UROC/PREP—Access, Wellness, and Relational Determinants of School Success (AWARDSS) Program

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UROC: Undergraduate Research Opportunities Consortium 2019

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Investigating the Impacts of English-only Programs on Bilingual Border Town Students

ASTRACT: Communities located along the U.S.-Mexico border have a unique culture due to the interchanging of Mexican and American languages. Such communities also have strong Spanish influence, making for bilingual students. Previous research has shown the importance of incorporating students' cultures into the classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory study is to investigate the impact of English-only programs on the lives of bilingual border town students, not only focusing on language acquisition, but the perspective bilingual students have of themselves. This study takes place in Nogales and Rio Rico Arizona, where 94.2% and 88.5% of the population identified as Latinx or Hispanic (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Due to the unique culture of border towns, it is immensely important to investigate the possible effects of mainstream English-only programs on border town students. The theoretical framework for this study revolves around border pedagogy and includes less than ten participants. The participants are the parents or guardians of bilingual border town students who are in grades K-5. During the interviews, participants fill out a 13-item survey regarding their opinion on bilingual education and answer 8 semi-structured interview questions about their students' experiences. This exploratory study is ongoing, and the data analysis is currently in progress. The greater study will begin once it has been IRB approved and will begin in August and conclude in December 2019.

Valeria Chavez German

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Mentor: Dr. Lia Falco – Disability & Psychoeducational
     Studies

Process evaluation of a school-based mental health program initiative
in Southern Arizona

ASTRACT: Talk It Out is a school-based mental health program initiative launched by the University of Arizona and Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) that provides no-cost and timely mental health counseling services to students and their families. In its pilot phase, the program has recently expanded to each of the district's four Family Resource Center (FRC) sites. Given the value of evaluative research in program implementation, researchers use a process evaluative framework to administer a qualitative survey to capture aspects of the program's implementation and overall functioning. The purpose of the evaluation at this point in the program's timeline is to explore the implementation of Talk It Out from the perspective of UA counselors delivering services (N=5) and TUSD Family Resource Center (FRC) staff (N=2). With established inter-rater reliability, a coding matrix developed by the researchers was used to analyze all open-ended survey responses. The matrix is organized into two themes: student process (skill development, site supervision, engagement, etc.) and program process (space, resources, scheduling, etc.). Student engagement, physical space, scheduling, and resources emerged as the most frequent responses. Implications for program improvements in the next phase of implementation are discussed.

Giselle Delcid

University of Arizona, Literacy, Learning and Leadership

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Delgado – Family Studies and Human Development

School and Me: The Relation between Sense of School Belonging and Academic Success among Latinx Middle School Students

ASTRACT: Latinx students trail behind their white counterparts on their ability to do well in school, as demonstrated by standardized reading scores, in which 66% of Latinx students pass compared to 90% of their white peers (Madrid, 2011). School belonging is one way in which we may target such achievement gaps. Indeed, previous work finds that school belonging is positively related to academic achievement (Goodenow and Grady, 1993). When compared to their White peers, Latinx students sense less of school belonging (LeCroy and Krysik, 2008), prompting the question as to how this may impact their overall ability to succeed academically. Therefore, the focus of this study is to examine the association between sense of belonging and academic success for Latinx middle schoolers. Data comes from a larger study on academic socialization. Participants were 329 (54% female, 86% US born) Latinx adolescents, interviewed when adolescents were in the 8th grade (Mage = 13.69 years, SD = .56). Adolescents reported on their background information, academic aspirations, and grades. Analyses for this study conducted preliminary descriptives and correlational analysis. Additionally, hierarchical linear regression analysis was used to test the following hypothesis. Findings of this study found a significant relation between sense of school belonging and academic success for Latinx middle school students ($r = .25$, $p < .001$). Findings of this study highlight the importance of examining sense of school belonging, particularly in the focus of Latinx middle school students to succeed academically.

