By doing so, these students forfeited the possibility to participate in traditional high school experiences (e.g., sports, band, choir) for a school with a strict academic focus. Furthermore, all of the participants desired a professional career. For example, the professions of "lawyer," "teacher," "marine biologist," and "registered nurse" were all hopeful careers articulated by the participants (see Table 1). Moreover, the girls revealed their aspirational capital, not just by participating in the early college program, but also through holding high hopes for the future, and knowing they had to work hard, be persistent, and take advantage of the reduced college expenses that TECHS offered.

High Hopes, Hard Work, and Persistence

Observations of and interviews with the Latina students confirmed they had aspirations and high hopes for themselves. For example, Winnie discussed her reasons for choosing TECHS noting, "The opportunity to go to college, cause I want to go to college. That's what I've been doing since middle school, trying to get prepared for college, so this is like the best opportunity, so I came here." Similarly, Leah noted her aspirations for success, "If you want to succeed, this is a good school, because it prepares you for the college experience. I think it is a really good school."

Preparing for college is not easy work. The girls' aspirations and high hopes for the future were not just lofty dreams. They knew preparing for college would take hard work and persistence, as well as dedication and focus. To this point, Ana discussed that giving up was not an option, she had to persist and stay motivated. She said, "Sometimes this school is very hard. People get stressed out. But, we have to say yes, we can't give up." Similarly, Mari, commenting on the focus she needed in preparing for college through TECHS said "Well, I guess, I mean we all want to look cute and everything, but like, you don't come to this school… to show off your hoodies."

Likewise, Isabel discussed trying to persist in the challenging academic environment at TECHS. She articulated that while sometimes students got bogged down, they did not let the challenge keep them down. She said, "[Students] get tired of doing work and stuff so they procrastinate, so they're in a rush. They're all worried about their pimples instead of their work. But we know when to get serious." Knowing when to get serious and staying focused meant having to give up some of the typical teenage distractions. For example, in reference to how she maintained focus Rosa said, "I want to graduate from college, get a job, and then all the social stuff at the end, like a boyfriend and stuff. Boyfriends can wait..."

Through having high hopes for the future, staying focused, and delaying the gratification that comes with some of the "social stuff," the girls persisted and stayed

motivated. They aspired to obtain an education (specifically a college education) as a means to a better life as well as a way to give their families a financial break.

Reduced College Expenses

Speaking to the financial break TECHS offered toward future college expenses, Ana noted "I just think life will be so much easier with a college degree, even if it's just a bachelor's or something. Like financially things will be easier." Similarly, Leah said "I decided to come to TECHS because I wanted to graduate, and not have like my mom and dad spend that much money on college, and I wanted… to tell the [university] that I went to an early college and got free credits." Likewise, Isabel noted that by attending TECHS she was getting a "50% discount" on college.

Getting a discount on college, and saving their families from funding the process, was important to the girls, but so too was college itself. Although the level of rigor was very high at TECHS, the girls used their aspirational capital, such as their dreams for a better life that they thought would come with a college degree, as a means to stay focused on their goals. Part of what kept the girls focused and motivated to persist toward their educational aspirations was family. In fact, family was a common form of capital discussed by the Latina students.

Familial Capital

Forms of knowledge that were initiated, nurtured, and sustained through family were present throughout all of the interviews with the Latina students. For example, all of the girls reported that their parents and extended family were proud of them for taking the initiative to enroll in the early college program, served as a source of motivation, and held high expectations for them. Furthermore, many of the girls noted learning from their older siblings as means of familial support or capital.

Pride

The girls often commented on the pride their parents had for them. For instance, Sea noted, "My mom is always bragging on me to her friends at work cuz [sic] I am here at TECHS and not at [Central High—the traditional high school]." Similarly, and to this point, Rosa stated, "My dad told me that he's proud of me. And he actually tells his friends and other people where I go to school. So I guess you can say he's showing me off." Likewise, Mari commented that not only were her parents proud, but it was important to her to make them proud. She remarked, "Graduating from TECHS and going on to college would make my parents really proud, my family and I know that is what I want, I want [to go to] college, [to a] university."

In addition to being proud of their daughters for taking on the challenge of TECHS and forging a path to college, the girls spoke of the various ways their parents and other family members helped to keep them motivated toward graduation.

Motivation

Similar to Rosa who was willing to delay some "social stuff" like boyfriends, Mari reported that her mom gave her similar advice about teenage romance. She said, "My mom told me, 'you know, boys come and go, but you are at TECHS. You can't be wasting your time on stuff like that.'" This nurturing advice helped Rosa stay focused and motivated.

Similarly, Sea recalled a story her dad told her, which helped to keep her motivated and focused on educational attainment. Sea noted,

> [My dad] has told me to go to college too because he doesn't want me to go through what he went through. He told me a story… the meaning is where your hands will be like really rough, so if you really want your hands to be rough like that, and you want to work really hard to get it, you can do it. But also, you can also like go to school and everything and get your job and like you're still good and your hands aren't that rough. He told me "I don't want your hands to be feeling like mine."

