



Volume VII, Spring Issue

May 2017



HETS ONLINE JOURNAL

Table of Contents

HETS Chairman’s Message.....	3
Chief Editor’s Message.....	4
Article 1:	
Online Learning: No Worries at Community Colleges.....	5
By: Dr. Sherese A. Mitchell, Hostos Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY)	
Article 2:	
<i>Relación Entre las Características Socioeconómicas de los Estudiantes de un Colegio Comunitario en la Ciudad de Nueva York con las Calificaciones Obtenidas en Cursos de Educación en Línea Modalidad Asincrónica.....</i>	21
By: Dr. Sonia Maldonado Torres, Hostos Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY)	
Article 3:	
The Need for Social Workers along the South Texas-Mexico Border: Meeting the Need through Distance Education.....	44
By: Dr. Denise A. Longoria, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; and Dr. Juan Gonzalez, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	
Meet the Authors.....	61
About HETS.....	64

Message from the Chairman



I am particularly happy to present the Spring Issue, Volume VII, of this publication. The HETS journal traditionally **addresses relevant topics impacting technology and Hispanic Students**; this issue is no exception. But we also will begin venturing into other areas of interest, including **student retention** and **assessment**, and the very important topic of **student access**.

I hope you will share the link to this Journal with your colleagues. And if you have an innovative technique or would like to share your knowledge and experience in any of these areas impacting higher education, please **consider submitting an article** for the Volume VIII, fall edition **on or before September 22, 2017**. Click [here](#) to **download the guidelines to submit your article**. Your submission should be an **original work either in English or Spanish**. Just send it to the HETS office via e-mail to: info@hets.org. Through publications such as the HETS

Online Journal, which is included in **EBSCO Publishing's databases**, we can share the latest and best information with others in higher education and focus a wide spotlight on the exciting work being done by our colleagues.

Our sincere gratitude to **editor in Chief, Pamela Vargas**, and members of the Editorial Board: **Dr. Naydeen González De Jesús, Prof. Ana Milena Lucumi, Mr. Sunil Gupta, Dr. Manuel Correa, Dr. Carlos Morales, Mr. Carlos Guevara, Dr. Juan "Tito" Meléndez, and Prof. Pura Centeno** for accepting the challenge of reviewing and selecting the articles among the many impressive submissions received. We would like to recognize the hard work, commitment and dedication of all.

I hope you find our Fall Issue both informative and interesting.

Dr. Carlos Vargas-Aburto

HETS Chair
President, Southeast Missouri State University

Message from the Chief Editor



Thank you for viewing the Spring 2017 edition of the HETS Online Journal! The Journal's goal is to provide information on the use of technology in student success, while also examining the critical areas of student retention and success overall. We hope you'll find some useful practices that you can implement at your own institution!

This edition features articles on meeting the need for utilizing distance learning to help meet the need for Hispanic social workers near the border in Texas, pre-course practices that can help students thrive in an online course, and a study, in Spanish, on the relationship between socioeconomic status and success in asynchronous courses.

Sincerely,

We hope you enjoy the issue!

Pamela A. (Krauser) Vargas
Director, Research and Grant Development
Southeast Missouri State University
One University Plaza
MS 4400
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701
Phone: 573.651.2196

Online Learning: No Worries at Community Colleges

Author: Dr. Sherese A. Mitchell

Assistant Professor

Institution: Hostos Community College

500 Grand Concourse

Bronx, NY 10541

Abstract

There has been an increase in online course enrollment through the years. More students are enrolled in these courses as a result of budget benefits and student interest. Typically, students take some time to become oriented to these courses and ask questions, especially about the navigation. This paper describes the design, content, and implementation of the training folder "Before Your Course Begins" that teachers can use to engage students before the start of an online course.

Online Learning: No Worries at Community Colleges

In the last decade, there has been an increase in online course enrollment in community colleges (Saltarelli & Roster, 2014). More students are enrolled in these institutions because of student interest in the classes offered, as well as lower tuition. Typically, students take some time to become oriented to the courses and ask numerous questions, and this is especially true of those new to online courses. This paper describes the design, contents, and implementation of the online folder “Before Your Course Begins” that was created to engage students before the start of the course. This study is based on my work at Hostos Community. The strategies outlined here can be used to keep students engaged.

Online course enrollment in community colleges has increased at an average rate of 18.5% during the ten years before 2011 (Allen & Seaman, 2011), which clearly exceeds the 2.1% rate of the total U.S. higher education enrollment during the same time frame of the past decade (Allen & Seaman, 2011). Moreover, over 6 million students had enrolled in at least one online course as of 2010 (Saltarelli & Roster, 2014). These increases demonstrate the importance of analyzing the way online technologies relate to instruction and course content (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Jones and Hansen (2013) in “Data Provided by the American Association of Community Colleges,” (p. 89), describe the role of Community colleges as the most active entry into higher education, registering nearly 50% of all undergraduate students. In addition, community colleges are the gateway to education for the nontraditional and underprepared student population (Allen & Seaman, 2011). As Ashburn (2006) outlined, students’ inadequate academic

preparation and their lack of success in their previous educational institutions are the most difficult obstacles facing community colleges nationwide. The means of resolving this problem may be a combination of conventional and new technology methodologies.

Although the discussion among academics in community *and* four-year colleges about the use of lectures versus lectures replaced by, or accompanied by, more active forms of learning has become contentious, (Nitecki, 2011), lectures continue to be an important element of the traditional classroom. In both community and four-year colleges, video-recorded lectures are often used to accompany in-person classroom lectures (Gorrissen, Van Brugge, & Jochems, 2012) and are a part of many online learning platforms (Breslow, Pritchard, DeBoer, Stump, Ho, & Seaton, 2013). The hybrid (blended) model of instruction consists of face-to-face instruction, plus time for students to work independently while using instructional technology. An overall goal of blended learning is to combine the best practices of the face-to-face classroom practice with the online resources of a virtual classroom (Rausch & Crawford, 2012).

According to research done by Means, there is important evidence that online learning is just as effective as classroom learning, and a hybrid is more effective than either one independently (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010). However, some students are entering hybrid courses unaware of how to navigate the course. Many students believe the class only meets one day a week and aren't aware that there is work to complete online. For others, the opposite is true, and they are absent in the face-to-face session. Overall, students are anxious initially about the format, course, and the expectations of the instructor. Because of this anxiety, students need to see the syllabus ahead of time (LaMonica, 2001), so they will know

what to expect in the course and can get a jump start on assignments. Furthermore, to allay their fears, many students ask schoolmates who have taken the courses before about professors or search <http://www.ratemyprofessor.com> to get an idea of the expectations of the teacher. The instructor may also advise the students to write down important dates, i.e. tests, due dates for papers, presentations, etc., or ask them to put reminders in their phones. All of these preparations reduce their anxiety and help them to get excited about what they are about to engage in for the coming semester.

Attention to diversity is also essential when assisting students with online learning courses (Seybert & Rossol, 2010). An increasing number of students have immigrated to the United States. The City University profiles of community colleges demonstrate that nearly half of students come from different countries and speak a host of native languages (“student profiles”, 2014). For example in 2014, 10,000 out of the 20,000 students enrolled in LaGuardia Community College were migrants. In total, they were natives of 157 different countries and spoke 111 different languages. Many of the students who emigrated lack adequate fluency and literacy in English, as evidenced by the large number of students enrolled in remedial courses (“student profiles,” 2014). In another community college, Hostos, the majority of first-year students are enrolled in such courses (“student profiles,” 2016). Culture and language barriers can interfere with the learning process, making teaching more challenging, and impacting the success of the student (Park & Choi, 2009).

In institutions serving non-traditional students, faculty need to develop an additional repertoire of teaching strategies that consider remedial education needs, cultural and diverse backgrounds and meaningful class content integration (Wichadee, 2013). In December 2009,

The City University of New York (CUNY) Office of Academic Affairs requested proposals for the expansion of hybrid instruction, in response to a call from the Chancellor. The request called for an increase in hybrid courses by the fall of 2010, with institutes facilitating the sharing, use and development of the best practices. During the academic years from 2010 through 2012, CUNY faculty received grant funding to develop hybrid courses and disseminate the results and best practices. The results were presented on discussion boards and blogs on the CUNY Academic Commons. (<http://www2.cuny.edu>)."

Hostos has developed an effective non-conventional strategy. Located in one of the poorest districts in the United States, the South Bronx, Hostos Community College is part of The City University of New York and serves nearly 7,000 students ("Student Profiles," 2014) with a population that is 60% Hispanic, 22% African American, 3% Asian, as well as 66% female ("Student Profiles," 2014). On average, 60% of the college's student population are first-generation college students. Overall, 86% of these students require remediation in mathematics, writing, or reading. Despite these challenges, the students have shown a desire to grow socially and academically through higher education. Many of these students are parents who are at or below poverty level. The hybrid format offers an opportunity for them to attend class while reducing the costs of transportation or child care. The online courses of Hostos Community College offer a great deal of flexibility. Following is a brief first day overview that I have implemented in a traditional classroom when welcoming students to the course.

Day One in Person:

- Ice breakers
- Provide and explain syllabus
- Overview of course
- Answer all questions and indicate that questions are welcome
- Dismiss early and allow students to purchase course materials

The same information can be provided online, in greater detail, and accessed at the convenience of the students. Following is an overview of how I orient students to online courses that I have found particularly helpful.

Course Availability and Instructor Involvement

I open the online course (make it available) between two to four weeks in advance. Another benefit of making lecture materials available to students online is that it allows students to study those materials on their own time and at their own pace (Bjork, Dunlosky, & Kornell, 2013). Once the course starts, instructors should be available to answer questions. Also important, instructors can influence their students through their “teaching presence” online. Teaching presence is indicated by the extent to which learners experience the instructor’s influence in the class (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006). Teaching presence is also reflected in designing, facilitating, delivering, and evaluating students’ performance. In research done by Baker, engaged teaching presence in the online environment has been shown to result in increased student participation and motivation (Baker, 2010).

