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## Dissertation Fellow Abstracts 2001-2010

*Research to Make a Difference*



## **DISSERTATION FELLOW ABSTRACTS 2001-2010**

### **2001**

**Helen Duffy**

**UCB, Education**

*Increasing College-Going Rates of Underrepresented Populations*

This study seeks to understand how professional development activities for teachers can help increase the college and university attendance rates of underrepresented populations. Using surveys and observational data, the study examines the High School Puente Project's professional development.

**Evellyn Elizondo**

**UCSC, Psychology**

*Factors Influencing the College Decision-Making Process of High School Youth*

For some students the decision to go to college is a clear and relatively easy choice to make while for others, the opposite is true. In particular, students who have family members that have gone on to college are often seen as having a "college-bound identity," and are better informed, prepared, and guided in their college decision making than students with no family college history. This study seeks to learn more about the processes by which advantaged and disadvantaged students decide to attend college. The information gained will help researchers better understand students' core beliefs about college and more systematically probe college-bound identity as an important dimension of college decision making.

**Dianna Gutierrez**

**UCD, Education**

*The Process of Social Capital Formation: One Rural High School's Response to Educate Mexican Immigrant Students*

This ethnographic study examines the experiences of working-class recent Mexican immigrant and limited English speaking youth in an impoverished rural high school. It seeks to illuminate how the structure and culture of rural high schools enable and constrain the social relationships that these high-risk students form with peers and adults. These relationships are critically important since peers and educators can provide various types of institutional resources and support (known as social capital) that are linked to higher academic achievement levels and access to higher education that families with little formal education are able to provide.

**Carl A. Lager**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Improving Algebra Instruction for English Language Learners*

Children who are learning English often struggle in their math classes because they find it difficult to understand the teacher's explanations or the written language of mathematics textbooks, and they may have further problems communicating their understandings to others. This study uses information about students collected from tasks, surveys, and interviews to identify and further investigate specific language obstacles that hinder Spanish-speaking middle school students as they attempt to learn algebra.

**Gregory Palardy**  
**UCSB, Education**

*Equitable Evaluation of School Performance*

Using national longitudinal data, this study will examine how differences in student background characteristics along with segregation influence academic outcomes and create inequitable learning environments. The findings will inform school district and state policy makers about how school factors such as organization, resources, and climate can increase student achievement. Finally, this study will illustrate how a promising new statistical method can be used to study school effectiveness.

**Terri Patchen**  
**UCLA, Education**

*The Relationship Between Latinas' Perceptions and Classroom Practices*

Using classroom observations and interviews with students, this study investigates the relationship between adolescent Latina/os' perceptions of classroom interactions and their actual classroom participation. Since participation is an important factor in creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities, students' understandings of "appropriate" participation may have an important influence on their educational progress. The study will help schools understand and respond to the different ways boys and girls strive for high academic achievement.

**Deborah Perry-Romero**  
**UCSB, Education**

*Using Technology to Empower Minority Families and Build on Student Strengths*

Increasing access to technology offers opportunities to develop existing strengths and competencies for culturally diverse students, English language learners, and others. This research studies the after-school participation of Latino K-12 students and their parents in the creation of a desktop publication; at a university-school collaborative learning experience building upon the families, social-cultural, and linguistic resources. Ethnographic methods and conversation analysis serve to examine how participants develop new problem-solving strategies and technology-based literacies. The findings promise to expand schools' understandings and inform instructional repertoires for educating all students well.

**Lisa M. Tripp**

**UCSD, Communications**

*K-16 Partnerships and the Possibilities for Educational Change*

This qualitative case study examines the implementation of UCSD/Create, an "outreach" project designed to increase the college-going rates of under-represented k-12 students, enhance the college experience of community college students, and strengthen institutional ties between K-14 and the University of California. In addition to documenting the core pedagogical challenges the project faces, the study details the project's struggle with considerable logistical and ideological obstacles. The goal is to provide a comprehensive description that contains useful lessons for other cross-institutional initiatives with similar goals.

**Alicia Valero**

**UCD, Education**

*Literacy Development among Latino Students in a Rural Preschool*

When Latino students enter kindergarten there are significant disparities between them and White, middle-class children in the area of school readiness. Therefore, it is important to provide Latino students access to early literacy experiences that are critical to later success in reading and writing. This ethnographic study explores how Latino students develop emergent literacy skills in a preschool program that promotes Spanish language and literacy experiences. A secondary purpose is to examine how literacy instruction is socially organized in this preschool context. This study may help optimize an emergent literacy curriculum for preschool students from Latino, Spanish-speaking backgrounds.

**Jean Yonemura Wing**

**UCB, Education**

*The Conditions Contributing to Racial Disparities in Student Achievement*

Much research on multi-racial high schools suggests that school structures and cultures contribute to racial disparities in student achievement. To learn more about the conditions that contribute to these disparities, this study analyzes the experiences and academic performance over four years of high school for students at a diverse, urban high school. Students include those who conform to the typical patterns (i.e., low-performing African American and Latino students and high-performing white and Asian American students) and those who do not conform (i.e., high performing African American and Latino students and low performing white and Asian American students.)

**2002**

**Diane Alvarez**

**UCLA, Education**

*Do You See What I See? A Qualitative Study of Black and Latino Adolescents' Identity Formation*

This study will inform our understanding of the nuances of race and ethnicity in schools, specifically how young people's racial identity is shaped by their high school context, how it is influenced by peers, and how it impacts students' conceptions of themselves as college-going young people. Depending on what the adolescents reveal as salient, the study may help schools develop ways to connect students' racial and ethnic identity formation to college preparation and the development of a college-going identity, including providing multicultural and multilingual social supports and diverse ethnic and gender relationships with adult workers and educators at schools.

**Rebecca M. Callahan**

**UC Davis, Education**

*English language proficiency and academic achievement: Tracking, testing, and opportunity to learn*

Recent California policy decisions focus on English Learners learning academic English as the key to improving their rates of school success. However, these policies have not, in practice, produced the desired gains, and available research offers little to predict the success of the policies. Indeed, there are indications that the policies may be counterproductive because their effect is to keep English Learners from experiencing high-level, academically rich curricula. This study will investigate the relationship between English language proficiency, track or course placement, and the academic achievement of high school English Learners.

