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Lupe Beltran Rosas

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A STUDY OF LATINO STUDENT DROP-OUT AND POTENTIAL  
SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

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by  
Lupe Beltran Rosas  
September 1995

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Lupe Beltran Rosas

September 1995


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## ABSTRACT

This research project studied the problems of dropout among Latino high school students and examined some interventions which school social workers can implement with the potential Latino dropout. The study described and explored some of the reasons that Latino students dropout of school in such great numbers. Using a Critical Theory paradigm the study adopted a positivist methodology using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A convenience sample of 26 Latinos, ranging in age from 18 to 53, who had dropped out of school responded to the study. The questionnaire used both closed-ended and open-ended questions on Likert-type scales. The programs represented were Somos Hermanas Unidas and Redlands Adult Education.

Most of the respondents preferred to speak English rather than Spanish and most identified themselves as Mexican-Americans. The primary reasons for dropping out of school were pregnancy among the women and going to work to help their families among the men. Although many of the students were bilingual, they did not feel that having a bilingual teacher would have been helpful in school. They felt generally supported by their teachers but said that having a mentor would have helped them stay in school. Most of the respondents stated that if they could go back to school that they would change both their attitude and their effort. They also stated that during school they felt

alienated and had poor self images. All indicated that their educational and personal goals focus on career and personal advancement.

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*To Joe, Jamie, Selia, and David:*

It's over! Thank you for believing I could do it, for hanging in there when I was not the easiest person to live with and for not giving up on me and running away.

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Thank you for your understanding, patient guidance in this last hurdle of my school career.

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## Introduction

### Problem Statement and Focus

This study focused on the drop-out problem among high school Latino students and some preventive interventions which school social workers can implement. If the school social worker has some knowledge of the factors associated with drop-out among Latino youth between the ages of 14 and 18, the worker will be better equipped to formulate the appropriate interventions.

Latino students are dropping out of high school at an alarming rate. They have a higher drop-out rate than Anglo or Black youth. Estimated drop-out rates for Latino youth range from 20 to 40%, and these rates are up to three times as high as those reported for non-Latinos (Steinberg, Blinde & Chan, 1984; Rumberger 1983; Brown, Hill & Olivas, 1980; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978). In many communities, over half the Latino children registered in elementary school will leave high school without a diploma (Orum, 1984).

Some of the factors previously found to be associated with Latinos dropping out of school were addressed in this research. These include: (a) boredom in the classroom, (b) being from a low socioeconomic status, (c) low grades which discourage the student from trying to do better, (d) unsupportive teachers who do not take the time to understand the Latino culture and its impact on the student, (e)

retention of students at lower grades, making them older than their peers, and (f) cultural alienation from students and from teachers who are from the dominant Anglo culture.

If Latino youth are not encouraged, supported, or persuaded to continue their education, they will not be able to maintain or support a family later in life or get into better paying jobs. The high drop-out rate among Latino youths serves to perpetuate the lower socioeconomic status of many Latino families across generations (Fernandez, Paulsen, and Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989). This in turn creates low self esteem which sometimes sends the youth looking to gangs as a way out of their feelings of desperation. This will only create problems for the society in general. This should be a concern for school administrators. They should intervene by taking steps to support school social workers in creating alternative means for these students to get the help they desire.

The school social worker can intervene by working with the families of the potential Latino student drop-outs. If some of these families do not speak English, the school social worker may work on creating a mentor system that will help the youth with homework and maybe even advocate for the student if intervention is needed. Also the school social worker may be the mediator between student and teacher to help enlighten both of as to what each expects of the other.

### Paradigm

Critical theory is the paradigm which was used in this research project. Latino youths have been oppressed in the classroom as well as in society because of their ethnic identity. They are often alienated or ostracized from the Anglo culture because of the way they dress and the way they speak. The current style of dress makes them look like "Cholos" and "Cholas". A "Cholo" (Chola is feminine) is a Latino who dresses and behaves in a way that marks him as a street-wise tough person. Essentially, these youths are seeking an identity apart from the dominant culture, but they find that they do not fit the Anglo image. The "Cholo" phenomenon represents a constant need of some Latino youth to self-define. This phenomenon has appeared through time under various names, including "pachuco" (the Zoot-suit image of the 1940's and 1950's). The boys may wear jeans that are slit at the bottom and baggy and wear white tee shirts, their hair cuts may be buzzed close to their scalp. The girls may wear a lot of make-up especially dark eye liner and their hair may be teased high in the bang area. Their clothes may consist of baggy overalls or provocative tight clothing. Teenage boys and girls are stereotyped into some form of gang. Ronda and Valencia (1994) summarize these "expressive cultural practices" as historical traditions, territoriality, and boundary-maintaining devices which are self-generated and express a group's social

identity and sense of primordiality.