Understandably, teaching presence online requires more personal communication between faculty members and individual students (Baker, 2010). This coincides with the findings of Shea, Li, & Pickett (2006), who assert that frequent student-faculty interaction was the “most important factor in student motivation” (p.1). Faculty members mentioned in Shea, et. al’s findings stressed the importance of having multiple contact points (phone, e-mail, texting, etc.) to ensure communication and quick responses. Another important element in the design of an online course is the interaction between students (Kumari, 2001). This helps the learners have a

sense of community. There is trust and interdependence (Davies & Graff, 2005). Instructors should introduce themselves on the first day of orientation and the first day of class in a designated spot on the discussion board.

Get Everyone Acquainted Via Discussion Board and Designated Area

Providing an ice breaker activity helps students to feel comfortable with participating in the course, and acquaints them with their classmates and with the discussion board. Discussion boards encourage students to think more deeply or creatively, which benefits everyone in the exchange (Kumari, 2001). The instructor can also lead a discussion that allays the students' fears about online learning, or college in general. Basically, introducing themselves and being social are things that students are familiar with. When they begin with something they know, they get comfortable and can ease into the unknown. The importance of community is explained by Rausch & Crawford (2012). They further mention that projects should be designed for collaboration, even though students are not familiar with each other. Churches (2011) stresses collaboration by highlighting the motivation factor for students when working with peers. Hybrid courses provide increased interaction between student and instructor and collaboration between students that would not be possible in a traditional face-to-face course. This is due to the opportunity for a live connection and the additional online correspondence with flexibility (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

Both the virtual and the actual classroom environments can either advance or obstruct a student's potential to learn and feel safe and content as a member of the class. Educational research supports creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, where students feel relaxed in asking questions and in expressing their thoughts and feelings, (Koljatic, 2001). Some areas to

consider when creating an atmosphere of mutual respect are classroom design, classroom procedures, and classroom strategies. Implementing a few strategies that address these areas can help develop a strong sense of community and encourage positive interactions and cooperative learning for students. A welcoming classroom environment can lead to increased academic achievement and a sense of pride and belonging in the school.

Orientation is essentially an experience that aids students in learning what they need to know before courses begin. Students who participate in orientation have a clearer understanding of what the course entails and greater rates of persistence in classwork and course attendance than their non-participant peers. Achieving a goal becomes easier when the goal is precise and the track to obtaining it is clear (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2010). Students who register late may also experience problems in online courses. Ford, Stahl, Walker, & Ford (2008) support the evidence that there is a decrease in the chance for success for late registrants to courses. Furthermore, late registration correlates with lower grades and lower re-enrollment the following term (Freer-Weiss, 2004).

With these possibilities in mind, it is important to establish structure during the first two weeks of class. The instructor's expectations should be clear (Breslow et. al, 2013). For example, in my classes, I jump start my online instruction with the "Before Your Course Begins" folder mentioned above. The folder contains material that students are assigned to download or print for the first day of class (syllabus, reading list, etc). I provide written and visual instructions on how to navigate the course. The written form is short and simple with bullet points to focus the students' attention and to not overwhelm them. I also include pictures and clip art where I can to appeal to the different learning styles. Additionally, I include a picture of myself in the

designated place where I introduce myself. A picture of the textbook is also included, along with the price and where they can purchase the book. The pictures and graphics that I use in the folder add visual appeal to the contents. I boldface important information. Equally important, I provide a list of study tips that will get students into an early routine in which they will feel connected to the course. In my visual aids, I use design elements, white space, and indentation to draw students' attention to the material they should focus on. Still, many students have said it is too much information to take in, and I am not physically there to explain it to them. Utilizing their feedback, I considered solutions. Although I would be online explaining the online course, I decided to imagine I was in physically in a classroom with the students.

Provide an Orientation Folder and Recorded Orientation Lecture

Educational research has demonstrated that students are not necessarily well equipped to monitor their own learning (Bjork et al., 2013), and such limitations may be especially likely to manifest themselves in the absence of face-to-face interactions that support monitoring processes in traditional classroom settings (e.g. asking instructors to clarify or elaborate upon points of confusions; Bjork et al., 2013). Studies by Choi and Johnson have shown that students subjectively assess video-recorded materials as easier to learn and more memorable than text materials (Choi & Johnson, 2005).

To introduce preservice educators to the hybrid environment, I created an orientation lecture in the format of a YouTube video that I taped one year ago as a pilot study, with the help of the technology department. EDU 104 (Teaching Language Arts to Young Students) is one of the primary courses needed for our education program. It is one of many of our program's hybrid

courses and sets the foundation for navigation in future teacher education classes that follow.

This is a course that I teach in the summer, and it is an accelerated version of the traditional EDU 104 that is taught during the fall and spring semesters. Due to the intensity, students had difficulty navigating the course in such a short time. Hence, the need for such a video.

In the video, I dressed up as I would in the physical classroom. I moved about the virtual space as if I were in a “reality” classroom. Once on camera, I explain how to navigate the course.

Because I opened the course at least 4 weeks in advance, I found that students inundated me with questions about the course and expressed how anxious they were about doing well. The video allowed students to ask me questions, get to know me and get a feel for my teaching style. This was a useful tool because online students who are not able to attend the in-person orientation can attend the one online at their convenience. Equally important, after my “online” introduction, students expressed less anxiety about working in a virtual environment.

Ensure the Students are Accountable and Get Their Feedback

Giving a quiz on the first day about the orientation and course set up is a very effective means of assessing the students’ understanding of the information presented. A quiz can also be used as an accountability measure. Students can complete an anonymous survey, so the professor can get feedback about the students’ navigation of the course. Instructors can ask students to send them an email or post to the discussion board to assess how students are navigating. All of this can be used to determine success and implement changes, if needed.

Conclusion

Student course engagement “typically refers to the amount, type, and intensity of investment students make in their educational experiences” (Koljatic & Kuh, 2001, p.361). Faculty should monitor student engagement as a formative strategy to examine the impact of their teaching and assessment activities. As highlighted by Ahlfeldt & Sellnow (2005), “the concept of student engagement is receiving increased attention globally as it is viewed as an important element in assessing and improving the quality of higher education” (p.16). According to (Wichadee, 2013), the online environment can best serve students with variable learning styles and those who do not approach learning in a systematic way. Consequently, online educators should plan activities that address different approaches to learning for the benefit of varied learning-style preferences. In this way, the learning needs of most students can be accurately addressed (Ryman, Hardham, Richardson, & Ross, 2009).

Some advantages of the hybrid and online instruction include varied ways of creating active and interesting learning using technology, self-directed learning opportunities, greater student/instructor interaction, and flexibility (Rausch & Crawford, 2012). Faculty who made an effort to actively engage students have found some success in reducing student attrition (Herman & Banister 2007). Finally, online learning will remain a mainstay in higher education. It is an important tool that instructors can use to facilitate greater retention, especially for students who are challenged with inadequate preparation or poor education from previous institutions. Finally, instructors can acclimate students to this methodology in a way that is comfortable and exciting.

References

- Ahlfeldt, S., Mehta, S. & Sellnow, T. (2005). Measurement and analysis of student engagement in university classes where saying levels of PBL methods of instruction are in use. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 24(1), 5-20.
- Allen, I., & Seaman, J. (2011). Going the distance: Online education in the United States, 2011. Wellesley, MA: Babson Survey Research Group.
- Arbaugh, J.B. & Hwang, A. (2006). Does “teaching presence” exist in online MBA courses? The Internet and Higher Education, 9(1), 9-21.
- Ashburn, E. (2006). Learning gaps worry community colleges. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(10), A2.
- Baker, C. (2010, January). The impact of instructor immediacy and presence for online student affective learning, cognition and motivation. *The Journal of Educators Online*, 7(1).
- Bjork, R. A., Dunlosky, J., & Kornell, N. (2013). Self-regulated learning: Beliefs, techniques, and illusions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 417-444.
- Breslow, L., Pritchard, D.E., DeBoer, J., Stump, G.S., Ho, A.D., & Seaton, D.T. (2013). *Studying learning the worldwide classroom: Research into edX's first MOOC. Research & Practice in Assessment*, 8, 13-25.
- Churches, A. (2011). Four elements of effective digital learning, *Teacher Librarian*, Vol. 39 (2), 34-35.
- Choi, H. J. & Johnson, S. D. (2005). The effect of context-based video instruction on learning and motivation in online courses. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 19, 215-227.

- Davies, J., & Graff, M. (2005). Performance in e-learning: Online participation and student grades. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 36(4), 657-663.
- Ford, G.G., Stahl, K.J., Walker, M.E., & Ford, A.M. (June, 2008). Better late than never? The relation of registration data to class performance. *College Student Journal*, 42(2), 402-407.
- Freer-Weiss, D. (2004). *Community college freshmen: Last in: first out?* *Journal of College student retention research theory and practice*, 6(2), 137-154.
- Gorrissen, P., Van Bruggen, J., & Jochems, W. (2012). Students and recorded lectures: Survey on current use and demands for higher education. *Research in Learning Technology*, 20, 297-311.
- Herman, T. & Banister, S. (2007). Face-to-face versus online coursework: A comparison of costs and learning outcomes. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 7(4), 318-326.
- Jones, S. & Hansen, K. (Spring, 2014). *Technology Review: Virtual Intrusive Advising—Supporting Community College Students Through Web-Based Synchronous Technologies*. The Community College Enterprise. pp. 89-93.
- Koljatic, M. & Kuh, G. D. (2001). A longitudinal assessment of college student engagement in good practices in undergraduate education. *Higher Education*, 42, 351-371.
- Kumari, D. S. (2001). Connecting graduate students to virtual guests through asynchronous discussions: Analysis of an experience. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 5(2), 53-63.

- Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., and Associates. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- LaMonica, L. (2001). The role of the instructor in web-based instruction: Are we practicing what we preach? *DEOSNEWS*, 11(6), 1-7.
- Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2010). *Evaluation of evidence based practices in online learning: Meta-analysis and review of online learning studies*. U.S. Department of Education.
- Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 108, 1017-1054.
- Moore, M. G., & Kearsley, G. (2005). *Distance education: A systems view* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Nitecki, E. M. (2011). The power of the program: How the academic program can improve community college student success. *Community College Review*, 39(2), 98-110.
- Park, J. H., & Choi, H. J. (2009). Factors influencing adult learners' decisions to drop out or persist in online learning. *Educational Technology and Society*, 12, 207-217.
- Rausch, D. & E. K. Crawford (2012). Cohorts, communities of inquiry, and course delivery methods: UTC best practices in learning—the hybrid learning community model. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 60:175-180.
- Ryman, B., Hardham, G., Richardson, B., & Ross, J. (2009). Creating and Sustaining online learning communities: designing for transformative learning. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 5(3), 32-45.

Saltarelli, A.J., & Roseth, C.J. (2014). Effects of Synchronicity and Belongingness on Face-to-Face and Computer-Mediated Constructive Controversy. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106(4), 946-960.

Shea, P., Li, C.S., & Pickett, A. (2006). A study of teaching presence and student sense of learning community in fully online and web-enhanced college courses. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 9(3), 175-190.

Seybert, J.A., & Rossol, P.M. (2010). What drives instructional costs in two-year colleges? *Planning for Higher Education*, 38(3), 38-44.

Wichadee, S. (2013). Facilitating students' learning with hybrid instruction: A comparison among four learning styles, *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 11(1), 99-116.

Resources

Hostos Student Profiles

<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/oaa/oir/PublicDocuments/StudentProfile.pdf>

The City University of New York

<http://www2.cuny.edu/>

***Relación Entre las Características Socioeconómicas de los Estudiantes de un Colegio
Comunitario en la Ciudad de Nueva York con las Calificaciones Obtenidas en Cursos de
Educación en Línea Modalidad Asincrónica.***

Autora: Dr. Sonia Maldonado Torres
Assistant Professor

Institución: *Hostos Community College, CUNY*

Abstracto

El propósito del estudio fue explorar la relación entre la edad, ingreso de acuerdo al código postal, género, concentración, raza y status ESL con las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica de un grupo de estudiantes que asiste a un colegio comunitario en la ciudad de Nueva York. Para obtener los resultados del estudio, se utilizaron datos proporcionados por la Oficina de Investigación Institucional y Evaluación Estudiantil (*Office of Institutional Research and Student Assessment*) del Colegio. Para el estudio se analizaron datos de 557 estudiantes que completaron 954 cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica durante cuatro semestres consecutivos. En el estudio se encontró una correlación entre la edad de los participantes y las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación asincrónicas ($r = .01$). Además se estableció una diferencia significativa entre la concentración de los participantes (todas las concentraciones ($M = 3.77$, $DS = 1.7$); educación ($M = 3.55$, $DS = 3.91$) ($t = 2.2$, $p = 0.03$) con respecto a las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. Los hallazgos de este estudio serán utilizados como punto de partida para realizar una investigación más detallada sobre las relaciones que existen entre el estatus socioeconómico de los estudiantes matriculados en un Colegio Comunitario localizado en la ciudad de Nueva York y su desempeño académico en los cursos a distancia.

***Relación Entre las Características Socioeconómicas de los Estudiantes de un Colegio
Comunitario en la Ciudad de Nueva York con las Calificaciones Obtenidas en Cursos de
Educación en Línea Modalidad Asincrónica.***

Introducción

Investigadores en el campo de la educación superior han indicado que los programas académicos de educación a distancia son una alternativa educativa eficaz y económica para completar un título universitario (Johnson, 2009; Kim, Welch, Nam & Seungwan, 2016; Shonfeld & Ronen, 2015). Estos mismos investigadores también concluyeron que estos cursos son de gran beneficio para los estudiantes que desean asistir a una universidad en particular pero no pueden hacerlo debido a la distancia o a su limitación con el tiempo. Estudiar a distancia implica que los estudiantes tendrán la oportunidad de educarse empleando la tecnología en cursos que pueden estar diseñados sincrónica o asincrónicamente (Kumi Yeboah & Smith, 2016). Es decir que los entornos de enseñanza que se utilizarán para impartir las lecciones a distancia se establecerán virtualmente (Birch & Volkov, 2007).

Sin embargo, aunque los cursos en línea hayan sido descritos por algunos investigadores como beneficiosos y accesibles (Kim, Welch & Nam, 2016), otros investigadores en el área de educación superior han expresado gran preocupación debido a que existe la posibilidad de que estos cursos no estén diseñados pensando en las necesidades de la población de estudiantes minoritarios que asiste a instituciones de educación superior en los Estados Unidos (EEUU) (Kumi Yeboah & Smith, 2016, Murugaiah & Thang, 2010, Richardson, 2012). Por esta razón, en este estudio se exploró la relación entre la edad, ingreso de acuerdo al código postal, género, concentración, raza y status ESL con las calificaciones en los cursos de educación en línea,

modalidad asincrónica de un grupo de estudiantes que asiste a un Colegio Comunitario en Nueva York. Los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica fueron escogidos para llevar a cabo el estudio debido a que la gran mayoría de los cursos que se ofrecen en línea en el Colegio Comunitario en Nueva York pertenecen a dicha facultad y más datos podrían ser obtenidos para el análisis preliminar. Este estudio debe ser visto como un estudio preliminar que ha sido diseñado con el propósito de explorar y entender posibles relaciones para luego investigarlas detalladamente.

Revisión de la Literatura

Según Merrills (2010), los cursos ofrecidos en línea son generalmente más rigurosos que los cursos presenciales (cursos tradicionalmente enseñados en el salón de clases). Algunos investigadores sugirieron además que los problemas que enfrentan los estudiantes minoritarios en este tipo de cursos están intrínsecamente relacionados con: 1) madurez académica, entiéndase por esto la adquisición de destrezas de estudio efectivas (Riccio, 2015), 2) la falta o el poco apoyo tecnológico por parte de la universidad (Merrills, 2010), 3) diversidad de destrezas académicas particularmente en el área de escritura y comprensión de lectura (Murugaiah & Thang , 2010; Richardson, 2012) y la 4) incongruencia entre los estilos de aprendizaje y los estilos de enseñanza (Maldonado Torres, 2014). También O'Neal, Espino, Goldthrite, Morin, Weston, Hernández and Fuhrmann (2016) indicaron que debido a que muchos de estos estudiantes pertenecen a la primera generación que asiste a la universidad esto hace que el apoyo académico que reciben en el hogar sea más limitado. De la misma manera, no sólo sus habilidades académicas de escritura y lectura en su primer o segundo idioma (inglés) podrían ser una potencial dificultad, sino que en ocasiones estos estudiantes

también tienen una noción totalmente opuesta a la noción del manejo del tiempo que se requiere para ser exitosos en una institución de educación superior localizada en los EE.UU. Para muchos de estos estudiantes la noción de tiempo y espacio constituye su necesidad de lidiar con el aquí y el ahora ya que planificar para el presente es más importante que planificar para el futuro (Meeuwisse, Born & Severiens, 2013). El futuro, para este grupo de estudiantes es visto como algo distante que podría ser manejado en el momento en que un evento o una situación particular se presente (Meeuwisse, Born & Severiens, 2013). Esta noción de tiempo y espacio también pone en peligro las posibilidades de que los estudiantes minoritarios tengan éxito en los cursos en línea debido a la naturaleza misma de los cursos. Los cursos en línea están diseñados por fechas de vencimiento y aunque en este sentido son similares a los cursos tradicionales, estos cursos requieren tener más asignaciones por semana que los tradicionales (Dvorak & Jia, 2016). A través de estos requisitos semanales, el profesor crea una atmósfera virtual que promueve que los estudiantes se sientan más conectados y menos aislados (Dvorak & Jia, 2016).

En un estudio realizado con un grupo de estudiantes minoritarios que asistían a un Colegio Comunitario en la ciudad de Nueva York se encontró que estos estudiantes preferían aprender en grupo (Maldonado Torres, 2014) y que se sentían más motivados a aprender cuando podían utilizar su primer idioma (Supple, Best & Pearce, 2016). Además, Maldonado Torres (2014) indicó que conocer al profesor e interaccionar con los compañeros en el salón de clase promueve que este grupo de estudiantes pueda desempeñarse mejor académicamente. En otras palabras, la limitación con respecto al apoyo académico que estos estudiantes puedan recibir en el hogar, el apoyo tecnológico que provea la institución, su visión con respecto a la

organización del tiempo, la falta de oportunidades para utilizar su primera lengua y sus posibles inseguridades con el lenguaje académico (escrito y comprensión de lectura) son elementos que podrían representar realidades que pueden promover la desigualdad educativa entre las minorías de estudiantes que asisten a los colegios comunitarios del país y están matriculados en cursos a distancia. Se entiende por desigualdad educativa la falta de desarrollo de iniciativas educativas que ofrezcan a los estudiantes la oportunidad de eliminar las barreras basadas en género, raza, edad y necesidades especiales al aprender (Jacobs, Beck & Crowell, 2014; Willems, 2012). Equidad educativa implica que cualquier iniciativa educativa se desarrollará de una manera sistematizada incluyendo las realidades socioeconómicas de los grupos en desventaja en la sociedad (Jacobs, Beck & Crowell, 2014). En otras palabras, para Willems (2012) el concepto de equidad educativa enfatiza en la importancia de reconocer las realidades socioeconómicas de nuestro estudiantado para así integrarlas en las lecciones que se ofrecen virtual o presencialmente. Este concepto de equidad educativa propone que para que la educación sea equitativa debe existir una participación académica activa en donde los estudiantes reciban el apoyo necesario según sus necesidades y además tener acceso a los recursos disponibles en su colegio (Jacobs, Beck & Crowell, 2014). Como resultado, este estudio pretende identificar algunas características socioeconómicas de un grupo de estudiantes que asiste a un colegio comunitario en una de las áreas con más desventaja económica de la ciudad de Nueva York, El Sur del Bronx. Véase Tabla 1 para obtener algunos datos socioeconómicos del estudiantado que asiste al Colegio Comunal. Estas características a su vez se relacionarán con las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación asincrónica ofrecidos en el Colegio. Según se menciona en la introducción de este estudio, los resultados

obtenidos en el mismo son parte de un análisis preliminar. Es decir, que otras investigaciones se llevaran a cabo en el futuro utilizando los resultados de este estudio como punto de partida.