**Gabriela Chavira**

**UCSC, Psychology**

*Latino Adolescents' School Achievement: The Roles of Family Involvement and Students' Ethnic and Career Identities*

This study investigates how two conditions for successful college going—a multicultural college going identity and family-neighborhood school supports—develop among Latino eighth grade students. The study begins with a theoretical model that proposes that, when provided supports and resources to challenge and navigate through obstacles, students can reach schooling success. It examines four dimensions of this success: 1) immigrant and non-immigrant Latino youth's perception of their families' involvement in their school achievement; 2) Latino families' impressions of their involvement in their adolescents' school performance; 3) the relationship between variation in family involvement among students on different math pathways; 4) the role of students' ethnic and career identities in students' school achievement.

**Anthony Collatos**

**UCLA, Education**

*Working at the Intersection of Capital Theory: Increasing College Access for Urban Youth through Multiple Sites of Exchange*

This study documents a four-year long project that proved to be highly successful in increasing college access for urban youth identified at the start of high school as having poor prospects for attending college. The key element of this program was the ongoing engagement of the high school students as "critical

researchers" who themselves studied inequitable patterns of college access for urban students of color. The study seeks to understand how students responded the program's pedagogy, in particular whether and how engaging urban students in high-level social analysis increased their ability to gain college access.

**Kathryn Olson**  
**UCLA, Education**

*The Pedagogical Consequences of Proposition 227*

With the passage of Proposition 227, schools serving English Language Learners (ELL) faced difficult choices of abandoning all primary language instruction, continuing some instruction based on earlier bilingual education, or choosing a third English-emphasis approach. In fact, a combination of factors including legal requirements, efforts to meet ELL's language and other learning needs, community preferences, and bureaucratic and resource constraints have produced hybrid programs and practices that require study and analysis to inform new policy that is consistent with students' learning needs. This study documents these programs and their impact on literacy.

**Mariana Pacheco**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Reading The Effects of Reform: A Case Study of The Effects of Reading Reforms and Language Policies in a High-Achieving School with a Significant Population of English Language Learners*

This dissertation will analyze the effects of the convergence of California policies that eliminate primary language instruction (Proposition 227) and that immerse English Language Learners in English-dominant instructional contexts that isolate reading skills from content and meaning. The study challenges theories of reading and language development implied in recent policies by examining the effects of their implementation in a high-achieving school that also serves many English Language Learners.

**Samantha M. Paredes Scribner**  
**UCR, Education**

*The Cultural Context of Standardization: A Study of Two Diverse Schools' Enactments of Curriculum Standards Reform*

Using institutional and organizational theory, this dissertation seeks to understand how and why a school district responds to new curriculum policies in ways that do or do not achieve the original policy intent. The study investigates the response to policy (the enactment of standards based curriculum reform in mathematics) at two middle schools in the district. Of particular importance is the impact of the social class and racial composition of the student body on educators' decisions about implementing rigorous academic reforms.

**Lori Wicker**  
**UCLA**

*A Social Cognitive Model of Attrition*

This dissertation proposes a model to explain the high rates of college attrition among African Americans students, and to understand how attrition factors may differ among African Americans and students from other low-income groups. The results will be used to inform interventions strategies aimed increase the college degree attainment of African Americans.

**2003**

**Collete Cann**

**UCB, Education**

*How Are Effective Mathematics Teachers Allocated to High School Students in an Urban School District?*

This research seeks to understand the social, political, and personal factors that influence the movement of mathematics teachers in and out of urban high school classrooms. This includes the entry, distribution and exit of mathematics teachers into, across and out of various levels of mathematics courses. Research has documented the importance of effective teachers in increasing students' access to a quality education and further academic opportunities. Therefore, this study also explores how district, school, department and teacher conceptions of "effective teaching" intersect with teacher requests, department needs and district budget limitations to influence the distribution of this valued resource across student groups.

**Anne Gregory**

**UCB, Psychology**

*Defiance or cooperation in the high school classroom: understanding how school discipline policies impact the education of African American students*

A much-discussed achievement gap across racial and ethnic groups plagues the educational system. Less discussed is a gap in discipline— the burden of which falls mostly on African American adolescents. African American students are often excluded from class for "defiance" suggesting pervasive authority conflicts between teachers and their African American students. Yet little research has explored what fuels or can prevent these negative interactions. This study includes a broad-scale review of discipline data at a large high school and an in-depth examination of how students and teachers experience defiance and cooperation. The study analyzes student beliefs, teaching styles, and discipline practices that promote trust, respect, and cooperation between teachers and students. The findings will provide insight into reducing the rates that African Americans are excluded from class for disciplinary reasons and for increasing their access to safe, engaging classrooms, which are critical for college preparation.

**Eileen Lai Horng**

**UCLA, Education**

*What Makes Schools "Hard-to-Staff"? Examining Teachers' Choices*

Low-performing, low-income students of color are most likely to attend schools that have difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. Educational policymakers and researchers have hypothesized that raising teacher salaries or improving working conditions would attract qualified teachers to hard-to-staff schools. This study will explore these and other job features that could encourage more qualified teachers to teach at hard-to-staff schools. The findings will provide new data to policymakers about the combination of job features that are useful in recruiting and retaining teachers in low performing schools.

**Korina M. Jocson**

**UCB, Education**

*Youth Poetry as a Tool for Promoting Literacy, Social and Academic Development*

This study examines the ways one intervention program, Poetry for the People (P4P), influences the literacy learning processes of high school youth. This study explores the impact of the program on literacy practices and learning processes associated with poetry. In addition, the study seeks to understand the

ways that these experiences have contributed to the academic and social identities of students in high school and beyond. Effective strategies for teaching and learning as well as developing a college-going school culture are assessed with respect to this intervention model.

**Rebecca Joseph**  
**UCLA, Education**

*How First Grade Teachers Utilize Prescriptive Reading Curricula*

California is currently at the forefront of a national trend in mandating prescriptive early reading curricula. These curricula exclude a focus on teaching methods and instead focus exclusively on the use of phonics-centered direct instruction. This approach is inconsistent with research that finds that effective literacy instruction requires multiple strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of students, particularly those with varying language and cultural backgrounds. This study investigates how six effective California urban first grade teachers make sense of and respond to these curricula-- exploring the beliefs and ideologies, tangible tools, literacy experiences, and teaching practices that shape their overall teaching identity.

