Improving Student Engagement: An Evaluation of the Latinos in Action Program

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Abstract
Hispanic students make up 12% of the enrollment in Utah elementary and secondary schools but only 3.4% of the enrollment at Utah's colleges and universities, according to Aleman and Rorrer (2006). The intervention Latinos in Action (LIA) seeks to increase high school completion and college graduation rates among emergent bilingual Latinos by involving them as paraprofessional literacy tutors for younger Spanish-speaking students. This dissertation, written in article-ready style, reports on two studies of the program. Study 1, a survey of 128 high school students, found that those involved in the service and literacy program scored higher than their bilingual Latino peers who were not involved on two dimensions of high school engagement: level of education desired and feelings that school contributed to increased self-understanding. Study 2, a coding analysis of 200 LIA student journals, demonstrated a high level of reflectivity across three emerging themes: satisfaction with the tutee's progress, growth in leadership and social skills, and increased drive for school success. Implications for educators and program administrators are discussed. Although intended for separate publication, the studies inform each other in important ways. For example, the qualitative finding in Study 1 that LIA students more than their non-LIA peers view school as important to their self-understanding correlates with the qualitative finding in Study 2 that 80% of LIA journal writers employed self-reflective language to describe experiences in LIA—indicating perhaps that elements of the program prompt the kind of thinking and communication that enhances understanding of self. Similarly, the new confidence and determination to succeed in school expressed by LIA journal writers supports the Study 1 finding that LIA students target higher levels of post-secondary education than do their non-LIA peers. Specific journal entries provide a window into how that growth in ambition comes to be. Within the hybrid dissertation format, Appendix A provides a literature review linking both studies. Appendix B gives detailed coding methods for Study 2. Appendix C combines the findings of both studies in a general discussion.

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e emergent bilinguals, High School Survey of Student Engagement, writing to learn, paraprofessional training, Latinos in higher education

Language
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achievement, including strategies for engaging students and improving student outcomes. Best practices and case studies examine issues of staffing, academic programs, and innovative solutions at high needs schools, and profile the use of programs such as TIF in recruiting highly effective teachers to these schools. In support of each, and implementation guidance from educators and district leaders across the country. The incorporation of the action items is “designed to stimulate professional conversation about meeting the academic language needs of ELLs and [the items] do not need to be followed in order.” Figure 1.4 below presents these 15 action items. Figure 1.4: Essential Actions for Academic Language Success. In 2015-2016, Evaluation Summary Report, A Note on Dates Overall by the Numbers Table: Overall descriptives of teachers and students using our courses Code Studio Students by the Numbers Breakdown of Code Studio Users and Usage (2015-2016) Hour of Code Impact Study Table: Largest perception shifts by group. High School Programs High School Teachers Table: Overall satisfaction with and preparedness from high school professional learning workshops Outlier Research & Evaluation Findings - High School Teachers High School Students Table: Number of high school students reached by program Outlier Research & Evaluation Findings - High School Students. Improve gender diversity in computer science.