While parents were considered to be sources of motivation for the girls, they were not alone. Some of the girls noted that their younger siblings served as motivators as well, that is, the girls wanted to serve as good role models for them. For example, Ana remarked, "I want to be a good example for my brothers, for my brothers and sister. I want to be a person that people can rely on." Ana thought education would help her to be that role model. Similarly, Leah pointed to both motivational advice from her parents and gaining motivation by serving as a role model. She stated,

> Whenever I have problems I talk to my mom or my dad. They really give me some good advice. Every morning my mom is like "do your best. You know what you want and don't let guys or don't let anybody distract you." [My mom] tells me to be an example for my brother and sister and that I can do it.

Thus, the girls were motivated through parental advice and through serving as role models for their younger siblings. In working to keep them motivated, the Latina students also noted that their parents, as well as older siblings, held high expectations for them, even though many of them did not persist within the school system themselves.

High Expectations and Learning from Older Siblings

The Latina students gained motivation from their parents' advice as well as their high expectations. Furthermore, as all of the Latina students were to be the first in their families to go to college, their older siblings, who had not completed high school, served as examples of what *not* to do. For example, pointing out both high expectations and older siblings' actions, Winnie explained,

> There ain't no Cs in my house. I get in trouble for a C. My parents will be like "why do you have a C in this class?" And they will yell at me. My mom wants me to go to college and finish. Not like my older sister, she had one semester left and she stopped going to college. And my mom's like, "[she] had one semester left to graduate. How dumb. Oh my God, that was so dumb of her." We had to pay all that money, and all she has is a semester and she wouldn't go back. I'm like you're just dumb. Six little months and you graduate. That's stupid.

Similarly, Bety noted how she also learned from her older siblings' actions. She said,

> Well you know, my brothers and sisters are dropouts. They just dropped out of school. I am not going to be like [them]. They said school wasn't for them. I

said, school is not for anybody at some point, but you actually learn how to take on the world [in school]. And I don't want to end up like them. I want to make a difference to my family because now I can be the first one out of my entire family to go to college. So they actually help me. They tell me their bad experiences, and they tell me to learn from them.

Familial capital, in the forms of high expectations, parental advice, wanting to be good role models, and learning from older siblings' actions, was helpful for the girls' motivation and persistence at TECHS. Also, important to the girls' motivation and persistence were the connections and networks they relied on. Relatedly, the resources they were able to develop and access based on these connections and networks helped them to better navigate the early college program.

Navigational and Social Capital

Navigational and social capital, important components of CCW that work to assist students in making key connections, creating relationships, and accessing important resources—are forms of capital that we see as particularly flexible and dynamic. While these types of capital were not expressed with similar frequency as some of the other forms of capital, the girls did rely on social networks that assisted them in navigating various aspects of TECHS as a social institution. That is, their navigational and social capital allowed them access to some information, support, and assistance that they may not have otherwise obtained. Such support and helpful 'steers in the right direction' often came from family, teachers, and peer networks.

Family

Isabel reported that her mother worked as a "lunch lady" at Central High. The majority of students at TECHS did not hold Central in high esteem, and regularly suggested that if they were to attend Central, they would experience foreclosed, rather than expanded, educational opportunity. As a group, the perceptions of the Latina participants were no different. Because Isabel's mother was an "insider" at Central, Isabel was able to gain some insightful and valuable navigational capital from a trusted source. To this point, Isabel said, "[My mom's] a lunch lady [at Central], and she sees a lot of girls getting pregnant and a lot of fights. She's like 'You want to stay at [TECHS].'" Clearly Isabel's mother was providing some navigational capital in that she knew personally the environment at Central, and worked to steer or navigate her daughter toward what she believed to be a better school, and thus expanded opportunity. Although family often served as a source of navigational capital, inside TECHS, teachers were reported to be a common source of helpful, navigational advice the girls sought out.

Teachers

Inside TECHS, a primary source of both navigational and social capital that the girls relied on stemmed from some of the teachers at TECHS. Overall, the girls reported that the teachers were good stewards for navigating the early college program, and people who could provide access to information and resources. The girls also reported that many teachers helped to keep them motivated and persistent toward their educational goals. For example, Bety said,

I love coming to this school because the teachers push you to the limit. And if they push you too far you might just get freaked out, but they know where at a

certain point to motivate you. They may nag at you to do your work, but you
know, they do it for a certain reason because they care about you.

Ana also discussed the ways some teachers provided navigational capital, which she found
useful when trying to understand a complex issue in class. She said "when [the teacher] starts
explaining or giving a lecture, you don't understand and the teacher looks at you and sees that
you look puzzled or lost, she starts [explaining the material in a different way]."

While some teachers were reported to be useful sources of capital, also important was
the small size of TECHS. Being in a smaller physical space, and having only 100 grade-level
classmates, may have facilitated the girls' navigational and social capital. To this point, Leah
noted "TECHS is a small school and everyone knows each other and we have good
relationships with teachers and stuff. We just all know each other." Whereas teachers were
identified as sources of motivation, persistence, as well as navigational and social capital, the
girls also found these components of CCW through their friends and peers.