Some youths lack the fundamentals of the English language even if they have been raised in the United States, which puts them at a disadvantage in their academic endeavors. The majority of Latino youths are from a low socioeconomic status which only tends to alienate them from the dominant Anglo culture because they are not able to afford nicer clothes and shoes. They also have the highest high school drop-out rate in the nation which only perpetuates their low socioeconomic status. They will continue to live in poverty if there is not some kind of action on their behalf to help empower them to strive toward higher education.

#### Literature Review

In many communities, over half the Latino children registered in elementary school will leave high school without a diploma (Orum, 1984). Between the ninth and the tenth grades, there is another leveling off, followed by an acute peaking at the eleventh grade, when 30% of all Latinos drop-out, or almost 150,000 Latinos, leave school (Hirano-Nakanishi 1986). From a status attainment perspective, the high drop-out rate among Latino youths serves to maintain the lower socioeconomic status of many Latino families over generations (Fernandez, Paulsen & Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989). Latinos are much poorer and have larger families than non-Latinos (see U. S. Bureau of the

Census, 1979). It has been found that within the general population, controlling other factors, the larger the family and the smaller the family income, the more likely it is that youth will work (Steinberg et al., 1982).

Reasons for dropping out of high school vary depending on the Latino youth. The most frequently cited reason for leaving school was that the student found school boring (Tidwell, 1988). In a study done by Delgado-Gaitan (1988), at a glance the state of boredom explains little, but in-depth analysis revealed that boredom masked the real anger which students felt about the unsupportive situations in the school. Some Latino youths need more individual attention from their teachers but the teachers are either not available due to the class size or because they lack interest in the student.

Grades are a strong predictor of dropping out of school. Youth with higher grades are less likely to drop-out than those with poor grades (Fernandez, Paulsen & Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989). Tidwell (1988) states, that the number one reason for dropping out was "poor grades" for all groups except Blacks, who cited family reasons most frequently. The Latino youth who is constantly receiving below average grades tends to wonder whether it is worth staying in school. Another reason Latino youth drop-out of school is because they have felt alienated from the dominant culture. Latino and African-American students have reported

acute levels of alienation which were seen as a contributing factor to high drop-out rates (Calabrese & Poe, 1990).

Alienation leads to absenteeism, and absenteeism leads to suspensions which increase the risk of dropping out of school.

Latino youth are being delayed from making educational progress for several reasons. The likelihood of being registered below grade level increases if children were born outside the United States, do not speak English, or have parents with little education (Orum, 1984). Being delayed from making normal educational advancement during adolescent years, as well as additional adolescent stresses, makes these students prone to frustration with the whole schooling system (Hirano-Nakanishi, 1986).

Recent scholarship has suggested that it is imperative for school social workers to have a variety of interventions that they can implement for the potential Latino drop-outs. These interventions must address oppression, socioeconomic, boredom, social and family support, and cultural alienation (Fernandez, Paulsen & Hirano-Nakanishi:, 1989, Calabrese & Poe, 1990). The school social worker can be an advocate for the youth if their parents are not able to talk with the administration because of their lack of the English language. The social worker can also be the mediator between a high risk student who is acting out, ditching school or by not doing his or her homework, by helping the

student hook up with a person who can tutor him or her to help bring their grades up (Orum, 1984). The school social worker might work on implementing a mentor program to help the student have a good role model as well as someone they can process their issues with (Tidwell, 1988).

## Method

### Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to describe and further explore some of the reasons Latino high school students drop-out of school at such high rates. The study provides those in the educational system, such as teachers, school social workers and counselors some suggestions about how to work with the Latino population in helping them to achieve their goal of graduating from high school.