**Ryane McAuliffe Straus**  
**UCI, Political Science**

*Increasing Segregation as Magnet Schools Seek to Attract Middle Class Students*

In response to a state court desegregation order, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) instituted magnet schools in 1978 for the dual purposes of integrating and improving schools. Now, however, magnets emphasize academic benefits over voluntary integration. Although these emphases are not mutually exclusive, this change appears to have accompanied the schools' shift from attracting and retaining both urban poor and middle class students, to a greater emphasis on attracting and retaining middle class students. The study analyzes this process by using both existing theories of public policy and emerging understandings of racial power in urban settings. The study applies a social construction perspective and the policy design framework to school desegregation, and it adds Los Angeles to the body of desegregation case studies.

**Roger Studley**  
**UCB, Economics**

*Socioeconomic Inequality, Ethnicity, and College Admissions*

Large socioeconomic and racial/ethnic disparities exist in college admissions. This research examines the extent to which an admissions policy that "levels the playing field" by thoroughly, objectively, and systematically accounting for the effects of socioeconomic factors on pre-college achievement can remedy these disparities. This study explores how various socioeconomic factors effect a student's pre-college academic achievement and explain differences in achievement across racial/ethnic groups. This analysis hopes to offer tangible recommendations for universities making admissions decisions, including how to ensure the validity of policies and how to predict the impact of such policies on the resulting pool of admitted students. Finally it examines if using socioeconomic factors in admissions has an impact on remedying racial/ethnic disparities in admissions.



## **2005**

**Gilbert J. Contreras**

**UCLA, Urban Planning**

*Transforming School Culture by Containing Gangs and Creating Safer Communities*

In California's public schools, youth are becoming victims of criminalization under the banner of promoting school and community safety. Increasingly, urban schools function as an extension of the criminal justice system and educational goals are subordinate to law enforcement priorities. This study will analyze the controversial policy of civil gang injunctions and the implications on the culture of schools. In addition, this study will provide a model for statewide policymakers regarding the interdependent relationship between crime containment policy and school safety efforts.

**Maria Ledesma**

**UCLA, Education**

*Higher Education as a Political Act: Waging the Battle Against Fictive Meritocracy*

Policy making in K-20 is often influenced by factors outside the realm of education. The language employed in public discourse to frame issues of educational opportunity also influences how policy is crafted and implemented. This fact coupled with ongoing debates around who deserves to gain entry into selective institutions of higher education, as well as enduring concerns about the use of race-conscious admissions policies have made college access and admissions a political act for many Students of Color. As more students apply for graduate and undergraduate admittance, race-conscious admissions practices aimed at equalizing the historic under-representation of Students of Color in higher education are increasingly scrutinized and attacked. The purpose of this dissertation then is to explore how critics and supporters of race-conscious admissions policies in the University of Michigan's 2003 affirmative action cases addressed, or failed to address, prevailing patterns of schooling inequality and disparities in access to higher education and what this means for California and the nation.

**Anysia Mayer**

**UCD, Education**

*Interrupting social reproduction: An International Baccalaureate program in a diverse urban high school*

My dissertation research will examine the development and outcomes of a high quality academic program, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB), in two contrasting schools. One school serves a community that is relatively disadvantaged according to a wide range of social and economic indicators. The other school serves a community at the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum. This study seeks to determine if an IB program established in a low performing school provide the same kinds of educational opportunities to students as an IB program in a high performing school. And to identify the relative importance of both SES and program design in shaping the educational futures of diverse students. Our understanding of these issues bear directly on one of the most critical social and educational dilemmas of our times: educational inequality, manifested in this case in college-going rates.

**Elvia Ramirez**

**UCR, Sociology**

*Navigating Through Highly Unequal Terrain: Latinos and Latinas in Graduate Education*

This study will investigate how University of California policies, as well as inequalities embedded in the

graduate schooling process itself, impact the educational trajectories of Latino/a doctoral students. Research suggests that recent policies enacted by the University of California system, including budget cuts, narrowing of admissions criteria, and increases in student fees, threaten the academic presence of Latinos/as and other historically underrepresented students at the undergraduate level. Less concern and research, however, has focused on how these and other University of California policies also impact Latinos/as at the doctoral level. This dissertation will examine how University of California policies, as well as race, class, and gender inequities embedded in the graduate schooling process, impact Latinos/as' access to, and experiences in, doctoral degree programs in the University of California system.

**Michelle Renee**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Using Research to Make a Difference: How community organizations use research as a tool for advancing equity-focused education policy*

The increasing activism of grassroots organizations representing low-income communities and communities of color in education reform has been little studied, either by education researchers or sociologists of social movements. Yet, this activism is significant, given the failure of traditional educational reform strategies to realize more equitable schooling. This study examines one aspect of this new form of change: how equity-focused organizations define, value, access and use research in their efforts to advance educational equity. As educational discourses become increasingly "scientific," community organizations and social movements must rely on research knowledge to advance equity agendas. Using mixed methods, I examine through the lenses of social movement theory, studies of equity reform in education, and research utilization in policymaking, how organizations use research, like the kind of research produced by ACCORD scholars, to positively impact critical equity issues, critical college going conditions and critical transitions in the lives of underrepresented students.

**Michael J. Strambler**  
**UCB, Psychology**

*Academic Identification among Ethnic Minority Elementary School Children: Developmental and School Contextual Factors*

Despite a large body of research on the achievement gap, disparities between ethnic minorities and whites continues to be one of the largest and most important problems of this society. Researchers have examined issues related to the gap ranging from biological, cultural, familial, and social factors. Academic identification, or how much one values and bases one's self-esteem on academic performance, is one such factor that has been explored in explaining the achievement gap. While there is some evidence that African American and Latino students are less academically identified than whites, there remains much to be understood about the developmental and context-specific factors that contribute to such differences. Also, few studies have examined academic identification within an ethnic minority population. My study aims to shed new light on developmental and environmental processes related to academic identification in the context of a high-poverty, predominantly ethnic minority elementary school. Specifically, from the perspective of students, I examine how classroom learning conditions (i.e. teacher expectations, student-teacher relationships, academic press), school culture (sense of community), and beliefs about the benefits of education relate to academic identification and gains in achievement. Developmentally, I examine the degree and process of academic identification across grade levels while exploring factors associated with ethnic (African American and Latino) and gender differences.