Peer Networks

As Leah noted, the students at TECHS knew each other well. Thus, peers and the
resultant networks often served as a solid source of support for the participants. That is, these
peer networks provided both navigational and social capital. For example, Sea who worked at
a church with her mother almost every day after school, had little time for study, homework,
or attending after-school tutorials. However, with the help of her mother who took on some of
her work responsibilities, Sea found ways to navigate around her employment obligations. For
example, she often orchestrated for her friends to form study groups that met at the church.
Sea said, "Yeah, sometimes we all just form a little group in the hallway there at the church
and pull out all our books and stuff." Similarly, Isabel noted that she often participated in
comparable peer-initiated study groups. She said that she and many of the students often "got
together and studied for the finals," working around their out-of-school obligations.

Relying on family, teachers, and like-minded peers as navigators proved helpful for the
Latina students. These connections seemed to assist the girls with their motivation and
persistence. Importantly, while the girls felt supported by their navigational and social capital,
they were not unaware of the dominant narrative and discourse that casts Latinas/os as
underachievers. Moreover, through their attendance at TECHS, the girls demonstrated that
they were actively resisting this narrative and discourse.

Resistant Capital

Knowledge and skills obtained and fostered through opposition that challenges
oppression and subordination were present throughout many of the participants' interviews or
stories. Notably, the girls' stories exposed the dominant narrative and discourse that (m)aligns
Latinas/os with low achievement in schools. However, the girls also evidenced an active
resistance to this narrative and discourse through attending the early college program. For
example, Sea remarked,

> I think TECHS is a good experience because you know, mostly all Latinos, you
> know they just drop out. They don't want to go to school. [TECHS is] a great
> opportunity. Like I see all the commercials on TV… I saw this one commercial
> about this girl, she was a Latina, and she started something at the university she
> was at. And I was just like you see, that's what I hope that a lot of Hispanics
> here at TECHS are wanting to do, you know, wanting to make our race higher,

because I know that a lot of people think that, "oh no, they're just Mexicans or whatever, they just want to come over here and take over," or whatever.

Likewise, Bety noted,

> I just wish that a lot of Hispanics would choose this opportunity [to go to TECHS]. I think this is a great, great opportunity. It's a good experience and so they should really, really come…. if they really want to better themselves.

As the data show, the girls wanted to do well to serve themselves, their families, and even their communities in the future. The various forms of capital helped them to stay motivated and persistent in the challenging academic environment at TECHS. Moreover, their CCW surely assisted them in resisting the dominant narrative and discourse. While the girls' CCW supported them in various ways, the lead author's "insider" time at TECHS often showed that the school, in spite of its social justice roots, may have been a challenging environment in which to rely on CCW.

Insider's Perspective

The participants' stories confirm that the capitals within CCW supported them as they felt their way through the foreign and rigorous educational terrain of the early college program. However, being situated in the context of TECHS allowed the lead author a unique insider's perspective regarding this terrain. The lead author certainly saw multiple levels of CCW in action at TECHS while interacting with the students. For example, she witnessed aspirational, social, and navigational capital frequently at play when she saw groups of Latina/o students huddled around small tables studying for exams. She saw familial capital when the father of a member of LYPE made a donation to the club to purchase t-shirts printed with "Yes we can!" a motto chosen by the students. And, she witnessed resistant capital when she heard stories from students with younger siblings who were trying to model and "recruit" those younger siblings for future placement as lower classmen at TECHS.

However, as the liaison, the lead author also interacted daily with the teachers, leaders, and staff at TECHS. Many (not all) of the teachers, leaders, and staff, despite working in a social justice-oriented educational program, seemed to be uncritically driven by the dominant narrative, discourse, and stereotypes that cast Latina/o students as underachievers. Through analyses of observations, field notes, and reflections that the lead author kept during her tenure at TECHS, we found these dominant narratives, discourses, and stereotypes to be evident in deficit perspectives and racist mocking.

Deficit Perspectives

Valencia (1997) defined deficit thinking or deficit perspectives and attitudes as the biased idea that certain students, particularly students from traditionally marginalized groups, experience low achievement in schools as a result of perceived deficiencies that hinder learning. These perceived deficiencies may encompass the rooted usual suspects of poverty, lack of familial or cultural support for education, and lack of motivation that project a shadow over Latina/o student achievement. Some of the most egregious examples of a deficit perspective or deficit attitude the lead author heard from the teachers at TECHS include "Today's students are not interested in education …" and "… all the Hispanic girls just want to put on makeup and look at boys. They'll all probably get pregnant before graduation and their families will be just fine with it."

One teacher, while recognizing the strong social ties and perhaps social capital among Latina/o students in her classes, also demonstrated a deficit perspective. While this teacher noted that many of the Latina/o students in her classes were not performing well, she saw that "… [the Latina/o students] are really tight, and they will stick together." When she queried the students regarding why they were not doing well in her class by asking them "What would you do if you could not go to school anymore?" reportedly, the students replied, "Go to Mexico." This teacher then expressed her frustration with "working so hard to teach these students when all they want to do is go to Mexico."