The questionnaire was designed for this study and is based on reasons for drop-out and the interventions currently discussed in the professional literature. Study participants were invited to present data which validate, invalidate, or present alternatives to current interventions. The long range purpose of this study is to motivate school personnel to intervene before the student reaches an age where they loses motivation to continue with education. The research questionnaire has the potential to be abbreviated and adapted by school social workers as an assessment tool for high risk Latino students.

This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches



to collect data on some of the factors thought to cause the Latino high school student to drop-out of school. Latino students' feelings about their oppression and some of the possible solutions in preventing students from dropping out of school were explored. The research questions were: Why do Latino students believe they are quitting school? What are some interventions which school social workers can implement with the potential Latino drop-out student to encourage the student to remain in school?

#### Sample Selection

A convenience sample of 50 Latino subjects from the Redlands area was originally solicited, but 26 actually participated in the study. All were in the process of working toward their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or high school diploma, and all were drop-outs from high school. The participants were registered in two adult re-entry programs. Somos Hermanas Unidas (SHU), or We are Sisters United, accepts students by contract agreements with the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program and through the Jobs Partnership Training Act (JTPA). The Redlands Adult School accepts self-referred students.

#### Data Collection and Instruments

##### Data Collection Process

Data was collected using a survey instrument which included both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Closed ended questions were answered on a

Likert-type scale from 1 to 5. An answer of 1 variously indicated "strongly agree," "very interested," and "very good." An answer of 5 variously indicated "strongly disagree," "bored," and "very bad." (See Appendix A). The questionnaire was created for this study based on information gathered in the literature. The questionnaire was pretested on two people who fit the criteria of the study population but who were not included in the study. Written permission was obtained prior to gathering data from the students. The students at both re-entry facilities were invited to participate in this study. Data were collected personally by the researcher, who visited each facility once a week to pass out and collect the questionnaires, as well as to help the participants with any questions they might have. Some of the questionnaires were completed in the classroom setting, while others were completed by individual subjects with the help of the researcher. The data collection process took approximately one month and was hindered by the turn over of students in the programs.

### Instrument

The questionnaire was made up of seventeen closed-ended questions and eleven open-ended questions. Demographic information solicited about the participants included the program in which they were enrolled, gender, age, preferred language, and cultural identity. Non-demographic closed-ended questions examined the respondents' reasons for

dropping out, their feelings about school and about their teachers, their perceptions of their friends' and classmates' feelings about school and about their teachers, whether the respondents believed having a mentor would have been beneficial, their parents' feelings about school, the quality of their experience in high school, and the quality of their experience of themselves during high school. Open-ended questions offered the participants an opportunity to comment on their feelings about themselves during high school, things they wish they could change, special academic achievements they dream of, their educational goals, and their immediate personal goals.

The instrument was a self-report questionnaire. A major flaw in a self-report questionnaire is the possibility that a respondent is not truthful. These questionnaires may also miss reporting on areas of significant concern to the respondents because study items are pre-selected and controlled by the researcher. Self-report questionnaires can be useful for two reasons. They record information uniformly. It is possible to gather large amounts of information quickly and simply. Because this is the first use of the questionnaire, no attempt was made to address reliability and validity. Care was taken to make the questionnaire reflective of the various self-identities of Latinos.

### Limitations of The Study

The principal limitation of the study was the small size of the sample. A convenience sample of 50 subjects was originally solicited, but 26 actually participated in the study. The small sample size constrained statistical analysis.

A second obstacle was the quality of the cooperation of the students in the re-entry programs. They were initially resistant and mistrustful of the potential intrusion into their lives. However, students in both re-entry programs who were under eighteen years old would have been eager to participate in the study if they could have.

Another was the sampling process itself. The sample could have been made broader and stronger by eliminating the restriction of using only re-entry sites. A survey of at-risk Latino high school students would identify potential drop-outs and provide immediate access to interventions. A snowball convenience sample of drop-outs or potential drop-outs would overcome the resistance of the study participants while broadening the sample.

### Protection of Human Subjects

The human subjects who were selected for this study had their confidentiality and anonymity protected at all times. The survey instrument was numbered so as not to have to use the subject's name. A participant consent form was issued at the beginning when the questionnaire was passed out, and

a debriefing form left with each subject explained the purpose of the study and gave information on where to write for the results of the study (see Appendixes B and C).