**Erica K. Yamamura**

**UCLA, Education**

*Moving from College Access to Educational Equity: Peer Social Capital in a University Outreach Program*

With continuing challenges in access to higher education for urban minority students, looking in-depth at outreach programs is imperative in this time of fiscal uncertainty in California. Increased accountability to policymakers with decreased funding necessitates identifying outreach outcomes that not only facilitate college-going but also translate into college success. This study aims to uncover the long-term effects of a university outreach program by linking its effectiveness from acceptance to college alone (college access) to adjustment and persistence in the college years (college equity). Building on a pilot study that identified peer social capital as a salient resource in students' college application processes, this study will continue to examine the influence of outreach peers on students' transition to college and first-year experience. Informed by theories of social capital and critical race theory, interviews with outreach students and document analyses of the outreach program will be conducted.

**2006**

**Roberta Espinoza**

**UCB, Sociology**

*Educational Pivotal Moments: Overcoming Class and Ethnic Disadvantage in Women's Access to Higher Education.*

This study examines the ways in which Latina, African American, and White female doctoral candidates organize their social support networks in graduate school, with an emphasis on the importance of “pivotal moments.” Pivotal moments are times when students first have access to educational social capital via an intensive academic social support network that launches them in a trajectory of educational advancement. Drawing from 50 open-ended interviews and using a social capital theoretical perspective, this study explores the timing of pivotal moments in predicting educational success in higher education. The data indicate that women who experience ‘early’ pivotal moments have broader support networks, more fellowships, grants, and conference presentations while women who experience ‘late’ pivotal moments have small support networks, fewer fellowships, grants, and conference presentations. Thus, pivotal moments have important policy implications for minority women’s access to and success in higher education.

**Jevon Hunter**

**UCLA, Education**

*The Social Organization of Academic Literacy Within and Across Middle School Contexts*

This dissertation study employs a sociocultural theoretical framework and an interpretative case study approach to understand how MESA, a University of California sponsored academic enrichment program, fosters academic literacy. A sample of ten seventh grade students and their teacher are followed in two settings, MESA and a language arts classroom, to examine the features that are associated with and contribute to the social organization of academic literacy learning within and across multiple contexts. Of central importance to this research is how the various learning contexts, and the features within, mediate the acquisition of academic discourses and literacies.

**Jolena James-Szanton**

**UCLA, Education**

*Examining the Social Networks of High-Achieving Black Adolescents*

Educators debate how Black students’ social networks and ethnic values relate to their academic performance. The literature often focuses on low-achieving students; however, high-achieving Black students’ social welfare is often overlooked in this debate. The tendency to overlook this group may result from educators’ assumptions that since high-achieving Black students do not have academic dilemmas, they must not have social ones. This dissertation will examine (a) where achieving Black students are located in a school’s social network, (b) what factors characterize achieving Black students’ friendships, and (c) how location in their school’s network and the characterization of their friends impacts achieving Black students levels of depression, loneliness, and self-worth. Employing social network methodology and hierarchical linear modeling, the research analyzes the relationships among the values and attitudes of high-achieving Black students their friends and determines what factors of the achieving students’ networks influence their psychosocial adjustment.

**Eva Ritter**  
**UCR, Education**

*Enlisting Minority Students into Science Research: Federal Policy, Science Curriculum, and Minority Underrepresentation in the Sciences*

Despite three decades of federal efforts to equalize ethnic/racial representation in the sciences, college enrollment and graduation statistics show that, other than Asian Americans, all major minority groups continue to be severely underrepresented in science and science education. Few studies illuminate why these efforts have not significantly increased representation of minority groups. This dissertation seeks to address one facet of this knowledge gap. Through an ethnographic case study, this research examines the intended and unintended consequences of a major federal program designed to facilitate underrepresented minority students' transition from undergraduate to graduate school in order for them to become research scientists. In particular, this dissertation will investigate: the role of federal minority programs in the undergraduate science context; the life and conditions for underrepresented minority students in college science; and, the policy implications of recruiting and retaining underrepresented minority students in the sciences.

**Erendira Rueda**  
**UCB, Sociology**

*Navigating School Transitions: Trajectories of Academic Engagement Among Children from Low-Income Mexican Immigrant Families.*

Many students experience negative outcomes following school transitions, such as declines in attendance, grades, attitudes toward learning, and classroom engagement. These patterns are particularly prominent among students from working class, urban, linguistic and/or racial/ethnic minority backgrounds. This study explores how children from low-income, Mexican immigrant families navigate the transition from elementary to middle school and highlights the ways in which school culture, racial demographics, institutional practices, and student-teacher relations affect student academic trajectories. A significant body of research suggests that students from different social and cultural backgrounds experience and perceive schooling in vastly different ways and emphasizes the social-cultural orientations that students bring to school are the most important factors affecting student engagement. This study seeks to counter the overemphasis of the influences of race, class, gender, family, and social experiences outside of school in order to bring to light the power schools and educators have to affect students' schooling experiences and academic engagement.

**Veronica Santelices**  
**UCB Education**

*Differential Item Functioning in the SAT Reasoning Test*

This research explores allegations of unfair SAT results for African American and other minority students, which would inaccurately limit college opportunities for disadvantaged students. My dissertation research revolves around the psychometric definition of unfair treatment (differential item functioning or DIF) and its effects on the SAT results for African American and Hispanic students. DIF is investigated using two different methodological approaches: a classical test theory approach and an item response theory approach. This research also helps to judge the merits of an alternative measure of academic preparation for minority students based on some of the more difficult SAT questions. The alternative measure will be judged by its capacity to predict minorities' performance in college and its predictive capacity analyzed in the context of other measures traditionally used for this purpose.

**Jessica Singer**  
**UCSB, Education**

*Literacy Sponsorship and First Generation Latino College Writers*

There is great need for educators and researchers to understand the kinds of classroom experiences that Latino students encounter in K-College that reinforce their literacy growth. This dissertation is a retrospective interview study of ten Latino college students and the factors that led their college professors to judge them as outstanding writers. The participants have made it past various social and academic barriers to attend and succeed in a prestigious four-year university. All of the students come from low-income families with little or no formal education in high poverty communities, and spoke no English at the time of entrance to school. This research will contribute to the diversity of literacy studies by providing concrete examples of the interactions and processes that mentors use to assist Latino students develop superior writing skills. Findings yielded from this dissertation may have significant implications for writing instruction and interventions for Latino students in K-College classrooms.