While the lead author heard deficit viewpoints such as those noted above expressed by many of the teachers, leaders, and staff throughout her time at TECHS, these conversations largely took place in the absence of students. However, the students were not completely spared from deficit points of view regarding the Latina/o culture and community. Sometimes these deficit views were expressed directly with or in the presence of students, and conveyed through language that we call racist mocking.

Racist Mocking

Coinciding with a deficit perspective, the lead author also saw that some of the teachers and leaders openly dialogued with the Latina/o students within a racist, classist, and nativist frame (or a frame that favors White-, middle-class-, and U.S.-normed values) through mocking and discounting their language and culture (Hill, 2008). Mock Spanish, according to Hill (2008) uses Spanish-language words and "assimilates their pronunciation to English [although often mispronounced or hyperanglicized], changes their meaning, usually to make them humorous or pejorative…" (p. 134). For example, one teacher commented that she liked to speak Spanish with the students in her classes. She said, "Yeah, I speak Spanish all the time. I say things like taco, burrito, and hasta lasagna!" Here the teacher was clearly mocking the students' language, particularly so with "hasta lasagna" as a substitute for *hasta luego* or "see you later" as it translates to English. In another instance, the lead author witnessed similar linguistic mocking in a group discussion with a Spanish teacher regarding the "type" or regional dialect of Spanish spoken among many of the Latina/o students at TECHS. The Spanish teacher said "Look, I told these kids that they need to speak properly. They are not going to get anywhere, a job or anything, with their Mexicanese." Often, this mocking was passed off as benign (Raines, 1991), trivial, and jocular, and as such it was dismissed and assumed away. However, the implied inferiority within these statements is evident, including a devaluation of non-White culture (Hill, 2007).

Similar to linguistic mocking, the lead author also witnessed conversations that mimicked and discounted Latina/o culture, particularly in reference to the student club, Latina/o Youth Promoting Education (LYPE). As the faculty sponsor for LYPE, a question the lead author was frequently asked by some staff members in a seemingly light-hearted manner was "What about WYPE?" jokingly noting the absence of a similar group for White students (i.e., White Students Promoting Education). Although noted in the bylaws and mission statement that LYPE was open to all students regardless of difference, some teachers consistently mocked the group openly and in the presence of both students and staff.

During the lead author's time at TECHS, based on observations and discussions she had with students, it seems that the relationship between the Latina/o students and some of the teachers and leaders at TECHS was racialized, although perhaps unconsciously, by both the teachers and the students. In their interviews, sometimes the Latina students were mildly critical of some teachers' and leaders' perspectives and mocking, but mostly dismissed it or did not identify it. In fact, the majority of the girls reported that they were very pleased with the majority of teachers at TECHS and found them to be very helpful, thus failing to

problematize the deficit perspectives and racist mocking, as we identify them, present among some of the school staff. While the girls did not seem to be affected by this, we were. After all, TECHS was a school that was designed with social justice intentions. The lead author frequently had discussions with the primary leadership of TECHS regarding the disrespectful talk she witnessed from some of the teachers, and suggested initiating dialogue in professional development meetings related to these issues. Her input, however, was quickly dismissed.

Discussion

The students' aspirations for obtaining an education for personal, familial, and even communal purposes were clear. All of the Latina students who participated in this study strongly believed in their education at TECHS as a means to improve their quality of life, their families' quality of life, and their future earning potential. They aspired to go to college and have professional careers, and were taking affirmative steps to do so. The girls were motivated to persist partly due to their obligation to family, and their parents' and siblings' dreams and desires for them. Additionally, the students' CCW helped them uphold their aspirations for future success, as well as navigate and resist potentially oppressive structures. In addition, the girls' reliance on the inherent foundational components of CCW was clear. For example, *consejos*, or nurturing advice, was sought out by the girls and provided by their parents and siblings. *Familismo*, *respeto*, and *confianza*, or the respect for, reciprocity with, and mutual trust of family were evident as the girls worked to be good role models for their siblings and others. Moreover, the girls acknowledged the hard work their parents were doing to be able to provide for them and were cognizant of the high costs associated with college. They realized their attendance at TECHS would offset some of those costs. Ultimately it was clear that the Latina students strived to be considered *bien educado*, respectable people who can be trusted and relied upon.

While the Latina students who participated in the study identified their early college program as one that was supportive and would help them achieve their goals, the lead author's observations and conversations with teachers and leaders showed that many of these educational professionals participated in subtractive forms of schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). That is, some teachers and administrators, who held deficit views and participated in racist mocking, failed to value the students' language, culture, and customs. Furthermore, they failed to value, recognize, honor, and acknowledge the students' beliefs, perceptions, and realities (Garza & Garza, 2010)—that is, the community cultural wealth students rely on to navigate, persist, and resist in a marginalized education system. We see this failure as disrespectful and chipping away at the students' culture and language (Garza & Garza, 2010). Moreover, in our opinion, through deficit perspectives and racist mocking, many of the teachers and leaders revealed their unreflective, deep-seated animosity and covert racism toward their Latina/o students (Irizarry & Ortiz, 2011), and tacitly violated the social justice vision of the school, undermining the hopes and dreams of the students. Importantly, however, these teachers' and administrators' racism was resisted, although perhaps unconsciously and uncritically, by these brave and agentic Latina students. However, their abilities to build particular forms of capital (especially navigational and social capital) may have been constrained by the teachers' racism. That is, the teachers' racism may have made it difficult for students to build truly authentic relationships with them. A lack of genuine relationships, or social capital, with institutional agents and therefore a potential lack of access to information and other resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), may have been partly responsible for the girls' comparable low achievement—that is, they may have been less able than their more academically successful peers to appropriately navigate the early college program.