## Results

### Characteristics of the Sample

A convenience sample of 26 Latino subjects from the Redlands area participated in the study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 53 years, and they were all in the process of working toward their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or high school diploma. These Latino subjects were all drop-outs from high school. Fifteen were registered in a re-entry school called Somos Hermanas Unidas (SHU). Translated into English, the name means We are Sisters United. These participants are enrolled in SHU by contract agreements with the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program and through the Jobs Partnership Training Act (JTPA). Eleven subjects were enrolled in the Redlands Adult School. Of the total sample, 69 percent (N=18) were female, and 31 percent (N=8) were male. Although all participants self-identified as bi-lingual, fifteen percent (N=4) stated that they preferred to communicate in Spanish. Culturally, 69 percent (N= 18) of the sample identified as Mexican-American, nineteen percent (N=5) as Mexican, eight percent (N=2) as Central American, and four percent (N=1) as Filipino/Mixed.

### Data Analysis

Using the Studentware version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), quantitative and qualitative analysis procedures were implemented to describe causes of drop-out and the respondents' perceptions of their feelings about school and about their teachers, friends' and classmates' feelings, their parents' feelings, the quality of their experience in high school, and the quality of their experience of themselves during high school.

The demographic variables in this questionnaire were examined using univariate analyses of central tendency, calculating the frequency, mean, median, mode, and the standard deviation. Demographic data are summarized in Table 1. Likert-scaled questions were also analyzed using measures of central tendency, specifically the frequency, mean, median, and mode.

Bivariate analyses included crosstabulations using the chi square to compute significance and the Lambda statistic to measure the strengths of relationships between variables. Reasons for dropping out were crosstabulated with the respondents' re-entry program, last grade attended, gender, preferred language, feelings about school and teachers, parents' feelings, friends' feelings, the usefulness of a bilingual teacher or mentor, and the respondents' experience and self-perception during high school. These crosstabulations were calculated for the entire sample and

with the gender of the respondent controlled. Comparison of means (t-tests) were computed for all variables, controlling for the respondents re-entry program and gender, respectively.

Table 1.  
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents By Re-entry Program

	Somos Hermanas Unidas		Redlands Adult Ed	
	%	N	%	N
Language				
English	80	12	91	10
Spanish	20	3	9	1
Culture				
Mexican-American	87	14	46	5
Mexican	6	1	36	4
Central-American	7	1	9	1
Other	0	0	9	1
Age Range				
18-20	40	6	27	3
21-24	0	0	36	4
25-30	33	5	18	2
31-40	7	1	9	1
41-50	13	2	9	1
Over 50	7	1	0	0
Gender				
Male	27	4	36	4
Female	73	11	64	7

### Patterns in the Data

#### Quantitative Results

Although the results of this study were not statistically significant, they revealed a pattern. The primary reasons for dropping out of school were pregnancy among the women and going to work to help their families

among the men. Although many of the students were bilingual, they did not feel that having a bilingual teacher would have been helpful in school. They felt generally supported by their teachers but said that having a mentor would have helped them stay in school. Most of the respondents stated that if they could go back to school they would change both their attitude and their effort. They also stated that during school they felt alienated and had poor self-images. All of the respondents indicated that their educational and personal goals focus on career and personal advancement, specifically getting a diploma, going to college, and getting a good job.

The principle reasons that female participants gave for dropping out of school were going to work and getting pregnant (see Table 2). A majority of them (N=11) left school in the tenth grade. Crosstabulations revealed that all of the female respondents felt good about their teachers and now believe that school is important to get ahead. Most believed that a bilingual teacher would not have assisted them in staying in school, but a mentor would have had a positive impact on their academic success. Despite dropping out, most of the women recalled that both they and their friends had good experiences in high school, and their teachers were generally supportive.