Propósito del Estudio

El propósito de este estudio fue investigar la relación que existe entre las características socioeconómicas y las calificaciones de un grupo de estudiantes que han tomado cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica en el Colegio Comunitario de Nueva York. Entre las características que se analizaron en el estudio están: edad, ingreso/código postal, género, concentración, raza y status ESL. Parte de la misión del Colegio Comunitario es:

“ofrecer acceso a la educación superior que conduzca al crecimiento intelectual ya la movilidad socioeconómica a través del desarrollo de competencias lingüísticas, matemáticas, tecnológicas y de pensamiento crítico necesarias para el aprendizaje permanente y para el éxito en una variedad de Programas incluyendo carreras, artes liberales, transferencia, y los programas profesionales que conducen a la licencia.

El Colegio se enorgullece de su papel histórico en educar a estudiantes de diversos orígenes étnicos, raciales, culturales y lingüísticos, particularmente hispanos y afroamericanos. Una parte integral del cumplimiento de su misión es proporcionar la transición del idioma para todos los estudiantes que tienen inglés como segunda lengua junto con ofertas de educación bilingüe español / inglés para fomentar un ambiente multicultural para todos los estudiantes (Catálogo del Colegio, 2014)”.

La realidad del Colegio Comunitario en términos de la población a la cual sirve se compara con la realidad de muchos de los colegios comunitarios en la nación. Es conocido nacionalmente que los colegios comunitarios reciben una gran cantidad de estudiantes que pertenecen a las minorías étnicas y raciales del país (Johnson, 2009). Se espera que en el futuro los colegios comunitarios aumenten su matrícula incrementando secuencialmente la población de estudiantes minoritarios que asistirán a los mismos (Johnson, 2009). No sólo la población de estudiantes minoritarios que asiste a los colegios comunitarios crecerá, sino que también se

espera que el papel de estos colegios comunitarios se transforme para así satisfacer las demandas de una generación de la era digital cumpliendo con los parámetros de una sociedad globalizada y educada equitativamente. En otras palabras, el progreso académico de los estudiantes minoritarios que asisten a los colegios comunitarios debería ser examinado identificando potenciales dificultades que podrían negarle el acceso a una sociedad globalizada y a una educación equitativa que promueva su movimiento en la escala social. Por esta razón, este estudio se llevó a cabo con el propósito de: 1) identificar las características socioeconómicas de un grupo de estudiantes que habían completado cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica, 2) examinar las relaciones entre características socioeconómicas con sus calificaciones. El análisis de esos datos permitirá establecer preliminarmente si los cursos en línea presentaban un problema al educar equitativamente a los participantes del mismo.

Metodología

Lugar

Este estudio tuvo lugar en el Colegio Comunitario que pertenece al sistema de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York (CUNY, por sus siglas en inglés). El Colegio se encuentra ubicado en el sur del Bronx y fue creado por la Junta de Educación Superior el 22 de abril de 1968 como respuesta a las demandas de puertorriqueños y otros líderes hispanos que instaron al establecimiento de una universidad para satisfacer las necesidades de El Sur del Bronx (Catálogo del Colegio Comunitario, 2014). La población del Colegio Comunitario está compuesta por más de 6,000 estudiantes. La tabla 1 incluye información sobre el estudiantado que comprende el Colegio Comunitario. Estos datos fueron recopilados por la Oficina de Investigación Institucional y Evaluación Estudiantil (*Office of Institutional Research and Student*

Assessment) del Colegio.

Tabla 1: *Perfil de los Participantes*

Raza	N	%
Blancos	133	1.9%
Negros	1586	22.2%
Hispanos	4212	58.9%
Asian/P.I.	224	3.1%
Nativos Americanos	40	0.6%
Otros	953	13.3%
Género		
Femenino	4730	66.2%
Masculino	2418	33.8%
Edad de los Participantes		
Menores de 18 Años de Edad	760	10.6%
18 a 21 Años de Edad	2577	36.1%
22 a 24 Años de Edad	1269	
25 a 29 Años de Edad	1154	16.1%
30 a 34 Años de Edad	633	8.6%
35 a 45 Años de Edad	559	7.8%
Mayores de 45 Años de Edad	228	3.2%
Cursos Remediales y Cursos de Desarrollo Cursados por los Participantes		
Cursos de Desarrollo ESL	420	5.9%
Cursos Remediales Inglés	481	6.7%
Cursos Remediales Matemática	1203	16.8%

Participantes

Información relacionada con 557 estudiantes matriculados en el Colegio Comunitario que completaron 954 clases asincrónicas en el área de educación fue utilizada en el estudio. Los nombres de los estudiantes no fueron identificados ya que solo se utilizaron datos sin

identificar por nombre provenientes de la Oficina de Investigación Institucional y Evaluación Estudiantil (*Office of Institutional Research and Student Assessment*) del Colegio Comunitario.

Recolección de Datos

Como se mencionó anteriormente, los datos que se analizaron en el estudio fueron provistos por la Oficina de Investigación Institucional y Evaluación Estudiantil (*Office of Institutional Research and Student Assessment*) del Colegio Comunitario. Estadísticas descriptivas y la prueba *t* para comparar muestras independientes fueron utilizadas para llevar a cabo el análisis de los datos. El “Software” Estadístico para las Ciencias Sociales (SPSS), versión 11.0 fue utilizado para obtener los resultados estadísticos finales.

Para el estudio se analizaron datos de 557 estudiantes que completaron 954 cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. Para determinar el desempeño académico de los estudiantes, se utilizaron las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica durante los semestres de otoño de 2014, primavera de 2015, otoño de 2015 y primavera de 2016. Es importante mencionar que actualmente, en el Colegio Comunitario, se ofrecen dos (2) tipos de modalidades de cursos a distancia— 1) los cursos híbridos o aquellos cursos que requieren que el 50% de las actividades sean llevadas a cabo virtualmente y 2) los cursos asincrónicos que son los cursos que se ofrecen completamente a distancia. Cabe señalar que aunque estos cursos son ofrecidos en todos los departamentos que componen el Colegio, para este estudio se utilizaron datos pertenecientes exclusivamente a las calificaciones en los cursos de modalidad asincrónica ofrecidos en el Departamento de Educación Temprana del Colegio debido a que es una de las facultades que ofrece más cursos a distancia.

Por otra parte, el código postal de los participantes se utilizó para identificar su nivel económico o su ingreso. El género de los participantes y el grupo racial al que pertenecían también se incluyó en el estudio. Además, factores tales como el estatus como estudiantes aprendiendo inglés como segundo idioma ESL, y la concentración de los participantes en el estudio fueron incluidos. Es pertinente también señalar que para determinar el status de ESL de los participantes se tomó en consideración si los estudiantes estaban tomando concurrentemente clases de ESL al completar los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. A continuación se presentaran tablas con los resultados del estudio.

Resultados

Las siguientes tablas contienen los resultados del estudio. Estas tablas presentan información sobre la relación entre la edad, ingreso de acuerdo al código postal, género, concentración, raza y status ESL con las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. En la tabla 2 se presenta información sobre el género de los estudiantes del estudio. Según los datos recogidos, 90% de los participantes son féminas mientras que el 9.9% de la población está compuesto por varones (Tabla 2).

Tabla 2: *Distribución de Porcientos del Género de los Participantes del Estudio*

Género	N= 557	%
Femenino	502	90.1%
Masculino	55	9.9%

Por otro lado, información sobre el grupo racial de los participantes se presenta en la tabla 3.

Conforme a la información sobre el grupo racial de los estudiantes el 77% de los participantes

eran hispanos mientras que un 89% de ellos eran negros. Por otra parte, 11% de los estudiantes en el estudio eran blancos siendo un 17% de ellos pertenecientes a “otro” grupo racial (Tabla 3).

Tabla 3: *Distribución de Porcientos del Grupo Racial de los Participantes*

Raza	N = 509	%
Hispanos	392	77.0%
Negros	89	17.5%
Blancos	11	2.2%
Otros	17	3.3%

Según la distribución de porcientos presentada en la tabla 4, para el otoño 2014 el por ciento de estudiantes matriculados en clases de inglés como segundo idioma (ESL) alcanzó el 7.2 % del total de estudiantes que completó cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. Por otro lado, para el semestre de primavera del 2015, la población de estudiantes matriculados en cursos de ESL que habían tomado cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica aumentó a un 13.5% mientras que los datos obtenidos para el semestre del otoño 2015 indicaron que solo dos (2) (12.5%) de los estudiantes matriculados en clases de ESL habían completado clases de educación asincrónicas.

Para la primavera de 2016 la población de estudiantes que tomaron cursos ESL fue disminuyendo y no se reportó ningún participante (Tabla 4).

Tabla 4: *Distribución de Porcientos de los Participantes con Inglés (ESL) como Segundo Idioma por Semestre*

Semestre	N	%
Otoño 2014	40	7.2%
Primavera 2015	14	13.5%
Otoño 2015	2	12.5%
Primavera 2016	0	0%

En la tabla 5 se presentan datos sobre las calificaciones obtenidas por los estudiantes en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. Según la información incluida en la tabla, 68% de los estudiantes que tomaron cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica obtuvieron calificaciones excelentes (A= 45%) o buenas (B= 23%) (Tabla 5).

Tabla 5: *Distribución de Porciento de las Calificaciones Obtenidas en Cursos de Educación en Línea Modalidad Asincrónica*

Calificaciones Obtenidas	N= 954	%
A	428	44.9%
B	216	22.6%
C	103	10.8%
D	14	1.5%
F	80	8.4%
W/INC	113	11.8%

En la tabla 6 aparece información sobre la concentración de los participantes que tomaron cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. Datos reportados en esta área reflejan que la gran mayoría de los participantes del estudio pertenecían al Departamento de Educación

Temprana del Colegio (71.4%) seguido por los estudiantes en la concentración de Artes Liberales (11. 8%) (Tabla 6).