## 2007

**Lauren Anderson**

**UCLA, Education**

*Opportunities to Teach, Grow and Transform: Exploring the Relationship Among School Conditions, Teachers' Social Networks, and Teachers' Careers*

High school reform and teacher development/retention are two pressing issues in urban education. This study explores the relationship among school conditions, teachers' social networks, and teacher development/retention in the context of a secondary reform—the creation of small, autonomous high schools—that is part of both a community-backed effort to improve educational opportunities for local, predominantly Latino students and a national trend among urban school districts. The mixed methods research design includes a social network survey administered to roughly 100 teachers at the large, comprehensive urban high school undergoing reform and longitudinal case studies that chronicle four of those teachers' experiences as they move across school contexts and work to expand opportunities to teach and learn for themselves and their students. Thus, this study seeks to yield findings that will inform ongoing reform efforts and extend existing research concerning the role of social relations in supporting teacher development/retention and urban high school reform.

**Grace Chiu**

**UCLA, Education**

*Peer Support Networks Among Urban Youth in Community Technology Centers*

Most education research on social capital has either focused on the social resources adults and teachers bring into schools, or the negative peer networks—namely gangs—among youth living in poor, urban conditions. Little attention has been paid on positive peer networks that form outside schools in the context of informal learning settings. The focus of my research is to investigate what a peer social network is: whether they exist among urban youth in informal learning environments, the attributes of such networks, and the role different aspects of a sociocultural constructionist learning model potentially plays in the development of these networks. Drawing from social capital, social network, and sociocultural constructionist theories, I have collected quantified network survey data, participant observations, and in-depth case studies from after-school, Community Technology Centers. Through this work, I hope to shed further light on the study of after-school pedagogy and its connection to the building and nurturing of college-bound urban youth.

**Luciana Dar**

**UCLA, Political Science**

*The Politics of Higher Education Spending in the American States*

Identifying policies that promote student access is at the core of higher education scholarship. However, little has been done to understand the political process through which these policies develop. My dissertation addresses the following questions: Why does the level and type of government support for higher education vary so much across states and over time? Does politics matter or is this variation just a by-product of the economic business cycle? How do political-economic trends affect states' ability to make a university education possible for all? Given that the reasons for states supporting higher education go beyond individual economic returns then investigating how and how much states invest in higher education may provide clues to the specific political-economic dynamics driving higher education policy. My dissertation sheds light on this process by investigating differences in spending patterns across 48 states from 1976 to 2002, in combination with a case study of California.

**Alice Ho**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Adjustment and Achievement of Ethnically Diverse, Urban Adolescents across the Transition to High School*

Existing transition research indicates that academic achievement and engagement significantly decline as students move from middle school to high school. Little is known, however, about why the decline occurs, the role of school structure, and whether the pattern might be different for particular ethnic groups. With an ethnically-diverse, urban sample, this study examines (1) ethnic identity development, perceptions of educational barriers and school interracial climate, and academic achievement and engagement longitudinally across the critical transition to high school, (2) the effects of school context, and (3) how different patterns of student experiences predict distal educational outcomes such as academic achievement and engagement at the end of 10th grade. Utilizing piecewise growth modeling and piecewise growth mixture modeling, I will analyze individual student change across the transition from middle to high school, identify groups of students with similar experiences in each phase, and use these groups to predict distal academic outcomes.

**Melanie Toshiye Jones**  
**UCD, Sociology**

*Educational Advantages: Race, Class, and Teacher-Student Relationships*

Past research emphasizes the importance of teachers in motivating students in school, especially African American students. However, we know little about why or how teacher-student relationships help students gain educational advantages or additional support from teachers. We also do not know how race and social class facilitate or impede teacher-student relationships or how students benefit from such relationships. This dissertation uses ethnographic methods, interviews, and observations at a public high school in California with a substantial African American population and diversity in social class to examine how race and social class shape relationships between African American students and their teachers. This project also investigates how teacher-student relationships help students gain increased support in planning course schedules and preparing for higher education. In doing so, this project will highlight the specific roles teachers play in reinforcing or moderating the relationship between social class and preparation for college among African American students.

**Martha A. Rivas**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Navegando Contra La Corriente: Understanding the Chicana Transfer Experience from Community College to the Doctorate*

Chicana/o students who pursue a postsecondary education are often concentrated at the community college segment. Although most of these students aspire to transfer into four-year institutions, their consistently low transfer rates indicate the lack of access to transfer opportunities. However, the U.S. Chicana/o doctorate production rates between 1990 and 2000 indicate that one out of four doctorate recipients first attended a community college (Solorzano, Rivas, & Velez, 2005). Nonetheless, the experiences of community college transfer students through every segment of postsecondary education continue to be underresearched. Using critical race theory and Chicana feminist epistemology, this retrospective study subscribes to Testimonios as the primary qualitative method. Ten Chicana students in their second or third year of doctoral training at UCLA participated in a 3-part series of Testimonios. A fourth meeting, focus group, served as the “member check” data analysis of the findings. This study seeks to develop a theory and initiate a discussion on how the role of racism, sexism, and other forms of subordinations may affect



the Chicana transfer experience at every segment of postsecondary education.

**Michelle Samura**  
**UCSB, Education**

*Architecture of Diversity: Dilemmas of Race and Space for Asian American Students in Higher Education*

Significant increases in Asian American college enrollment have created a veil of success often concealing a variety of tensions and dilemmas that many Asian American college students wrestle with—dilemmas that stem from their achievement, on the one hand, and their inability to escape processes of racialization on the other. By highlighting the multiple salience of higher education for Asian Americans, this study aims to examine how Asian American students work to understand, negotiate, and contest their racial identities given their fluctuating status within the larger US racial system. Bringing together three distinct and usually separate perspectives to frame this project—symbolic interactionism, group position model, and spatial analysis—this study gathers data from a large public university in the form of in-depth interviews, surveys, ethnographic observations, and cognitive mapping in order to: 1) examine how Asian Americans college students navigate through physical and social spaces; and 2) explore what it means to be Asian American in spaces where inclusion and mobility, while highly sought after, remain problematic.

**Rosaura Tafoya-Estrada**  
**UCI, Sociology**

*Multi-Generational Educational Trajectories of the Mexican-Origin Population*

This study examines the different pathways of educational mobility undertaken by descendants of immigrants in pursuit of upward mobility. Specifically, how 1.5, second and third generation Mexican descendants make decisions about family, housing/neighborhood and work responsibilities that affect educational mobility? By comparing the experiences of men and women across the generations, documentation of individuals' lived experiences will help discern specific trade-offs and constraints affecting each generation. The study will draw from the Intergenerational Immigrant Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) project that covers more than four generations of persons of Mexican-origin. Based on a total of 100 in-depth interviews and utilizing immigrant incorporation theory, the project examines at what point and under what conditions, Mexican-Americans alter, delay or enhance their educational trajectories. This research will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on multi-generational educational attainment focusing on the intersection of race/ethnicity, class and gender.