Furthermore, although resisted by the students, the deficit perspectives and racist mocking demonstrated by many teachers may have been tolerated by the school leader because an initiative or reform rejecting these views may have faced opposition (Hynds, 2010). Or, perhaps these types of "everyday" racism were overlooked because they are simply consumed as normal (Pollock, 2008), benign (Raines, 1991), trivial, or jocular. Regardless, deficit perspectives and racist mocking left unchallenged or willfully ignored by school leadership can only diminish relationships between students and educators, making it unlikely that students will be allowed to fully rely on their CCW in school, particularly navigational and social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Likewise, these diminished or strained relationships make it challenging for the teachers to connect the curriculum to students' lived and cultural experiences—or CCW, thus undermining effective teaching as well as academic success.

As alluded to previously, while navigational capital and social capital, components of CCW, were present in the data, these types of capital were not expressed with similar frequency as some of the other forms of capital, likely because the original study did not address or analyze students' social networks specifically. Navigational capital and social capital, or lack thereof however, are likely important components of creating a more holistic image of the girls' achievement, as well as their persistence and motivation.

It is possible that the girls' navigational and social capital with the institutional agents at TECHS (teachers and leaders) were constrained by racist mocking and deficit perspectives. However, even though during the interviews the students' were sometimes mildly critical of their teachers' remarks, they remained confident that the majority of teachers at TECHS were "very good," they "cared" for students, and were "motivating." Minimizing or dismissing these teachers' racism and deficit perspectives is not our goal. However, based on the data, what most likely and most significantly impacted the girls' ability to build critical networks with other students and teachers, access particular forms of support, and perhaps learn how to best navigate the early college environment stems from their status as low-income. As highlighted in previous work (Locke & McKenzie, 2015), all of the girls who participated in this study worked outside of school. That is, they held wage-earning jobs that they attended after school and on weekends, or they had responsibilities at home (babysitting, helping younger siblings with homework, and so on). These non-school responsibilities often precluded the girls from participating in capital-building activities such as afterschool or Saturday tutorials and participating in study groups. Thus, their opportunities to build particular networks and forms of capital were significantly restricted by their economic status. That is, their abilities to be progressively agentic regarding their schooling was impacted by socioeconomic constraints.

Conclusion

In response to the first research question guiding this inquiry (How can the CCW framework help us understand Latina students' persistence and motivation at TECHS?), through seeking to understand the Latina students' use of CCW, we found that dynamic forms of capital, in particular aspirational, familial, navigational, social, and resistant, granted the students with a significant drive to persist and stay motivated. These forms of capital, as well as funds of knowledge, *educación,* and the concepts of *consejos, confianza, famlismo, respeto,* and *confianza en confianza* are conducive to academic success. Therefore, it seems clear that all schools, and ECHSs in particular given their social justice vision, should be invested in understanding these capitals and constructs, and how they can be reinforced through curriculum, pedagogy, and general school norms and discourse. That is, ECHSs should be especially interested in such constructs and frameworks as they speak to students' and families' humanity as well as their motivation, aspiration, and dedication. If these constructs and

frameworks were actively embraced, then ECHSs would be enacting their social justice imperative.

In response to the second research question guiding this study (What might these students' perceptions and experiences indicate about ECHSs as a solution for advancing the education of Latina students in particular, and other students from historically underserved groups generally?), the Latinas' stories expose that "their futures may not be merely an accession to the cultural discourses around them or the passive reproduction of a gendered subject; rather, they can be powerfully agentive" (Harklau, 2013, p. 24). All schools, and ECHSs in particular, should be empowering academic ecosystems for this and other target student populations. As this study demonstrated, by not explicitly recognizing and building on students' CCW, TECHS may have lost an opportunity to capitalize on the assets and resources embedded in these students' identities, families, and communities, and therefore improve achievement (Gaytan, 2013).

Furthermore, according to the TECHS Welcome Document, part of the Early College vision is "… to remove the financial, academic, and psychological hurdles that prevent too many students from entering and succeeding in college." However, as many of the teachers at TECHS expressed deficit views of the Latina/o students and openly mocked their language and aspects of their culture, we see this as insertion, rather than removal of such hurdles. Ironically, even in a social justice-oriented school—one that was designed to be transformative, the pervasiveness of stereotypes, deficit views, and dominant narratives often influence teachers' perspectives of and interactions with their students. This is an unfortunate reality that must be monitored. Social justice must be a reality—rather than simply a vision.