Tabla 6: *Distribución de Por ciento de Participantes por Concentración*

Especialidad	N= 954	%
Artes Liberales	113	11.8%
Artes Liberales en Ciencia	7	0.7%
Contabilidad	11	1.2%)
Diseño Digital	2	0.2%
Diseño de Juegos	1	0.1%
Educación	681	71.4%
Enfermería o LPN	22	2.3%
Gerontología	1	0.1%
Higiene Dental	45	4.7%
Justicia Criminal	7	0.7%
Negocios	2	0.2%
Rayos X	15	1.6%
Salud Comunitaria	7	0.7%
Tecnología de Oficina	5	0.5%
No Grado	32	3.4%

La edad de los participantes del estudio fluctuó entre los 18 a los 48 años de edad (Tabla 7). La media de la edad de los participantes fue 25 años de edad.

Tabla 7: *Media y Desviación Estándar de la Edad de los Participantes*

	M	SD	N
Edad	25.00	7.00	557

Según la información obtenida en los resultados del análisis de correlación entre las calificaciones obtenidas por los participantes y la edad de los mismos, se encontró que existía una correlación positiva entre las calificaciones y la edad de los participantes del estudio ($r = .01$) (Tabla 8). Esta correlación implica que a mayor edad, mayores serán las posibilidades de obtener una mejor calificación en este tipo de curso.

Tabla 8: *Correlación Entre Calificaciones (+ & -) Obtenidas y la Edad de losn participantes (* = $p < 0.05$).*

	Calificación	Edad
Calificación	1.00	
Edad	*0.01	1.00

En la tabla 9, se presenta información sobre la correlación existente entre las calificaciones y el ingreso de los participantes. Se encontró a través del análisis de correlación que no existía ninguna correlación entre ambas variables ($p = .06$) (Tabla 9). En otras palabras, no existe en el estudio correlación alguna entre calificaciones obtenidas y el ingreso de los participantes (Tabla 9).

Tabla 9: *Correlación Entre Calificaciones e Ingreso de los Participantes (* = $p < 0.05$)*

	Calificaciones	Ingreso
Calificaciones	1.00	
Ingreso	0.06	1.00

Se realizó una prueba t de muestras independientes para comparar el género y las calificaciones de los participantes (Tabla 10). Los resultados de esta prueba determinaron que no existía una

diferencia significativa en las puntuaciones de calificaciones y el género de los participantes, mujeres ($M = 3.55$, $DS = 1.7$) y varones ($M = 3.55$, $DS = 3.91$) ($t = -1.6$, $p = 0.10$) (Tabla 10).

Tabla 10: *Resultados de la Prueba t sobre las Calificaciones y el Género de los Participantes*

	Media	SD	t	p
Mujeres	3.55	1.7	-1.6	0.10
Hombres	3.91	1.6		

En la tabla 11, se incluyen los resultados de la prueba t de muestras independientes para comparar las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica y la concentración de los participantes. Los resultados de esta prueba determinaron que existía una diferencia significativa en las calificaciones y la concentración de los participantes; todas las concentraciones ($M = 3.77$, $DS = 1.7$) y educación ($M = 3.55$, $DS = 3.91$) ($t = 2.2$, $p = 0.03$) (Tabla 11).

Tabla 11: *Resultados de la Prueba de t sobre las Calificaciones (= y -) y la Concentración de los Participantes*

	Media	DS	t	p
Todas las Concentraciones	3.77	1.7	2.2	*0.03
Educación	3.50	1.7		

Al realizarse una prueba t de muestras independientes para comparar las calificaciones con aquellos participantes que estaban tomando clases asincrónicas de educación simultáneamente

con las clases de ESL se encontró que no existía diferencia significativa alguna entre las calificaciones de los estudiantes que tomaron cursos de ESL ($M = 3.80$, $DS = 1.6$) con las calificaciones de aquellos estudiantes que no estaban tomando cursos ESL ($M = 3.55$, $DS = 1.7$) ($t = -1.2$, $p = 0.22$) (Tabla 12).

Tabla 12: *Resultados de la Prueba de t sobre las Calificaciones (= y -) y el Estatus ESL de los Participantes*

	M	DS	t	p
ESL	3.80	1.6	-1.2	0.22
No ESL	3.55	1.7		

Discusión de Hallazgos

El propósito del estudio fue explorar la relación entre la edad, ingreso de acuerdo al código postal, género, concentración, raza y status ESL con las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica de un grupo de estudiantes que asiste a un Colegio Comunitario en la ciudad de Nueva York. Para obtener los resultados del estudio, se utilizaron datos proporcionados por la Oficina de Investigación Institucional y Evaluación Estudiantil (*Office of Institutional Research and Student Assessment*) del Colegio.

Según los porcentajes obtenidos en el estudio, en términos del género de los participantes se encontró que el 90 % de ellos eran mujeres mientras que un 10% eran varones. Además, más de la mitad de los participantes se auto-categorizaron como hispanos (77%) o negros (17.5%). En base a los datos obtenidos a través de la Oficina de Investigación Institucional y Evaluación Estudiantil (*Office of Institutional Research and Student Assessment*) el perfil de los participantes del estudio es congruente con la realidad racial, de edad y género de otros

colegios comunitarios de la nación (Martin Galentino, & Richard, 2014). De acuerdo con Martin, Galentino y Richard (2014), la población de los colegios comunitarios de la nación estará compuesta por estudiantes minoritarios cuyas edades al ingresar por primera vez al mismo fluctuarán entre los 18 a los 41 años. También se espera que la composición de la población que asistirá a los colegios comunitarios esté desproporcionalmente compuesta por mujeres y estudiantes cuyo inglés será el segundo idioma (Martin Galentino & Richard, 2014).

A través de los resultados de este estudio se establecieron relaciones significativas entre: 1) la edad y las calificaciones obtenidas por los participantes del estudio en cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica y 2) la concentración de los participantes y las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. De acuerdo a Carlsen-Landy (2012), la edad de los estudiantes puede ser un factor determinante en el éxito en los cursos a distancia. En su estudio Carlsen-Landy (2012) indicó que los estudiantes que tienen 20 años o menos tienen promedios académicos más bajos que aquellos estudiantes mayores de 20 años. Para Carlsen-Landy (2012) una posible explicación para el desempeño académico de este grupo de estudiantes puede ser los niveles de interés y motivación que poseen. Otra posible explicación, es que estos estudiantes que son mayores de 20 años demuestran mayor confianza y madurez académica que aquellos que pertenecen al grupo de estudiantes que tienen 20 años o menos (Carlsen-Landy, 2012).

Por otra parte, se encontró a través de un análisis estadístico descriptivo, que la mayoría de los estudiantes que habían completado cursos en línea, modalidad asincrónica pertenecían a la facultad de Educación Temprana del Colegio (71.4%). No obstante, al analizarse las diferencias entre las calificaciones obtenidas y la concentración de los estudiantes a través de la prueba de

t se encontró que existía una diferencia entre las calificaciones obtenidas por los participantes del estudio y su concentración. Cuando se compararon ambos grupos— los estudiantes cuya concentración era Educación con los estudiantes que pertenecían a otras concentraciones, el grupo de otras concentraciones obtuvo mejores calificaciones en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica que aquellos que perseguían un grado asociado en educación. Una posible explicación para estos hallazgos podría ser el hecho de que un porcentaje de los estudiantes que tomaron estos cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica pertenecían a concentraciones relacionadas con la salud y las ciencias (8.72%).

Tradicionalmente, para ser aceptados en estos programas, se les exige a estos estudiantes promedios académicos más altos y generalmente este grupo de estudiantes también posee un repertorio de destrezas de estudio que les permite ser más exitosos en su desempeño académico (Riccio, 2015). Otra posible explicación que podría justificar estos hallazgos es la diversidad de preparación académica que existe entre nuestro estudiantado. Los colegios comunitarios de la nación observan una política pública de admisión abierta que permite a los estudiantes que aún están desarrollando destrezas en el idioma escrito, comprensión de lectura, o inglés como un segundo idioma además de destrezas en matemáticas, ser admitidos a instituciones de educación superior.

Es posible que estos estudiantes que pertenecen a la facultad de educación se beneficien más con cursos híbridos en donde tengan la oportunidad de interactuar con sus compañeros y tener más acceso al profesor. Esta sugerencia de matricularse en cursos híbridos con el propósito de tener una relación más directa con profesores y compañeros de clase también fue apoyada por Kumi Yeboah & Smith (2016); Maldonado Torres (2014) y Richardson (2012).

Aunque se encontraron diferencias y correlaciones significativas entre edad y concentración de los estudiantes con respecto a sus calificaciones, los resultados generales de este estudio indicaron que no existió diferencia significativa entre el género, ingreso de acuerdo al código postal, la raza y el estatus ESL con las calificaciones obtenidas en los cursos de educación en línea, modalidad asincrónica. Los hallazgos de este estudio serán utilizados como punto de partida para realizar una investigación más detallada sobre las relaciones que existen entre el estatus socioeconómico de los estudiantes del Colegio Comunitario ubicado en la ciudad de Nueva York y su desempeño académico en los cursos a distancia. Esta investigación futura explorará las relaciones que puedan existir entre las calificaciones y el estatus socioeconómico de los participantes desarrollando un cuestionario que incluya preguntas relacionadas no solo con el estatus socioeconómico de los participantes sino preguntas con respecto al manejo del tiempo, estilo de enseñanza del maestro, tiempo que se utiliza para completar asignaciones en los cursos en línea de modalidad asincrónica, frecuencia con que accede al curso, semestre que cursa, dominio del lenguaje académico y estilos de aprendizaje entre otros. Además, en la investigación que se llevará a cabo, se establecerá una comparación entre grupos por raza y lugar de origen con el propósito de establecer diferencias en desempeño académico según el perfil racial de los participantes. Se espera también poder comparar los resultados sobre el desempeño académico de los participantes con otros cursos en línea de modalidad asincrónica en el Colegio.