**Elizabeth Vazquez**  
**UCLA, Education**

*We're Back: The Emerging Importance of Suspension, Expulsion and Student Reentry*

This study looks at how low-income students of color make a critical transition back into the learning environment and the types of critical conditions necessary to facilitate successful student reentry. Existing research on school discipline provides compelling information about the overrepresentation of low-income students of color in unprecedented suspension and expulsion rates. More recently, scholars have pointed to discipline incidents as a potential factor in the dropping out process. Learning and understanding how students make sense of removal from school, why they return to school and what the reentry process means to them is at the heart of this study. While these questions remain understudied and often overlooked, they are telling of a crisis that plagues school systems nationwide. Students' interpretations can shed light on the complexity of expulsion and suspension and possible interventions that might aid such students' reentry into schooling and prevent them from dropping out in the future.

**2008**

**Arshad Ali**

**UCLA, Education**

*The 'Other' at Home: The Construction of the Label 'Muslim' as an Emergent Racial Signifier*

Through this study I ask how this racialization process of Muslim college students in Southern California is occurring. I will engage this research through a mixed methods study employing analysis of two preexisting data sets and the collection of interview and focus group data from Muslim college students on three campuses in Southern California. To explore the questions within my study I utilize a theoretical approach drawing from multiple traditions to construct a more complex picture of Muslim college students. I utilize aspects of socio-cultural learning theory, critical race theories, post-colonialism and critical pedagogies. This project addresses questions including: how do Muslim college students characterize the U.S. culture's representations of the 'Muslim' in the post-9/11 period; how do Muslim college students construct their own racial/racialized identities, and how are these racialized characterizations and identities reflected in the daily lives of Muslim college students?

**Gabino Arredondo**

**UCB, Education**

*A Social Justice High School: The Construction and Socialization of a College Going Culture*

With many urban schools that primarily serve diverse students being designated as low performing it becomes paramount to examine how the day-to-day conditions at these schools impact minority students' preparedness, eligibility, and competitiveness for college admission. The proposed dissertation reports on a three and a half year ethnographic study that follows the establishment and eventual closure of one such small school, Panther High School, in Oakland, CA. The study focuses on the creation, co-construction, and socialization of college going identities among Latina/o and African American students. The dissertation examines these processes primarily by looking at language use, literacy practices, and critical discourses of academic achievement in the lived experiences of these students in their school and neighborhood communities. A close examination of these processes offers insight to researchers, educators, policy makers, and community organizers on the critical conditions and transitions of these underrepresented youth in pursuing a higher education.

**Gabriel Baca**

**UCLA, Education**

*Education Organizing, Policy Advocacy and the Accountability Gap: How Activist Organizations Leverage Power for Advancing Equity-Focused Education Policy for English Learners in a Post-Proposition 227 Era*

Education organizing has increasingly been seen as a significant alternative, given the failure of traditional educational reform strategies, to realize more equitable schooling for students learning English in under-resourced communities. Dozens of organizing groups have entered the field of education reform in the last decade, helping to change the landscape of education politics in powerful ways. In the Southwest, many of these groups hope to remedy the deplorable state of education for English learners, as evidenced by high drop-out rates and poor test scores, and in light of the onerous effects of an accountability system that positions English as the superior and legitimate language to be learned in school. This activism around education has been examined very infrequently either by scholars in education or by scholars of social movements. Moreover, almost nothing is known about how these groups grapple with, make sense of, and ultimately take action around English learner issues. This study begins to fill this gap. Using a blended

conceptual framework which draws from studies of equity reform in education, scholarship on education organizing and social movement theory, and using a comparative case study design, this study documents how activist groups use a variety of tools, some grounded in knowledge production and others grounded in political interaction, to advocate for English learners and hold the system accountable for their learning opportunities and outcomes. Specifically, the study examines how four different activist organizations leverage power through social movement activism for equity-focused education policy for English learners. By situating the study within the context of NCLB implementation in California, attention can be given to the complex processes through which education organizing, policy advocacy and restrictive language policies intersect.

**Dafney Blanca Dabach**

**UCB, Education**

*Teachers as a Context of Reception for Immigrant Language Minority Youth: Adaptations in 'Sheltered' and 'Mainstream' Classrooms*

This dissertation investigates how secondary teachers of immigrant students who are not fluent in English understand and enacts their practice within a system of specialized instruction called “sheltered instruction” (or SDAIE). In this qualitative study, 20 teachers of immigrant language learners who teach both sheltered and mainstream courses in social studies, math and science are being interviewed in order to determine how their curriculum and instruction vary in each. This design is unique as it follows teachers across different instructional contexts to capture their potential adaptations. Two-four case study teachers will be selected for observations and additional interviews in order to understand how explanatory variables (institutional constraints, teacher disposition, and teacher repertoire) map out in teachers’ classrooms. Understanding the process by which teachers respond and adapt to their immigrant language learners is of critical importance with direct links to the critical conditions necessary for providing college opportunities for underrepresented students.

**Lindsay Huber Perez**

**UCLA, Education**

*Suenos Indocumentados: The Educational Experiences of Undocumented Chicana College Students at a Public California Research University*

Utilizing a LatCrit framework, this study seeks to understand how the critical issues of race, immigration status, gender, and class mediate the educational trajectories of undocumented Chicana students at a four-year public research university. This study also identified the critical conditions they have utilized to navigate higher education. A total of 40 interviews will be conducted with undocumented and U.S. born Chicana students to explore how the college experiences of undocumented and U.S. born students vary. In addition, I will conduct 2 focus groups where these experiences will be further discussed and data collaboration will take place. I provide policy recommendations for institutions of higher education, as well as state and federal legislation that will create greater educational opportunity for this student population.

**Season Mussey**

**UCSD, Education**

*Negotiating Identities: Student Perspectives and Strategies for Striving in and Surviving the Undergraduate STEM Experience*

Females and minority students are underrepresented in STEM careers and majors. Using a mixed methods

design, this study aims to investigate and understand what strategies and behaviors first generation, low income, underrepresented minority (URM) females who graduated from an innovative college preparatory high school use to achieve success within the context of the university science culture and to understand how they perceive their academic and science identity formation within the context of a large public university. The main research questions are: In what ways does completion of a rigorous, personalized high school program with the critical conditions for enhancing college opportunities for minorities influence both the academic and social-cultural college science experiences for first generation, low income, minority students at large public universities? How are students developing their multi-cultural college-going academic identities in the context of university science classes and cultures?