The principle reasons that the male participants gave for dropping out of school were going to work and having



teachers who were unappreciative of the Latino culture (see Table 2). A majority of them (N=8) quit school in the twelfth grade. Crosstabulations revealed that most of the male respondents felt good about their teachers and now believe that school is important to get ahead. Unlike the women, the men were equally divided in their opinion of the impact of having had a bilingual teacher or a mentor. Also unlike the women, the men recalled that both they and their friends had unhappy experiences in high school, were generally bored, and found their teachers to be unsupportive. ✓✓

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Table 2.  
Reasons for Dropping Out of High School

Reason	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
To work	3	37.5	4	22.2	7	26.9
Teachers did not appreciate Latino culture	1	12.5	0	0.0	1	3.8
Got pregnant	0	0.0	10	55.6	10	38.5
To marry	2	25.0	2	11.1	4	15.4
Gave up in life	2	25.0	2	11.1	4	15.4
Total	8	100.0	18	100.0	26	100.0

---

T-test results were not statistically significant. A comparison of means by program revealed that the answers were essentially the same for the SHU participants and the Adult Education students. A comparison of means by

respondents' gender replicated the results of the crosstabulations.

### Qualitative Results

The respondents' answers to open-ended questions disclosed a pattern of impaired self-efficacy during high school. Most of the respondents stated that they had felt ambivalent about school due to poor self-images, alienation from peers, and discouragement. Self-image is one area that the respondents would change if they could re-live the past.

Other areas the respondents would change, given the opportunity, were their attitudes and effort, learning skills, conflicts with their teachers, class sizes, and their own living conditions (see Table 3). They also indicated that these contributed heavily to their ultimate decision to quit school. Additional influences were peers who quit, lack of social support, racial prejudice among teachers, and family or emotional problems.

Primary among the respondents' educational and professional goals was a desire for general life success. Academically, they stated that their goal is graduation (see Table 4). Special academic achievements they desired were skills in writing, social sciences, mathematics, and science. Their educational and personal goals centered on completing high school and college and establishing professional careers.

Table 3.  
Past Influences Respondents Would Change

Issue or Area	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Attitude or effort	2	66.7	8	47.1	10	50.0
Learning skills or habits	1	33.3	3	17.6	4	20.0
Conflicts with teachers	0	0.0	3	17.6	3	15.0
Living conditions	0	0.0	1	5.9	1	5.0
Self-image	0	0.0	1	5.9	1	5.0
Class size	0	0.0	1	5.9	1	5.0
Total	3	100.0	17	100.0	20	100.0

## Discussion

### Research Question One

Why do Latino students believe they are quitting school?

Most of the respondents stated that they went to work or otherwise left school to help their families. Teachers who were ignorant of or unappreciative of the Latino culture contributed to the male respondents' unhappy experience in high school. While most of the female respondents left school because of pregnancy and marriage, both the female and male respondents addressed a sense of school as a war zone which caused them to have a poor self-image and lack self-efficacy, or a sense of self-determination and control of their own destiny.

### Research Question Two

What are some interventions which school social workers

can implement with the potential Latino drop-out student to encourage the student to remain in school?

#### Culturally Sensitive Assessment

The findings of this research can help school social workers make appropriate interventions with the potential Latino drop-out student with the goal of encouraging the student to remain in school. It will help the school social worker get a better understanding of the potential Latino drop-out from the student's point-of-view and the issues they is facing and wants help in overcoming.

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Table 4.  
Personal and Educational Goals of Respondents

Goal	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
General Equivalency Diploma (GED)	1	12.5	6	33.3	7	26.9
High School Diploma	1	12.5	5	27.8	6	23.1
Career Development	2	25.0	3	16.7	5	19.2
College Graduation	2	25.0	2	11.0	4	15.4
Personal Development	1	12.5	1	5.6	2	7.7
Better life	1	12.5	1	5.6	2	7.7
Total	8	100.0	18	100.0	26	100.0

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The school social worker must make an assessment of each individual student who is at high risk of dropping out of school. A culturally sensitive questionnaire may be adapted by school social workers as an assessment tool so that they have a better understanding of what some of the

stressors or problems are as the student sees them. Many Latino drop-out students have been a product of their environment which has not been culturally sensitive to their needs; they have been written off as unmotivated and trouble makers who do not deserve the attention needed to keep them in school.

### School-Based Mentoring

A school-based mentoring program will provide adult contacts with the larger community. These adults can fill many roles in the student's life. They can serve as mentors, tutors, and role models. Potential drop-outs who are not fluent or whose families do not speak English often need mediators between the student, family, the school, and the community. Mentors have the capacity to advocate on behalf of the student for individualized solutions to the student's unique problems and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress.