We agree with Burciaga et al. (2010), "to improve educational outcomes for these students, educational institutions must learn to draw from the strengths [they] bring to schools, instead of focusing on false deficiencies" (p. 422) and we would add, the deep-rooted usual suspects of poverty, lack of familial or cultural interest in education, and lack of motivation that have long casted a shadow over some students' achievement. Rather, the various forms of capital in CCW, as well as funds of knowledge, *educación,* and the concepts of *consejos, confianza, famlismo, respeto,* and *confianza en confianza* should be seen as valuable and powerful assets (Rodriguez-Valls, 2009), and accepted and used in schools, thereby inviting students to tap into the knowledge they bring with them to the schooling process. These cultural assets could be the keys to building bridges between students and teachers, teachers and parents, and schools and communities. ECHSs, which espouse to embrace a social justice imperative, have a particular and unique responsibility to ensure that these bridges are both intact and bidirectional (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002).

Recommendations: What is Needed in Schools for Latina Students?

These recommendations are specific to our data and the particular early college context. We believe these recommendations will help diffuse deficit thinking and actions, and relatedly better diffuse assets-based perspectives and actions to support student motivation, persistence, and achievement.

- **Productive conversations.** School leaders—in particular those who work in educational programs that claim to have the best interests of students from historically underserved groups at heart—must take an active role and have productive conversations, addressing teacher perspectives that may negatively impact students' sense of self. Racist mocking and deficit perspectives have no place in such a program. A standard must be set and adhered to—for if it is not important to the school leaders, then it unlikely to be important to the teachers (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Wahlstrom,

Anderson, Mascall, & Gordon, 2010). Intentionally seeking out teachers who have an equity orientation (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2008), or those who are willing to develop such an orientation may facilitate productive and honest conversations (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011).

- **Welcoming students' and families' authentic selves into the school.** Schools must be knowledgeable of, as well as invite, embrace, and value the cultural concepts of *educación*, funds of knowledge, *consejos, confianza, famlismo, respeto,* and *confianza en confianza,* as well as CCW inside the school at all levels. That is, students must be allowed to draw on their internal, familial, and communal resources in their schooling. And, in order for this to occur authentically, teachers, leaders, and all other institutional agents must be open to developing a holistic understanding of students' and families' histories, as well as their self-articulated needs and constraints. This will help to create social and navigational scaffolding for students and allow institutional agents to become empowerment agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011), thereby enabling the empowerment of students and families. Cultural discontinuity (Delpit, 2006), or a clash between the norms of the home and the norms of the school, has no place in self-described equity-oriented schools, such as the ECHS.
- **Collaboration between systems.** Institutional agents working in ECHSs in particular need a better understanding of poverty and how it impacts and restricts families' access to opportunity. If students are unable to access particular resources (i.e., after- or before-school tutoring, Saturday school, weekend events, study groups) then they will not be informed and therefore may fall behind. We call for a more comprehensive collaboration, or a "joint effort toward social justice" (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000, p. 252) between economic, social, and education policy and practice to meet the diverse and complex needs of students and families. As we have discussed elsewhere (Locke & McKenzie, 2015), the need to work will almost always override a need to study or to attend tutorials. Without a more comprehensive picture of the real issues of poverty and marginalization, even in a reform such as the ECHS notions of meritocracy persist (Skerrett, 2008).

References

Barajas, H. L., & Ronnkvist, A. (2007). Racialized space: Framing Latino and Latina experience in public schools. *Teachers College Record*, *109*(6), 1517-1538.

Berger, A., Adelman, N., & Cole, S. (2010). The early college high school initiative: An overview of five evaluation years. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *85*, 333-347.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Halsey (Eds.), *Power and ideology in education* (pp. 487-511). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In defense of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods, 10*(1), 59-74.

Burciaga, R., Pérez-Huber, L., & Solorzano, D. (2010). Going back to the headwaters: Examining Latina/o educational attainment and achievement through a framework of hope. In E. G. Murillo, S. A. Villenas, R. T. Galván, J. Sánchez Muñoz, C. Martinez, & M. Machado-Casas (Eds.) *Handbook of Latinos and education: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 422-437). New York, NY: Routledge.

Carter, P. (2003). "Black" cultural capital, status positioning, and schooling conflicts for low-income African American youth. *Social Problems 50*, 136-155.

Chambers, T. T. V. (2009). The "receivement" gap: School tracking policies and the fallacy of the "achievement" gap. *Journal of Negro Education*, *78*(4), 417-431.

Conrad, C. F., Haworth, J. G., & Millar, S. B. (2001). A positioned subject approach to inquiry. In C. F. Conrad, J. G. Haworth, L. R. Lattuca (Eds.), *Qualitative research in higher education: Expanding perspectives* (pp. 203-216). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Dodea Pacific. (2011). *AVID information*. Retrieved from http://www.dodea.edu/Curriculum/AVID/

Edmunds, J. A., Bernstein, L., Glennie, E., Willie, J., Arvshavsky, N., Unlu, F., . . . Dallas, A. (2010). Preparing students for college: The implementation of the early college high school model. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *85*, 348-364.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Feagin, J., & Cobas, J. (2014). Latinos facing racism: Discrimination, resistance, and endurance. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Garcia-Reid, P. (2007). Examining social capital as a mechanism for improving school engagement among low income Hispanic girls. *Youth & Society*, *39*(2), 164-181. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0044118X07303263

Garza, R. E., & Garza, E. (2010). Successful white teachers of Mexican American students of low socioeconomic status. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *9*(3), 189-206.