**Vanessa Ochoa**  
**UCLA, Education**

*A Case Study Portrait of an Effective High School Counseling Program and its Impact on Latina/o Student Academic Preparation and the College Choice Process*

Research highlights that Latina/o high school student's experience difficulty in their attempts to enter post-secondary education. In certain instances, Latina/o students attend high schools where they do not receive appropriate counseling to assist in their academic preparation and college choice process. This dissertation project entitled: A Case Study Portrait of an Effective High School Counseling Program and its Impact on Latina/o Student Academic Preparation and the College Choice Process paints a portrait of two Counselors of Color and their tactics and motivation for assuring that Latina/o high school students are well informed in the college-choice process. Moreover, the counselor's ability to motivate, energize and engage their Latina/o students allows them to promote a strong college-going attitude for their students. Thus, this project provides depth to an issue that is rarely discussed in educational research: Latina/o students, their college choice process and the role of effective high school Counselor of Color.

**Rema Reynolds**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Holla If You Hear Me; Giving Voice to Those We've Missed: A Qualitative Examination of Black Middle Class Parent Engagement in Public Secondary Schools*

In the United States, persistent educational inequities have resulted in dramatic contrasts in both economic and social opportunities for students of color in the public school system. Researchers find that parent involvement is associated with a greater likelihood of aspiring to attend college and actually enrolling, as well as with higher grades, higher eighth grade mathematics and reading achievement, lower rates of behavioral problems, and lower likelihood of high school dropout and truancy. Merging a Critical Race Theory Framework with The Ecologies of Parent Engagement, I explore notions of agency, authorship, and space as they relate to parent engagement, seek to discover parents' beliefs about their engagement, and develop a holistic picture of parent-school relationships. How do race and class intersect to influence parent engagement? Counter storytelling through interviews and a focus group as a qualitative methodological tool allows parents' lived experiences to be the central focus of this study.

**Veronica Terriquez**  
**UCLA, Sociology**

*Latino Parental School Involvement in Los Angeles County: Opportunities and Challenges*

Latino parental school engagement has important implications for addressing disparities in student outcomes and increasing the accountability of schools to the Latino communities that they serve. Yet

research on parental school involvement has not adequately accounted for variations in Latino parental school involvement, especially among immigrant working mothers and fathers. Using an immigrant incorporation theoretical framework to guide my analysis, I examine how race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, immigrant background characteristics, parental employment, and school conditions are related to Latino parental school participation. I also investigate how parents, gender, work schedules, labor union participation, and access to labor union resources influence their engagement in children, schools. My study uses data from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey, as well as survey and qualitative data gathered from the Los Angeles County membership of the Service Employees International Union Local 1877.

**Veronica Velez**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Del Coraje a la Esperanza (From Rage to Hope): Transformation, Empowerment, and Collective Agency Among Latina/o Immigrant Parents*

This qualitative case study seeks to understand how members of ALIANZA, a Latina/o immigrant parent group, come to see themselves as agents of change and organize collectively as a result. Utilizing a LatCrit framework, this study contends that educational research erroneously characterizes Latina/o parents as disinvested in the education of their children. A more critical analysis reveals that these characterizations operate from normalized standards of what it means to be a "good" parent that fail to acknowledge the participation of Latina/o parents as well as the barriers they face within schools. Moreover, a LatCrit analysis reveals that traditional notions of civic engagement render invisible the political efforts of non-citizens, like those in ALIANZA. This study argues that ALIANZA could inform research and practice about how to build school-community partnerships in Latina/o communities, as well as how parent involvement and civic engagement intersect in campaigns for social justice on behalf of Latina/o immigrant parents. To examine notions of consciousness and collective action, this study uses a Freirean pedagogical perspective that broadly guides its main inquiry. Data from this study are collected from semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and organizational archives.

## 2009

**L. Esthela Bañuelos**

**UCSC, Sociology**

*(Re) Producing Difference: Academic Cultures and the Making of “Women of Color” PhDs*

This study examines the social relations intersecting everyday experiences of racialized women Ph.D. students and the academic cultures in which they participate in order to gain insights into knowledge formation processes and racial/ethnic identity formations at the graduate level. This study seeks to understand the experiences of graduate students from a comparative lens, with racialized women the primary analytic focus. Research was conducted at the University of California Berkeley and consisted of a survey that yielded 171 respondents and in-depth interviews of 51 participants (30 core interviews of racialized women and 21 comparative interviews of men of color, white women, and white men). I argue that the complex positioning of racialized women in the academy has important theoretical implications for the study of knowledge formations that has to date, been largely overlooked. Through identifying ‘best practices’ that can have an impact on diversity and representation, the policy contributions of this project may ultimately benefit all students.

**Shiv Desai**

**UCLA, Education**

*Emancipate yourself from mental slavery / None but ourselves can free our minds: Spoken word as site/sight of resistance, reflection and rediscovery*

Throughout the nation, urban high schools are experiencing a “silent epidemic” where half of all minority youth drop out of high school. In addition, these youth are increasingly being incarcerated at disproportional rates (Orfield, 2004). Thus, this proposal provides a concrete example of implementing the critical conditions needed to enhance college opportunities for underrepresented youth as identified by UC ACCORD. By providing a three-year qualitative account of a spoken word classroom, I will illustrate how the class fostered a safe learning environment, provided a rigorous academic curriculum and created a college-going culture. In addition, I demonstrate how creating a student-centered curriculum that privileges “urban youth realities” allows teachers and students to critically analyze key issues affecting the lives of urban youth such as gangs, violence, immigration and education. Moreover, this study discusses how alternative forms of literacies can enable urban youth to develop a multi-cultural college-going identity (Oakes, 2003).

**Nicole Hidalgo**

**UCSC, Education**

*When Stepping to College is Stepping to Consciousness: Cultivating Transformational Resistance in an Urban High School Classroom*

This presentation explores the curricular and pedagogical processes involved in cultivating transformative forms of youth resistance in an urban high school classroom, the interweaving influences in the students’ lives, and the impacts of transformative classroom practices on youth’s academic achievement, college going, and social justice sensibilities. I draw from a two-year critical ethnography of the East Oakland Step to College program (STC), which prepares underserved African American and Latina/o youth to enroll in four-year universities, and nurtures students’ motivations to foment positive social change. Findings revealed that the STC students were highly engaged and self-disciplined in STC class, and resisted inequities in transformative ways such as engaging in public intelligence, protest marches, public testimonies, and critical college going. Using the analytical frameworks of college access, youth

resistance, and critical, culturally relevant pedagogies, this presentation illuminates the complexities of youth resistance and the powerful role of classroom teachers as transformational mentors.