Una de las limitaciones del estudio fue que los datos obtenidos no reflejaban la realidad económica de los estudiantes ya que se utilizó el código postal de los mismos en lugar de su

ingreso real. Esta limitación se debió a que los datos que se analizaron fueron provistos por el Colegio lo que implica que la información que se analizó fue limitada.

Aunque los hallazgos de este estudio no muestran grandes diferencias significativas con respecto a las características socioeconómicas de los participantes y su desempeño académico en los cursos de educación en línea de modalidad asincrónica, es necesario que se investiguen las mismas utilizando una base de datos más comprensiva incluyendo otros elementos que podrían ser significativos al educar a este grupo de estudiantes.

Referencias

- Birch, D., Volkov, M. (2007). Assessment of Online Reflections: Engaging English Second Language (ESL) Students. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 23(3), 291-306.
- Carlsen-Landy, B. (2012). Identity, age, proportion of online classes, and success among students in a predominantly online degree program. Texas Woman's University, *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. (UMI No. 3520806).
- Dvorak, T., Jia, M. (2016). Do the Timeliness, Regularity, and Intensity of Online Work Habits Predict Academic Performance? *Journal of Learning Analytics*, 3(3), 318-330.
- Eugenio María de Hostos Community College of the City University of New York. (2014). College Catalog. Bronx, NY: Hostos Community College Press.
- Jacobs, J., Beck, B., Crowell, L. (2014). Teacher Leaders as Equity-Centered Change Agents: Exploring the Conditions that Influence Navigating Change to Promote Educational Equity. *Professional Development in Education*, 40 (4), 576-596.
- Johnson, R. W. (2009). The relationship between academic integration and student success in distance learning in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. University of Louisville, *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. (UMI No. 3401275).
- Kim, T., Welch, S., & Nam, S. (2016). Examining Graduate Students' Perceptions of and Preferences for Online Courses. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 15(2), 179-194.
- Kumi Yeboah, A., Smith, P. (2016). Relationships Between Minority Students Online Learning Experiences and Academic Performance. *Online Learning*, 20(4).
- Maldonado Torres, S. E. (2014). Helping Latino Students to Succeed in Community Colleges by Understanding the Relationship Between Their Learning Styles and Their Academic Performance. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 38(4), 357-369.
- Martin, K., Galentino, R., Townsend, L. (2014). Community College Student Success: The Role of Motivation and Self-Empowerment. *Community College Review*, 42(3), 221-241.
- Meeuwisse, M., Born, M. P., Severiens, S. E. (2013). Academic Performance Differences among Ethnic Groups: Do the Daily Use and Management of Time Offer Explanations? *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal*, 16 (4), 599-615.
- Merrills, J. M. S. (2010). Factors affecting nontraditional African American students' participation in online world literature classes. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. (UMI No. 3434153).
- Murugaiah, P., Thang, S. M. (2010). Development of Interactive and Reflective Learning among Malaysian Online Distant Learners: An ESL Instructor's Experience. *International Review*

of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 11(3), 21-41.

O'Neal, C. R., Espino, M. M., Goldthrite, A., Morin, M. F., Weston, L., Hernandez, P., Fuhrmann, A. (2016). Grit under Duress: Stress, Strengths, and Academic Success Among Non-Citizen and Citizen Latina/o First-Generation College Students. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 38(4), 446-466.

Riccio, P. A. (2015). Predictors of Improvement in Critical Thinking Skills among Nursing Students in an Online Graduate Nursing Research Course. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 3(9), 606-609.

Richardson, J. T. E. (2012). The Attainment of White and Ethnic Minority Students in Distance Education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(4), 393-408.

Richardson, J. T. E. (2012). Face-to-Face versus Online Tuition: Preference, Performance and Pass Rates in White and Ethnic Minority Students. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 43(1), 17-27.

Riccio, P. A. (2015). Predictors of Improvement in Critical Thinking Skills among Nursing Students in an Online Graduate Nursing Research Course. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 3(9), 606-609.

Shonfeld, M., & Ronen, I. (2015). Online learning for students from diverse backgrounds: Learning disability students, excellent students and average students. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 3(2), 13-29.

Supple, B. J., Best, G., Pearce, A. (2016). My Purpose Was to Help Them with Accounting, Not English": An Exploratory Study of Languages Other than English in Peer Assisted Study Sessions. *Journal of Peer Learning*, 9(6), 49-65.

Willems, J. (2012). Educational Resilience as a Quadripartite Responsibility: Indigenous Peoples Participating in Higher Education via Distance Education. *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning*, 16(1), 14-27.

**The Need for Social Workers along the South Texas-Mexico Border: Meeting the Need
through Distance Education**

Authors: Denise A. Longoria

John M. Gonzalez

Contact Person: Denise A. Longoria denise.longoria@utrgv.edu

Institution: The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Denise A. Longoria, Ph. D., LCSW, is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

John M. Gonzalez, Ph. D., LMSW, is an Associate Professor and MSSW Program Director of the Social Work Department at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Abstract

As we approach the end of the second decade of the new millennium, the United States continues to see significant growth of the Hispanic population. It is expected that one in every six people will be Hispanic by the close of the second decade, and that by 2060, the population will increase to approximately 128.8 million, or 31% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Along the South Texas-Mexico border, the Hispanic population ranges from approximately 80-95%, and many of these areas are poverty stricken and greatly underserved. Consequently, social workers are in great demand to help meet the multiple and diverse needs of those living in these areas. As a result of the collaboration between a Texas university and a community college, students have been able to obtain a social work degree via distance education.

The Need for Social Workers along the South Texas-Mexico Border: Meeting the Need through Distance Education

Introduction

As we approach the end of the second decade of the new millennium, the United States continues to see significant growth of the Hispanic population. It is expected that one in every six people will be Hispanic by the close of the second decade, and that by 2060, the population will increase to approximately 128.8 million or 31% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Consequently, Hispanics will play an increasingly important role in U.S. society and all aspects related to it, such as the economy, education, health, mental health and the future as a whole.

While there is a limited amount of literature focusing on the reasons that Hispanic students do not pursue graduate studies in social work, there is extensive literature about the growing Hispanic population, as well as specific needs as they relate to social services. This article will focus on the benefits of a distance learning Master of Social Work program in the South Texas border region and its positive impact on the primary areas where graduate level social workers are needed, which include: counseling/therapy, faculty mentors, administrators, supervision, peer support and advocacy.

Background and Significance

All bachelor's and master's programs in social work must meet accreditation standards stipulated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which is recognized as the sole accrediting agency for all social work education programs in the United States (CSWE, n.d.). Currently, there is a growing trend of social work programs that offer all or portions of their curricula via distance education and/or online only. In today's society, students often find

themselves in multiple roles, including working parent, caregiver to a parent, student, spouse, etc. Distance education and online programs have provided a viable option for these individuals who might otherwise not be able to pursue a graduate degree. Many students have sought options that allow them to complete a graduate degree without having to relocate and/or even go to campus. Vernon, Pittman-Munke, Vakalahi, Adkins and Pierce (2009) noted that there has been an increase in the number of programs offering these options as a way to meet these students' needs. While some studies have shown that students have a preference for a traditional face-to-face course room (Thyer, Artelt, Markward, & Doziere, 1998), others have reported that there is not a significant difference in the level of satisfaction when compared to students who are enrolled in distance learning courses via interactive television or fully online courses (Crowell & McCarragher, 2007; Oliaro & Trotter, 2010; Petracchi, Mallinger, Engel, Rishel, & Washburn, 2005).

In 2009, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) (formerly known as University of Texas-Pan American - UTPA) established a partnership with Laredo Community College (LCC) in order to offer a hybrid distance education program which effectively delivers a bachelor's and a master's in social work. This partnership addressed a significant barrier to social work education in the area. Since its inception, a total of 26 students have been awarded a Bachelor of Social Work degree and 29 have been awarded a Master of Social Work degree. This has allowed an additional 55 individuals to provide social work services in the Laredo, Texas area.

Literature Review

Educational Attainment for Hispanic Students

Historically, Hispanics have lagged behind in educational attainment when compared to their White counterparts. High school dropout rates have decreased between 1990 and 2014 (for Hispanic students (from 32.4 to 10.6%); however, they are still higher than rates for both White (9.0 to 5.2%) and African-American (13.2 to 7.4%) students (National Center for Education, 2016). With regards to higher education, these gaps have been even greater. Specifically, for students in graduate social work programs, the percentage of those who are of Hispanic descent has been very small (approximately 2.5% for those who self-identified as “Chicano/Mexican American and 7.5% for those who self-identified as “Other Latino/Hispanic”) (CSWE, 2010). To date, the large majority of social work students enrolled in programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) have been White (Non-Hispanic); in fact, the most recent survey revealed that those who identified themselves in this category totaled 54.6% (CSWE, 2010). Given that Texas is a state with a large Hispanic population (37.6%) (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010a), the number of social workers of Hispanic descent should be somewhat relative to the population. As the Hispanic population continues to grow rapidly in the United States, it is likely that the gap between the needs of society and the graduate social workers who can address these needs will increase significantly. The current literature offers limited information regarding the reasons that Hispanic students do not pursue a graduate education in social work.

According to the literature, there are a number of factors that influence a Hispanic student’s decision to attend graduate school; these include family, cultural beliefs, language

barriers, accessibility to minority faculty and self-perceptions about abilities (Abreu, 2000; Caravantes, 2006; Harvey, Beckman, Browner, & Sherman, 2002; Lopez, Lopez, & Fong, 1991; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Schwarzbaum, 2004; Wilton & Constantine, 2003). Family support often includes financial as well as emotional support. Additionally, parents of students were more likely to provide financial support if the students are single or if they had children (Descartes, 2006).

The literature revealed that in some instances, males felt threatened when females were the primary breadwinners in the home (Caravantes, 2006; Harvey et al., 2002; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). This was particularly true for adult children with their own children as well as single, adult children (with no children of their own) who were attending college or graduate school (Descartes, 2006). Additionally, the literature also suggested that Hispanic females are generally expected to stay at home and care for elderly parents and/or for younger siblings (Castillo & Hill, 2004).