Gaytan, F. X. (2013). Social capital and the academic resources of Mexican youth in New York City. In B. Jensen & A. Sawyer (Eds.), *Regarding educación: Mexican-American schooling, immigration, and bi-national improvement* (pp. 255-278). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Giroux, H. A. (1983). *Theory and resistance in education: A pedagogy for the opposition*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Gonzalez, N., & Moll, L. (2002). Cruzando el puente: Building bridges to funds of knowledge. *Educational Policy*, *16*(4), 623-641.

Gorski, P. C. (2008). Peddling poverty for profit: Elements of oppression in Ruby Payne's framework. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *4*(1), 13-19.

Grau, J. M., Azmitia, M., & Quattlebaum, J. (2009). Latino families: Parenting, relational, and developmental processes. In F. Villarruel, G. Carlo, M. Grau, M. Amitiza, N. Cabera, & J. Chair (Eds.), *Handbook of US Latino psychology: Developmental and community-based perspectives* (pp. 153-169). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Harklau, L. (2013). Why Izzie didn't go to college: Choosing work over college as Latina feminism. *Teachers College Record, 115,* 010307.

Haviland, V. S. (2008). "Things get glossed over": Rearticulating the silencing power of whiteness in education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *59*(1), 40-54.

Hill, J. (2007). Mock Spanish: A site for the indexical reproduction of racism in American English. *Language & culture: Working paper symposium #2*. Retrieved from http://language-culture.binghamton.edu/symposia/2/part1/index.html

Hill, J. (2008). *The everyday language of white racism*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hynds, A. (2010). Unpacking resistance to change within-school reform programmes with a social justice orientation. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *13*(4), 377-392.

Irizarry, J. G., & Ortiz, C. (2011). Don't believe the hype: Challenging deficit perspectives from the inside. In J. G. Irizarry (Ed.), *The Latinidzation of U.S. schools* (pp. 39-56). Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Jayakumar, U. M., Vue, R., & Allen, W. R. (2013). Pathways to college for young Black scholars: A community cultural wealth perspective. *Harvard Educational Review*, *83*(4), 551-579.

Jensen, B., & Sawyer, A. (2013). Regarding educación: A vision for school improvement. In B. Jensen & A. Sawyer (Eds.), *Regarding educación: Mexican-American schooling, immigration, and bi-national improvement* (pp. 1-26). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Kelly, A., Schneider, M., & Carey, K. (2010). *Rising to the challenge: Hispanic college graduation rates as a national priority*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Kozol, J. (2012). *Fire in the ashes: Twenty-five years among the poorest children in America*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

Larrotta, C., & Yamamura, E. K. (2011). A community cultural wealth approach to Latina/Latino parent involvement: The promise of family literacy. *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*, *5*(2), 74-83.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Wahlstron, K., Anderson, S., Mascall, B., & Gordon, M. (2010). How successful leadership influences student learning: The second installment of a longer story. *Second International Handbook of Educational Change*, *23*, 611-629. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2660-6_35

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Liou, D. D., Antrop-Gonzàlez, R., & Cooper, R. (2009). Unveiling the promise of community cultural wealth to sustaining Latina/o students' college-going information networks. *Educational Studies*, *45*, 534-555.

Locke, L. A., & McKenzie, K. B. (2015). "It's like giving us a car, only without the wheels": A critical policy analysis of an early college programme. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *19*(2), 157-181.

Locke, L. A., Tabron, L. A., & Venzant Chambers, T. T. (2017). "If you show who you are, then they are going to try to fix you": The capitals and costs of schooling for high-achieving Latina students. *Educational Studies*, *53*(1), 13-36.

Luna, N. A., & Martinez, M. (2013). A qualitative study using Community Cultural Wealth to understand the educational experiences of Latino college students. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, *7*(1).

Luzzo, D. A., & McWhirter, E. H. (2001). Sex and ethnic differences in the perception of educational and career-related barriers and levels of coping efficacy. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *79*, 61-67.

McKenzie, K. B., & Scheurich, J. J. (2008). Teacher resistance to improvement of schools with diverse students. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *11*(2), 117-133.

McLeod, J. (1987). *Ain't no makin' it: Aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighborhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, *31*(2), 132-140.

Moll, L. C., & Ruiz, R. (2002). The schooling of Latino children. In M. Suárez-Orozco & M. M. Páez (Eds.), *Latinos: Remaking America* (pp. 362–374). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Menchaca, M. (1997). Early racist discourses: The roots of deficit thinking. In R. R. Valencia (Ed.), *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice* (pp. 13-40). London, UK: Falmer Press.

Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Oakes, J., & Lipton, M. (2002). Struggling for educational equity in diverse communities: School reform as social movement. *Journal of Educational Change*, *3*, 383-406.