Daisy Esquivel

University of Arizona, Economics and Spanish

Mentor: Dr. Celina Valencia – Cancer Center Division

Food Insecurity: How Poor Nutrition Could Impact Academic Success

ASTRACT: Proper nutrition, or lack thereof, can have various effects on the development and academic success of a child. A large amount of low income students face food insecurity and rely on government assistance programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, to provide them with food. This study utilized data from the Saludables pilot program which was a mindfulness intervention program conducted in rural Maricopa county. The samples size was N=20, and the mean and median age of the participants was 9.5 years old. Of the participants, 95% stated they qualify for free lunch, thus implying this is a very low income community, as the criteria for qualification of free meals is a household income of at least 130 percent below the poverty level. Only two of the participants reported eating vegetables 6-7 times in the past week, which is the USDA recommended vegetable intake. This data was collected in a food desert, meaning this community does not have access to fresh produce. The purpose of this secondary analysis is to test the associative relationship between students self-reported grades and their fruit and vegetable eating patterns. This Kruskal Wallis analysis concluded there is no statistical significance between fruit and vegetable eating patterns and student's grades. However, the vegetable measure demonstrated a trend towards significance. This could be an indication that the consumption of vegetables could lead to the improvement of student's grades. A future study with a larger sample size may yield more significant and conclusive results.

Eniola Idowu

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Mentor: Dr. Josephine Korchmaros – Gender and Women's Studies /SIROW

Medication Adherence Among Chronically Ill African American Patients

ASTRACT: Chronic illnesses have produced the highest mortality rates and incurs the highest healthcare costs in the United States. Compared to other minority groups, African Americans are disproportionately affected by chronic diseases and are more likely to experience negative health outcomes and develop more chronic diagnoses. In order to reduce the mortality rates among chronically ill African American patients, adherence to mediations is significant to promote health behaviors and increase self-management of care. This study investigated the association between adherence to medication regimen and age, number of chronic conditions, use of social support, and use of reminder cues among 100 African American patients. A quantitative approach using existing self-report surveys from a past study was adopted. Results indicated that ages, social support, and number of chronic diseases are associated with medication adherence. Participants who reported low adherence were more likely to use social support. Participants who reported having four chronic conditions were less likely to adhere to medications. Older aged participants (56-74 years old) were more likely to report adequate adherence compared to younger and middle-aged participants. Reminder cues was commonly reported among the participants as a strategy to remember to take their medications. However, use of reminder cues was not associated with adherence. Medication adherence among chronically ill African Americans depend on many factors that healthcare providers need to take into consideration. Future studies need to explore culturally sensitive strategies that will target the needs of the population and improve adherence rates.

Laura Juarez San Juan

University of Arizona, Literacy, Learning and Leadership

Mentor: Dr. Jill Koyama – Educational Policy Studies and Practice

Policy, Public Discourse, and the Lived Experiences of DACAmented Students and their Educators in Arizona Higher Education

ASTRACT: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was established under the Obama Administration in 2012 granting eligible undocumented individuals with a lawful presence and a work permit renewable every two years. Since its enactment, several studies (Adams & Boyne, 2015; Jones, 2018; Muñoz & Vigil, 2018) have explored the educational barriers and limitations that DACA recipients experience in higher education, but few analyze the impact of policies and public discourse on their enrollment and retention rates. Informed by the theoretical contributions of Policy as Practice (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009), this qualitative study addresses the following questions: (1) How do policies and public discourse (as portrayed in the media) impact enrollment and retention rates of DACA students in Arizona community colleges and universities? And (2) How do educators in higher education negotiate policies to support DACA students? To answer these questions, five forms of data will be collected. These are: 2012-2019 enrollment rates of DACAmented students at three Arizona universities and two community colleges; DACA-related and immigrant policy and legislation; 200 news articles, published from 2012-2019; an online survey of DACAmented students and educators; and interviews with DACAmented college students and educators. The relationships between the policies, public discourse, and enrollment patterns will be analyzed. The survey and interview responses will be situated within these broader contexts to highlight the experiences of DACAmented college students, and the strategies that educators utilize to negotiate policies to support DACA students. The final data collection and data analysis will be completed in Fall 2019.