School social workers can be the impetus behind mentoring programs. They can provide assessments, negotiate individual mentoring contracts (including Individual Education Plans [IEPs]), and supervise teams made up of the student, the mentor, interested family members, faculty, and academic counselors.

Mentors can be recruited from local community colleges, graduates of mentoring programs, and university students in field training for social work, education, psychology,

sociology, and educational counseling. The school social worker can be both the team leader and the preceptor or faculty field instructor for qualified university students.

#### Professional Development and Education

School social workers can advocate for or design and implement cultural awareness programs for faculty and staff. They can also encourage networking with the leaders of the Latino community, so that the school and its Latino students do not exist in a cultural vacuum.

## Implications for Social Work Practice

### Public Policy Implications

Current public policy in California seeks to oppress a subculture which poses little threat to the political power base. Affirmative action policies have already been rescinded with regard to state-funded construction contracts. If affirmative action and equal opportunity programs are overturned at all state levels, prevention and intervention programs targeting only Latino minority students will be disallowed. Special scholarship programs providing for university placements for Latino students may be diverted to more privileged students from the dominant culture. The social work profession has an ethical obligation to oppose oppression of Latino youth by political action, education, and direct intervention in schools and communities. It is important for social work to act on its mandate to be the voice of the oppressed.

### Areas for Further Study

Although the professional literature is rich with information about Latino students' reasons for dropping out, little practical attention is given to discovering how to mitigate the problem on the individual, school, community, and policy level. Research is needed which assesses both actual and potential drop-outs and the strengths which cause Latinos to return to school or remain in school in spite of personal and societal obstacles. Programs in which Latino

students have been successful, regardless of the size of the program, need to be studied, replicated, and publicized.

A difficult but necessary area of study is the growing narcissism of the dominant society. Eventually, scholars of human behavior must seek answers and interventions which address society's consistent and self-destructive need to maintain and punish an oppressed class.

#### A Practical Model

Achievement for Latinos for Academic Success (ALAS) is a unique drop-out intervention program in a large junior high school in Los Angeles (Rumberger and Larson, 1992). In Spanish, "alas" translates to "wings." The program consists of specific interventions which address four spheres which impact the student as person-in-environment. These are (a) the students themselves, (b) the teachers, (c) the school, and (d) the parents.

Student's social and task-related behavior. To enhance the student's social and task-related behavior, the program incorporates metacognitive problem-solving training which incidentally reduces truancy and misbehavior. Students are taught to apply these skills to their own unique situations, interpersonal, familial, school, gang, or substance abuse.

Teacher feedback. Contrary to the traditional use of progress reports at five- or ten-week intervals, the ALAS program provides daily, weekly, or bi-monthly teacher feedback reports to both students and their parents. The



frequency of feedback is determined by the student's performance and self-efficacy needs. Students use this feedback during their problem-solving training. The frequency of feedback strengthens positive relationships between students, families, and teachers.

School attendance monitoring and supportive bonding.

The program provides what its administrators have termed "hot-seat attendance monitoring" (Rumberger and Larson, 1992, p.8). This involves period-by-period attendance taking. Parents are contacted daily about truancy or extended absence, and students are required to make up missed time. This is accomplished through positive adult contacts intended to communicate personal interest in the student.

The program provides both student-to-student and student-to-adult bonding through extra-curricular activities. Adults also serve as advocates and role models for the students.

Parent participation and monitoring. The ALAS program recognizes that Latino parents interact significantly less than non-Latino parents with teachers and school personnel. This is not because they are not concerned about their children or do not value education. Latino parents often do not understand their role in their children's education or lack the confidence and skills necessary to interact with school personnel.

The program trains parents in two skills. First, parent-child problem solving training consists of weekly tutorial material mailed to the parents. This material provides specific suggestions for enhancing and improving the child's behavior. In addition, parents receive direct instruction and modeling in how to modify their child's behavior. Second, parents receive instruction in how and when to participate in school activities, to contact teachers and administrators, and to monitor their child's school performance.

#### Conclusion

This study focused on the drop-out problem among high school Latino students and some preventive interventions which school social workers can implement. If the school social worker has some knowledge of the factors associated with drop-out among Latino youth between the ages of 14 and 18, the worker will be better equipped to formulate the appropriate interventions. Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success is presented as an effective and replicable model program.