Ochoa, G. (2010). (Re)conceptualizating race/ethnic relationships in US schools: Toward a multifaceted and multilevel framework. *Sociology Compass*, *4*(2), 136-148. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00264.x

Ojeda, L., & Flores, L. Y. (2008). The influence of gender, generation level, parents' education level, and perceived barriers on the educational aspirations of Mexican American high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly, 57*, 84-95.

Orozco, G. L. (2008). Understanding the culture of low-income immigrant parents: Key to involvement. *The School Community Journal, 18*(1), 21-37.

Pérez-Huber, L. (2009). Challenging racist nativist framing: Acknowledging the community cultural wealth of undocumented Chicana college students to reframe the immigration debate. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(4), 704-729.

Pew Hispanic Center. (2012). *Hispanic public school enrollments*. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/08/20/ii-hispanic-public-school-enrollments/

Pollock, M. (2008). *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Raines, F. (1991). Is the benign really harmless? Deconstructing some "benign" manifestations of white privilege. In J. Kincheloe, S. Steinberg, N. Rodriguez, & R. Chennault (Eds.), *White reign: Deploying whiteness in America* (pp. 76-101). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Riegle-Crumb, C. (2006). The path through math: Course sequences and academic performance at the intersection of race-ethnicity and gender. *American Journal of Education*, *113*(1), 101-122. doi:10.1086/506495

Rochmes, D. (2007). Blinded by the White: Latino school desegregation and the insidious allure of whiteness. *Texas Hispanic Journal of Law & Policy*, *13*(1), 7-22.

Rodriguez-Valls, F. (2009). Culturally relevant poetry: Creating esperanza (hope) with stanzas. *Multicultural Education*, *17*(1), 11-14.

San Miguel, G., & Valencia, R. (1998). From the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The educational plight and struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. *Harvard Educational Review*, *68*(3), 353-412. Retrieved from ProQuest Psychology Journals database. (UMI No. 34453231).

Skerrett, A. (2008). Racializing educational change: Melting pot and mosaic influences on educational policy and practice. *Journal of Educational Change*, *9*, 261-280.

Solórzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *24*(3), 5-19.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youths. *Harvard Educational Review*, *67*(1), 1-40.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2001). Social capital and social embeddedness in the socialization of low-income Latino adolescents in the United States. In R. D. Stanton-Salazar (Ed.), *Manufacturing hope and despair: The school and kin support networks of U.S.-Mexican youth* (pp. 12-34). New York, NY: Teacher College Press.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2004). Social capital among working-class minority students. In M. A. Gibson, P. Gándara, & J. P. Koyama (Eds.), *School connections: U.S. Mexican youth, peers, and school achievement* (pp. 18-37). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2011). A social capital framework for the study of institutional agents and their role in the empowerment of low-status students and youth. *Youth & Society*, *43*(3), 1066-1109.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1995). Social capital and the reproduction of

inequality: Information networks among Mexican-origin high school students. *Sociology of Education*, *68*, 116-135.

Stanton-Salazar, R. D., & Spina, S. U. (2000). The network orientations of highly resilient urban minority youth: A network-analytic account of minority socialization and its educational implications. *The Urban Review, 32*(3), 227-261.

Theoharris, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(2), 221-258.

Tyson, K. (2013). Tracking, segregation, and the opportunity gap: What we know and why it matters. In P. L. Carter & K. G. Welner (Eds.), *Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance* (pp. 169-180). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

United States Department of Education. (2011a). *Gaining early awareness and readiness for undergraduate programs (GEAR UP)*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html

United States Department of Education. (2011b). *TRIO information*. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html

Valdés, G. (1996). *Con respeto: Bridging the distances between culturally diverse families and schools.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Valencia, R. (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring.* Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Villapando, O., & Solórzano, D. (2005). The role of culture in college preparation: A review of the research literature. In W. G. Tierney, Z. B. Corwin, & J. E. Colyar (Eds.), *Preparing for college: Nine elements of effective outreach* (pp. 13-28). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

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

Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Young, J. W., Lakin, J., Courtney, R., & Martiniello, M. (2012). *Advancing the quality and equity of education for Latino students: A white paper.* (Report No. ETS RR-12-01). Princeton, NJ: ETS.

Zambrana, R. E., & Zoppi, I. M. (2002). Latina students: Translating cultural wealth into social capital to improve academic success. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *11*, 33-53.

Author Note

Leslie Ann Locke is an Assistant Professor in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies at the University of Iowa. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: leslie-locke@uiowa.edu.

Gerri M. Maxwell is an Associate Professor in Educational Leadership and Chair of the Department of Teacher & Bilingual Education at Texas A&M University—Kingsville. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: gerri.maxwell@tamuk.edu.

Maria R. Tello is an Associate Professor in Developmental English at South Texas College. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: mtello@southtexascollege.edu.

Article Citation

Locke, L. A., Maxwell, G., & Tello, M. (2017). "… you don't come to this school… to show off your hoodies": Latinas, community cultural wealth, and an early college high school. *The Qualitative Report, 22*(9), 2404-2427. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss9/9