Quezada and Loque (2004) noted that students' perceptions about the university's interests in program diversity were largely determined by the number of minority faculty present. They also recognized that trust levels were likely to be greater if universities employed faculty of color. Knowles (1990) identified three factors that were necessary to enhance the learning atmosphere. These included:

- 1) Helping students to feel respected and valued.
- 2) Having students know that they will be in a reciprocal relationship where ideas will be shared.
- 3) Having a supportive environment that is open and authentic.

For students living on the U. S.-Mexico border, it is critical that they experience the diversity the program has to offer. A faculty member of Hispanic descent is assigned and serves as the primary contact in the Laredo area. This allows for immediate contact with students seeking to discuss concerns with a faculty member. The faculty member also serves as a liaison to the program and its faculty that is approximately 160 miles away. This structure ensures that the critical factors identified by Knowles are met.

The Need for Social Workers

In an era when society is continually faced with many challenges, it is not unusual for the average individual to experience stress. Problems related to family, friends, employment, school, and finances are only a few issues that generally affect many people. When one adds the effects of more specific crises such as domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, or child maltreatment, the problems can be overwhelming. Emotional and professional support is often needed in order to handle the distress which results from these issues.

Social workers who have specialized in mental health are trained to provide the many services needed by these individuals who experience difficulties which range from low levels of stress to more severe mental illnesses. Compounding these findings is the issue of poverty. According to Hudson (2005), people who were impoverished were three times more likely to suffer from a mental illness. In South Texas, counties that are on the physical border with Mexico reported a poverty level which averaged 30 -35.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). According to Hudson (2005), poverty and its related factors, such as unemployment and homelessness, were strongly correlated to higher risk of mental illness.

For Hispanics, concerns regarding mental health issues and stressors are no different; however, there are a number of reasons why these needs may not be addressed. Even though graduate level social workers are trained and qualified to provide mental health services, graduate level social workers, especially those that are of Hispanic descent, are scarce. Because of the enormity of the stressors described above, it is imperative that more Hispanic graduate social workers be educated and trained to provide these services. Further, the number of people of Mexican origin accounted for 63% of the Hispanic population 2010 census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010c), which implies that there is a significant population to be served by social workers of similar backgrounds. Although much of this population is concentrated in large cities such as Los Angeles, Houston, and San Antonio, border cities in Texas such as Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville are 95.6%, 84.6% and 93.2% (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010 b) Hispanic, respectively. Additionally, it is important to note that levels of poverty are particularly high in these areas (30 – 35.8%) (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010c); as already noted, mental health concerns tend to be higher in areas of poverty.

Suleiman (2003) noted that “social services have been generally unresponsive to the values and needs of Hispanic families, even to the most basic of communication in Spanish” (p. 186). Given that Hispanics have often demonstrated a need for social services, it is important that more students seek a graduate education in social work in order to more effectively meet these needs. The Hogg Foundation (2007) noted that “people of color are underrepresented in mental health professions, and Texas appears to be lacking in effective racial and culturally diverse recruitment in the mental health professions” (p. 1). Furthermore, Hogg averred that although social workers are the “largest group of mental health providers” in Texas and across the entire United States, the areas of West and South Texas are still severely lacking these services.

The number of people diagnosed with a serious mental illness in the state of Texas is significant – approximately 3.8% for adults, and approximately 11.3% of adolescents were diagnosed with at least one major depressive episode (SAMHSA, 2015). Because the Hispanic population has continued to grow, it can be assumed that many of those who are affected by these illnesses are people of Hispanic descent. Adding to this assumption is the fact that many Hispanics living in the South Texas border are currently living at or below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010c), and poverty has been identified as a risk factor for mental illness. Studies have shown that clients prefer working with social workers of the same ethnic background (Abreu, 2000; Lopez et al., 1991; Schwarzbaum, 2004; Wilton & Constantine, 2003); consequently, with the shortage of Hispanic graduate level social workers, many people do not receive the mental health services they need.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Social Work Program has served to fill the need for social workers, especially those of Hispanic descent, in McAllen, Brownsville and other cities in the Rio Grande Valley, but the gap remained in Laredo, with the closing of the local program which existed from 2000-2010 (Cortez, 2007). This paper focuses on Laredo and the efforts to increase the number of social workers there.

Finding Solutions

When the Laredo-based university, Texas A&M International University, announced the impending closure (projected date was May 2010) of its Bachelor of Social Work program (Cortez, 2007), one of the authors (together with several community members) sought assistance from legislators, as well as the Laredo Community College (LCC) President. Recognizing the need for social workers, because there were fewer than a dozen master's level social workers in Laredo at the time, LCC administrators collaborated with administrators from UTRGV (formerly UTPA) to establish a hybrid distance education program in social work. In

addition to providing a Bachelor of Social Work program, it also established a Master of Science in Social Work. The goals of the program were twofold: 1) to address the social service and mental health needs of Laredo; and 2) to make social work education accessible to students who were unable to relocate.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), it is expected that the need for social workers will continue to grow faster (an average of 12% between 2014 and 2024) than any other profession through the year 2018. Specifically, it is expected that there will be a 12% growth in the area of child, family and school social work, approximately 20% growth for mental health and substance abuse social workers, and about 22% growth for medical and public health social workers. Because of the expertise required in these areas, it is essential that providers attain the education necessary to provide these services.

If one poses the following questions: “Do counselors need to be of the same ethnicity as their clients in order to be effective?” “Are mentees better able to relate to their mentors if their mentors have the same ethnic or cultural background?” “Do students respond more readily to instructors who are ethnically the same?”, the quick response to these questions is “No.” However, when one delves more deeply and examines the needs of individuals, one finds that Hispanic clients often do have a preference for Hispanic workers (Abreu, 2000; Engstrom, Gamble, & Min, 2009; Lopez et al., 1991; Schwarzbaum, 2004; Wilton & Constantine, 2003). In the same manner, mentees and students also prefer a mentor or instructor who is ethnically or culturally similar because they serve as role models (Quezada & Louque, 2004; Verdugo, 1995); therefore, the need for Hispanic social workers needed to be addressed.

Addressing the Need

With the establishment of the BSW and MSSW programs, one faculty member was hired to be stationed in Laredo full-time. This allowed for ongoing networking, awareness and recruitment of students, as well as collaboration with college administrators, faculty and staff, and community members involved in social service agencies.

The delivery of courses for the BSW and MSSW program would consist of a mix of online courses and courses taught through Interactive Television. Blackboard was also used to supplement the Interactive courses and to deliver the online course. With regard to online, courses were designed with the instructional designers using Quality Matters standards. Blackboard also assisted with email, notes for students, information on assignments and a place to upload assignments. Additionally, Blackboard assisted students with Discussion Boards and any group assignments. Interactive Television used PowerPoint for presentations for students. Faculty also used the document camera to share notes for both classes to view, face-to-face and interactive.

The first MSSW cohort consisted of five students, all of whom graduated in December 2010. At the time of this writing, twenty-nine students had graduated with an MSSW degree, and eleven more will be graduating this Spring. The first BSW cohort was admitted in 2011, and, to date, a total of twenty-six students have graduated.

In addition to recruiting and graduating students, there was a need to establish field practicum sites. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (2015) requires that BSW students complete a minimum of 400 practice hours in a field setting; these students must receive weekly field instruction from an individual who holds a BSW and five years of post-graduate experience or an MSW/MSSW and two years of post-graduate experience. The MSSW

degree requires that students complete a total of 900 practicum hours; they must receive field instruction from someone who has an MSW/MSSW and at least two years post-graduate experience. Given that there were few Master's level social workers in Laredo prior to the existence of the program, it was a challenge to establish these sites. As students have graduated, the number of field instructors, as well as the number of field sites, has increased. To date, the university has an affiliation with twenty-five social service agencies where students can complete the required practicum and gain practice experience.

Implications and Recommendations

Clearly, there is a high need for social workers in the Laredo area, and the social work program provided by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is helping to fill that gap. In 2014, it was reaccredited for eight more years by the Council on Social Work Education, and this now included the distance education component. For Laredo, the continuation of a distance education program is essential to its ongoing success as it allows non-traditional students the opportunity to complete a graduate degree without having to relocate. This program has met the two goals initially identified.

As suggested in the literature, it is important for universities to ensure that students have access to support services such as counseling and stress management. Even though studies vary regarding the mental health needs of Hispanic students, some studies do indicate that Hispanic students can be more prone to depression and/or anxiety, especially if family support is more of a risk factor than a protective one (Del Pilar, 2009). Castillo et al. (2008) noted that these feelings of depression and/or anxiety also depended on several factors, including the quality of social support and socioeconomic status. If students are able to obtain

counseling and stress management through a university counseling center, or in this case, at the community college which this program is associated, then this can fill some of the needs that Hispanic students may encounter. Additionally, having a faculty mentor available in the same city is critical so that students can have that connection with the university.

The literature also revealed that universities should focus on increasing cultural competence among faculty members, as well as emphasizing this as part of the curriculum. While this includes focusing efforts on recruiting faculty of color, it should be clear that all faculty members should engage in training that emphasizes cultural sensitivity. Torres (2003) referred to “ethnic identity development as a tool” which can help administrators, recruiters, student affairs personnel, and faculty members have a better understanding how cultural and ethnic factors can impact students of color (p.545).

Conclusion

As we near the end of the second decade, the distance education social work program continues to grow and meet the needs of students as well as the community. It has successfully reached the two goals identified, and it is expected that it will continue to do so.