Gemma Parra

University of Arizona, Public Health

Mentor: Dr. Michael Grandner - Psychiatry

Acculturation and Sleep along the US-Mexico Border

ASTRACT: Sleep duration is linked to many health outcomes and chronic diseases that minority populations are at a disproportionate risk for (Jackson, Redline, & Emmons, 2015). Understanding the sleep patterns of diverse populations may guide healthcare providers and public health professionals in addressing health disparities. Hispanics, despite being at a greater disadvantage and higher risk, tend to have better health outcomes than non-Hispanic Whites (Ruiz, Steffen, & Smith, 2013). This epidemiological phenomenon, known as the Hispanic Health Paradox, has not been examined in the context of sleep health. This study seeks to investigate the association between social, cultural, and behavioral determinants of sleep in individuals of Mexican decent. A survey was conducted on a sample of 100 residents of the US-Mexico Border in Arizona. Acculturation was assessed with the Acculturation Scale for Mexican-Americans (ARSMA-II). Sleep quality was assessed with the Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), insomnia with the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI), and sleepiness with the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS). Linear regression between variables of interest and post-hoc analysis of the data showed an association between assimilation and higher ISI. Among this population, a greater degree of Anglo acculturation is associated with poor sleep, insomnia, and shorter sleep. This can guide public health professionals and healthcare providers when screening for sleep discovers and implementing interventions. Future studies on different aspects of acculturation need to be further investigated in ethnically-diverse Hispanic populations.

Julia Perez

University of Arizona, Psychology

Mentor: Dr. Francesca Lopez – Educational Policy Studies
and Practice

An exploratory analysis of Latinx DLLs' perceptions of school belonging in relation to academic outcomes

ASTRACT: The aim of this study was to explore Latinx dual-language learners' (DLLs) perceptions of school belonging (SCBL) in relation to academic outcomes, under a segregative language policy in Arizona. Participants were Latinx DLL middle school students (n = 4,434) enrolled in grades 6th through 8th at the Tucson Unified School District. A linear regression was conducted to measure the relationship between the students' perceptions of SCBL (through SCBL student survey responses) and academic outcomes (through the students' 3rd quarter English language arts and math benchmarks scores). Findings indicate that SCBL is significantly related to Latinx DLLs' math outcomes, but the relation between their SCBL and ELA outcomes was not significant. The findings discussed go against the current literature and implications about the language policy were made.

Gabrielle Rivas

University of Arizona, Literacy, Learning and Leadership

Mentor: Dr. Michael Sulkowski – Disability and
Psychoeducational Studies

Willingness of college student bystanders to report sexual assault on college campuses

ASTRACT: The prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses is a concern for college institutions. Prevention methods are being created and implemented at these institutions to combat this issue. One approach to sexual assault prevention utilizes prosocial bystander behavior among college students. This promotes college student bystanders in sexual assault cases taking active roles in these contexts. Prosocial bystander behavior was expressed by Latane and Darley in 1970 through their 5-step model for prosocial behavior. Barriers were discovered that could prevent a bystander from completing the model thus failing to express prosocial behaviors. These barriers are present within college student populations. Current research on college student bystander prosocial behavior fails to examine the self-esteem of the college student bystanders as a possible barrier. The current study examines this gap using college student bystanders' willingness to report a sexual assault as a means of demonstrating prosocial behavior. Data from a larger study was obtained for this project. Participants (N=1010) were college students 18 years of age or older. Each completed a 3-part survey which contained willingness to report scores and self-esteem scores (Rosenberg self-esteem scale). A linear regression was conducted between the independent variable of self-esteem and the dependent variable of willingness to report to discover self-esteems' ability to predict college student willingness to report. Results revealed self-esteem as a weak predictor of willingness to report ($R^2=.001$). These findings can inform further research on self-esteem as a potential barrier to college student prosocial bystander behavior in sexual assaults on college campuses.