The school social worker must make a culturally-sensitive assessment of each individual student who is at high risk of dropping out of school. Possible direct interventions the school social worker can make include school-based mentoring programs and cultural awareness programs for faculty and staff. They can also encourage

networking with the leaders of the Latino community.

Finally, the profession must take the lead in addressing abuses of power in public policies which maintain and punish an oppressed class.

## Appendix A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. IDNUM \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the last grade you attended \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you (1) male \_\_\_\_\_ or (2) female \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is your preferred language (1) English \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) Spanish \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which Latino Culture do you most identify with  
(1) \_\_\_\_\_ Mexican-American  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Mexican  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_ Puerto Rican  
(4) \_\_\_\_\_ Central American (Costa Rica, Honduras,  
Nicaragua, etc.)  
(5) \_\_\_\_\_ South American (Argentina, Brazil, etc.)  
(6) \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish  
(7) \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Please circle the appropriate answers

7. Why did you drop-out of school?  
(1) to work  
(2) poor grades  
(3) unappreciative teachers  
(4) no parental support  
(5) held back a grade  
(6) got pregnant  
(7) felt alienated  
(8) Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

8. How did you feel about school?

1	2	3	4	5
very interested	somewhat interested	Neither	Not very interested	Bored

9. Would it have made a difference for you to have had a bilingual teacher in high school?

- (1) Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how would you have felt about having a bilingual teacher?

1	2	3	4	5
very good	somewhat	neither	not very	very bad
about it	good about		bad about	about
	it		it	it

10. Do you feel that it would have helped you to have a mentor in your high school?

1	2	3	4
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

11. It is important to go to school to get ahead?

1	2	3	4
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

12. If I could go back to high school I would change

---

13. I left school because \_\_\_\_\_

---

14. My parents or mother or father felt that school was

- 
- (a) Boring
  - (b) Important
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Hated
  - (e) Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

15. My experience in high school was

- (a) Boring
  - (b) Important
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Hated
  - (e) Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

16. My teachers were

- (a) Boring
  - (b) Important
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Hated
  - (e) Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

17. I felt \_\_\_\_\_ about myself when I was in school

- (a) Boring
  - (b) Important
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Hated
  - (e) Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

18. My friends thought school was \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (a) Boring
  - (b) Important
  - (c) Good
  - (d) Hated
  - (e) Other (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

19. If I could have achieved one special thing academically, it would have been \_\_\_\_\_

20. My educational goal is \_\_\_\_\_

---

21. My immediate personal goal is \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to explore some of the reasons why Latino high school students drop-out of school. This study is being conducted by Lupe Rosas under supervision of Dr. Rosemary McCaslin. This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee of the Department of Social Work which is a sub-committee of the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire that will take approximately fifteen minutes to a half hour. The questions in the questionnaire will be concerning some reasons high school students drop-out of school as well as various demographic questions. It is the goal of this project to gain some insight into the problem of the high drop-out rate for the Latino high school students and to offer some solutions to help students stay in school. When the project is completed, the agency will be given the results of the project, so that those who are interested in seeing what the outcome is, will have the opportunity to do so.

Each questionnaire will be assigned a number instead of having you write your name on the questionnaire. This is a precaution to help keep your anonymity. At the conclusion of the project, you may receive a summary of the results upon your request.

Please understand that your participation in this research study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and freely consent to participate. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

---

Participant's Signature

Date

---

Researcher's Signature

Date

## Appendix C

### Debriefing Statement

Thank you for participating in this study. It is the primary goal of this project to gain some insight into the problem of the high drop-out rate among Latino high school students and to offer some solutions to help students stay in school.

This study will be conducted from January 1995, and will be completed in June 1995. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if you would like the results of this study, you may contact my faculty advisor at the following location:

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Social Work Dept.  
California State University, San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397  
Phone: (909) 880-5501

This study deals with some sensitive issues regarding ethnicity and the problem with discrimination within the educational system. If you experience problems from this study, the researcher can be contacted through the Social Work Department at California State University, San Bernardino. Also, you may contact the counselor at the Adult Education office to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

Lupe Rosas



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