References

- Abreu, J. M. (2000). Counseling expectations among Mexican-American college students: The role of counselor ethnicity. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 28*(3), 130 -143. Retrieved February 1, 2017, from Academic Search Complete database.
- Caravantes, E. (2006). *Clipping their own wings: The incompatibility between Latino culture and American education*. New York: Hamilton Books.
- Castillo, L. G., & Hill, R. D. (2004). Predictors of distress in Chicana college students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 32*, 234-248. Retrieved February 10, 2017, from the MasterFILE Premier database.
- Cortez, T. (2007, August 8). Closing it down: TAMU says it can't justify its social work program. *The Laredo Morning Times*. Retrieved February 13, 2017 from <http://airwolf.lmtonline.com/news/archive/080807/pagea1.pdf>
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2010). *2010 statistics on social work education in the United States*. Retrieved February 15, 2017, from <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=52269>.
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (n.d.). *About CSWE*. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from <http://www.cswe.org/About-CSWE>.
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2015). *Educational policy and accreditation standards*. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from http://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx
- Crowell, L. F., & McCarragher, T. (2007). Delivering a social work MSW program through distance education: An innovative collaboration between two universities, USA. *Social Work Education, 26*(4), 376-388. Retrieved February 14, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.
- Del Pilar, J. A. (2009). Mental health and Latino/a college students: A psychological perspective and new findings. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 8*(3), 263-281. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from Sage Publication at Capella University database.
- Descartes, L. (2006). "Put your money where your love is": Parental aid to adult children. *Journal of Adult Development, 13*(3/4), 137-147. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from Academic Search Complete database.

- Engstrom, D. W., Gamble, L., & Min, J. W. (2009). Field practicum experiences of bilingual social work students working with limited English proficiency clients. *Journal of Social Work Education, 45*(2), 209-224. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from Academic Search Complete database.
- Harvey, S. M., Beckman, L. J., Browner, C. H., & Sherman, C. A. (2002). Relationship power, decision making, and sexual relations: An exploratory study with couples of Mexican origin. *The Journal of Sex Research, 39*(4), 284-291. Retrieved February 1, 2017, from the MasterFILE Premier database.
- Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. (2007, May). *The mental health workforce in Texas: A snapshot of the issues*. Retrieved February 3, 2017, from <http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/PDF/TxMHworkforce.pdf>.
- Hudson, C. G. (2005). Socioeconomic status and mental illness: Tests of the social causation and selection hypotheses [Electronic version]. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 75*, 3-18. Retrieved February 10, 2017, from the PsycInfo database.
- Knowles, M. S. (1990). Fostering competence in self-directed learning. In R. M. Smith and Associates (Eds.), *Learning to learn across the lifespan*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lopez, S. R., Lopez, A. A., & Fong, K. T. (1991). Mexican Americans' initial preferences for counselors: The role of ethnic factors. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 38*(4), 487-496. Retrieved February 1, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2016). *Fast facts*. Retrieved February 21, 2017, from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16>.
- Oliaro, L., & Trotter, C. (2010). A comparison of on-campus and off-campus (or distance) social work education. *Australian Social Work, 63*(3), 329-344. Retrieved February 14, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.
- Petracchi, H., Malinger, G., Engel, R., Rishel, C. W., & Washburn, C. (2005). Evaluating the efficacy of traditional and web-assisted instruction in an undergraduate social work practice class. *Journal of Technology in Human Services, 23*(3/4), 299-310. Retrieved February 14, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.

- Quezada, R. L., & Louque, A. (2004). The absence of diversity in the academy: Faculty of color in educational administration programs. *Education, 125*(2), 213-221. Retrieved February 3, 2017, from Questia database.
- Rafaelli, M., & Ontai, L. L. (2004). Gender socialization in Latino/a families: Results from two retrospective studies. *Sex Roles, 50*(5/6), 287-299. Retrieved February 2, 2017, from the SocIndex with Full Text database.
- Schwarzbaum, S. E. (2004). Low-income Latinos and dropout: Strategies to prevent dropout. *Journal of multicultural counseling and development, 32*, 296 – 306. Retrieved February 3, 2017, from Academic Search Complete database
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2015). *Behavioral health barometer, Texas 2015*. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA16-BARO-2015/SMA16-BARO-2015-TX.pdf>
- Suleiman, L. P. (2003). Beyond cultural competence: Language access and Latino civil rights. *Child Welfare, 82*(2), 186-199. Retrieved February 10, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.
- Torres, V. (2003). Influences on ethnic identity development of Latino college students in the first two years of college. *Journal of College Student Development, 44*(4), 532-547. Retrieved February 15, 2010, from ProQuest Psychology Journals database.
- Thyer, B. A., Artelt, T., Markward, M.K., & Dozier, C. D. (1998). Evaluating distance learning in social work education: A replication study. *Journal of Social Work Education, 34*(2), 291-296. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.
- U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). *Occupational outlook handbook*. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010a). *State and county quickfacts*. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>

- U. S. Census Bureau. (2010b). *Fact finder*. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml#>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010c). *Fact finder*. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_00_SF3_P090&prodType=table
- U. S. Census Bureau. (2012). *U. S. Census Bureau projections show a slower growing, older, more diverse nation a half century from now*. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html>
- Verdugo, R. R. (1995). Racial stratification and the use of Hispanic faculty as role models: Theory, policy, and practice. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 66(6), 669-685. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from Questia database.
- Vernon, R., Pittman-Munke, P., Vakalahi, H., Adkins, L.F., & Pierce, D. (2009). Distance education programs in social work: Current and emerging trends. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 263-276. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.
- Wilton, L., & Constantine, M. G. (2003). Length of residence, cultural adjustment difficulties, and psychological distress symptoms in Asian and Latin American international college students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 6(2), 177 - 186. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from the Academic Search Complete database.

Meet the authors:

Article 1: The Need for Social Workers along the South Texas-Mexico Border: Meeting the Need through Distance Education



Author: Dr. Denise A. Longoria

Assistant Professor of Social Work
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Dr. Denise A. Longoria is an assistant professor of social work at UTRGV. She holds an MSSW from University of Texas at Austin and a Ph.D. in Education from Capella University. Her areas of interest and expertise include social work practice, family violence issues, working with older adults, mental health issues, and social work education. In addition to teaching social work courses, Dr. Longoria is responsible for recruitment and

advising of Laredo students enrolled in the distance education program. Dr. Longoria maintains a small private practice where she provides individual and couples' therapy.

Contact Info:

Denise Longoria, Ph.D., LCSW

Assistant Professor of Social Work

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Mail Address: The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

1201 W. University Dr.

Edinburg, TX 78539

Phone: (956) 665-3575

Fax: (956) 665-3516

Email: denise.longoria@utrgv.edu

Author: José M. Gonzalez, Ph. D., LMSW

Associate Professor and MSSW Program Director

Social Work Department

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Article 2: Online Learning: No Worries at Community Colleges



Author: Dr. Sherese A. Mitchell

Assistant Professor

Hostos Community College, CUNY

Dr. Sherese A. Mitchell has served as an Assistant Professor at Hostos Community College for 9 years. She holds an Educational Doctorate in instructional Leadership with a focus in Learning Styles. Prior to working in academics, she spent 20 years in the field working with children in various settings and leadership roles. Dr. Mitchell has brought that experience to her current instructional position to future educators enrolled in methods courses at Hostos. In those courses, she constantly invites student- and colleague- feedback to revise course organization and content to meet the varied learning needs of all students. She is passionate about student accountability and classroom management and provides staff development on such. Dr. Mitchell is a strong advocate of student accountability and serves as a chair of the Student Disciplinary and Instructional Evaluation committees at Hostos. She is an Executive board member of NACCTEP (National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs) and the Children's center at Hostos. Additionally, she provides voluntary services of staff development in educational settings and is the Academic Director at a summer camp. Beyond learning-style and note-taking research, Dr. Mitchell has presented many papers at National, local and regional conferences.

Contact info:

Dr. Sherese A. Mitchell

Assistant Professor

Hostos Community College, CUNY

Mail Address: Hostos Community College

500 Grand Concourse (Room A107)

Phone: (718) 518-4413

Email: smitchell@hostos.cuny.edu

Article 3: *Relación entre las características socioeconómicas de los estudiantes de un Colegio Comunal en la ciudad de Nueva York con las calificaciones obtenidas en Cursos de Educación Asincrónicos.*



Author: Dr. Sonia Maldonado Torres

Assistant Professor

Hostos Community College, CUNY

Dr. Sonia Maldonado Torres was born in Puerto Rico and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. She possesses two Masters' degrees—one in Guidance and Counseling from the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, and a second one in Educational Psychology from SUNY at Albany. She completed a doctoral degree in Education and Leadership at Fielding University in California. In 1996 she moved to New York City and began working at Hostos Community College (HCC) spending fifteen (15) years of her academic career working as an academic counselor in the Division of SDEM. In 2011, Dr. Maldonado Torres joined the Teachers Education Unit where she is currently working as an Assistant Professor. Some of the courses she imparts within the Unit are: Introduction to Education, Social Studies and Language Arts for Bilingual Students, Multicultural Education, Special Education, and Creative Arts among others.

Dr. Maldonado Torres has published her research work in different reputable journals and had served as editor in Journals such as Journal of Latinos in Education and the Journal of Hispanics in Higher Education. Her research interests are mainly focused on 1) Latino students' learning styles, 2) Students' graduation and retention, 3) English Language Learners (ELL), and 4) Multiculturalism. She has presented her research findings in National and International Conferences such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and in different colleges and universities around the nation.

Contact Info:

Dr. Sonia Maldonado Torres

Assistant Professor

Hostos Community College, CUNY

Phone: (646) 298-5633

Email: smaldonado@hostos.cuny.edu

About HETS



The **Hispanic Educational Technology Services (HETS)** started in 1993 as a group of institutions interested in sharing courses at a

distance. Since its inception, the HETS Consortium has evolved from the use of telecommunications to the asynchronous modes of anywhere-anytime learning, using technology to reach greater collaboration among and within educational institutions. Headquartered in San Juan, PR, HETS networks Hispanic and Emerging Serving Institutions in the United States, Puerto Rico and Latin America in an effort to widen educational opportunities and access to post-secondary education through the use of the technological modalities of distance education. To HETS, and its more than 40 institutional members, technology can especially transform service delivery styles and open the doors to a larger spectrum of audiences. These technologies continuously facilitate the teaching-learning process and foster the expansion of a web of services that promote learner success. For more information about us and our services send an email to: info@hets.org or go to our website www.hets.org.