Victoria Rodriguez

University of Arizona, Educational Psychology

Mentor: Dr. Yumi Shirai – Family and Community Medicine

An Adapted Narrative Quality Assessment for Examining Grief Experiences Expressed by Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

ASTRACT: There is a limited understanding of the grief experiences of individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and minimal appropriate resources to serve them after experiencing loss. Counter to previous beliefs, research has shown that individuals with ID experience a range of grief responses comparable to the general public yet, due to unique communication challenges associated with the cognitive challenges, need appropriate grief support. Building on existing research examining artistic expression and narrative skill in regard to expanding communication tools and effective grief processing respectively, the current study asks: What is the quality of narrative skill exhibited by individuals with ID in grief interviews; Does narrative skill change after participation in an expressive arts-based grief support group? As phase 1, this study aims to adapt an existing narrative quality assessment to document and measure the narrative skill exhibited by individuals with ID when discussing their grief experiences. A typical narrative quality assessment utilizes general children's stories and children's' retellings to assess literacy skills in several core elements. Such an assessment tool was adapted specifically to fit the context of grief for individuals with ID by analyzing video-recorded interviews inquiring about their grief experiences. The adaptations to the scoring system included separation of elements into tiers according to significance to the context of grief, identification of elements present in each structured interview question, and the addition of an element of prompting by the interviewer. Further research is needed to expand the coding system (i.e. non-verbal components) and validate the adapted scoring system.

Joseph Sturm

University of Arizona, Literacy, Learning and Leadership

Mentor: Dr. Kevin Henry – Educational Policy Studies &
    Practice

Exploring Difficulties in Supporting Underrepresented Students Due to the Higher Education Act's Overaward Policy

ASTRACT: Established in 1965, the Higher Education Act (HEA) established many principles for post-secondary institutions to follow to ensure equitable opportunities for all students in higher education. One of the policies established within the Higher Education Act is the Over-award policy, which states that a student is ineligible to receive more financial aid than the financial needs of the student (determined by the Need Analysis model of the H.E.A). While the Higher Education Act was created with the goal of equity for all, policies such as the Over-award policy created additional barriers for underrepresented students. In this study, I examine the implications of the Overaward policy on the abilities of institutional programs in supporting historically and presently underrepresented students in higher education. Through a deductive qualitative study utilizing semi-structured interviews and an anonymous survey, discourse of faculty/staff members of various student support programs is analyzed. As approval from the Institutional Review Board has just been received, the data for this study is still being collected. Plans for completion include conducting a deductive analysis of the responses of both the survey and interviews following the conceptual framework of the study.

Tony Viola IV

University of Arizona, Literacy, Learning and Leadership

Mentor: Dr. Sara Chavarria – College of Education

Exploring the Impact on Student Perceptions of Self and Future Aspirations through Experiential Learning

ASTRACT: Informal and experiential learning programs have become increasingly popular in the field of education, ranging from settings in primary, secondary, or higher education. As current studies are generally focused on best practices for structuring and implementing an experiential or informal education program, little research has been focused on the direct impact of participation, specifically for underrepresented, students of color. While it is necessary to focus research on program design and implementation, it is equally as crucial to place a focus on students' experiences and centering their voices. This present study sought to explore the experiences of 13 Indigenous and Latinx identifying high school students in a university-based, informal and experiential learning program through a goals-based evaluation. Student-produced multimodal products, consisting of text, audio, and video, were analyzed through a mixed-methods analytical software utilizing a content analysis strategy. A combination of deductive and inductive coding was implemented to reflect not only the components of the program curriculum framework but the general experiences of students that were not limited to the original goals and objectives identified in the program structure. In doing so, this study not only analyzed how well the predefined curriculum framework was reflected in students' work but also focused on what students felt was important to emphasize as a reflection of their participation. Results found the 2019 program cycle was successful in implementing the main components relating to the curriculum framework and identified additional themes as strategies for doing so.