**John Johnson**  
**UCSB, Psychology**

*The Contextual Functionality of Black Student Unions: An Ecological Systems Analysis of Institutional Resources Contributing to Black Student Retention*

Black Student Unions (BSUs) in higher education contribute to the flow of ethnic minority students through the education pipeline via student-initiated recruitment and retention efforts. BSUs also offer underrepresented students a medium for campus involvement and leadership development. However, BSUs in higher education are beset by a variety of complexities and complications that correspond with their contextual conditions, not the least of which is the unavoidable instability of their membership. The current study involves a mixed-method analysis of four BSUs in the California higher education system examining the internal and external networks of these student organizations and testing the effectiveness of an ecological systems approach to assessing organization-context congruity. Preliminary results suggest that practices that extend or stabilize member composition contribute to organization development and success and that ecological system conditions and resources impact organization effectiveness. For BSUs in higher education, context is likely more important than member composition.

**Maria Malagon**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Trenches Under the Pipeline: The Educational Trajectories of Chicano Male Continuation High School Student*

This study examines the educational trajectories of 11 Chicano male high school students in a California continuation school. Chicana Feminist Epistemological and Latina/o Critical Race frameworks are utilized to reveal how Chicano male continuation students come to understand their experiences as they access, persist, and resist schooling institutions. Theories of reproduction and resistance additionally provide for a theoretical exploration of Chicano racialized masculinities in educational discourse and practice. Data is collected from participant observation at a continuation school site, along with 22 oral history interviews and one focus group interview. The research and policy goals of this dissertation seeks to 1) subvert dominant paradigms in education discourse that reproduces deficit knowledge about non-dominant communities, 2) move towards epistemological approaches that can examine the multiple and intersecting constructions of race, class, gender, sexuality and other forms of domination, and 3) offer policy recommendations that can help researchers and practitioners improve the quality of instructional practices within remedial educational spaces.

**Denise Pacheco**  
**UCLA, Education**

*From Pedagogy to Art: The Role of the Teacher-Poet in Apprenticing Young Poets*

This dissertation uses qualitative methods to investigate the pedagogy, learning and student participation in a creative writing intervention. “The Writing Out Loud Project” introduced a class of fifth graders to college level texts, literary analysis, and poetry writing. Guided by Xicana feminism and critical pedagogy this study argues that poetry writing is useful for bringing institutional recognition to students’ articulation of voice. By federal standards these students, urban English Learners, are in need of standardized curriculum and instruction. This dissertation counters this assumption, arguing that poetry writing allows

students to practice meaningful ways of using language to develop complex forms of thinking and voice. Through the teaching of poetry writing as a *cultural process* as opposed to isolated skills, students were encouraged to take on the identity of a poet. This study contributes to an understanding of the teaching practices and curricula necessary for meeting the academic needs of urban students.

**Shirin Vossoughi**

**UCLA, Education**

*Streaching Towards the Possible: A Qualitative Case Study of Literacy and Learning in the Migrant Program*

Migrant students comprise one of the most educationally underserved populations in the United States. In the Migrant Program (MSLI), an educational intervention designed to provide a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, high school age migrant students became successful participants in university level reading, writing and social analysis, moving on to matriculate in four year institutions in striking numbers. Through a qualitative case study of one classroom for which I was the primary instructor, this dissertation draws on Freirean and Vygotskian traditions to analyze the specific pedagogical practices that constitute MSLI as an effective intervention. Through micro-ethnographic analysis of classroom discourse and students' expanding participation in university level literacy practices, I look closely at the role of mediation in literacy learning, arguing for the developmental affordances of a deeply collective model of apprenticeship. This study contributes to a growing set of scholarly-pedagogical efforts aimed at transforming literacy education for non-dominant students.



## 2010

**Brianne Davila**

**UCSB, Women's Studies**

*Negotiating "Special" Identities: Structure and Agency in Special Education*

This study is a qualitative exploration and analysis of Latina/o student experiences in special education, specifically in the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) in an urban high school located in Southern California. Using an ethnographic approach, observations, in-depth interviews (with students, parents and teachers) and educational case studies are analyzed in order to determine the role of educational experiences and student interactions in shaping student identity, academic performance and motivation. I focus on the role of schools as social institutions, and teaching and learning as cultural practices in order to understand their role in the production of racially gendered identities for Latina/o students enrolled in special education. This research contributes to the sociological and educational literature that seeks to challenge deficit notions traditionally attributed to the educational outcomes of Latina/o students and expose the way social institutions and interactions shape the life opportunities of Latina/o students enrolled in special education.

**Terry Flennaugh**

**UCLA, Education**

*Mapping Academic Self-Concept: A Mixed-Method Approach to Understanding Academic Self-Concept among Black Males in Urban Schools*

The Schott Foundation for Education issued a national report card in 2008 revealing that during the 2005-2006 academic year 47% of African American males did not receive diplomas with their classmates after four years of high school. A major component of this problem is what some researchers have referred to as the development of Black adolescents' academic identity or academic self-concept (Welch & Hodges, 1997). This study explores academic self-concept among high and low-performing Black males in urban schools through the use identity maps, surveys and interviews. A variety of factors are considered within this study such as the role peers, family, parents, teachers, school staff, school activities, popular culture and community play in the composition of academic self-concept. Further understanding of these identification processes can heavily impact models for counseling, pedagogy, and theories surrounding achievement for Black males.

**Megan Hopkins**

**UCLA, Education**

*Drawing on Our Assets: A Study of the Unique Contributions of Bilingual Teachers*

This study examines the unique contributions that bilingual teachers make to the education of English learners (ELs) and the extent to which these contributions are mediated by the policy context. Assessing bilingual teachers' contributions, or the assets and skills that translate into pedagogical and other teaching practices, is especially relevant due to the continuing underachievement of ELs, who comprise one of the fastest growing student populations in the country, and to the decreasing numbers of teachers pursuing bilingual credentials in states with English-only policies. A small body of research suggests that bilingual teachers are best suited to work with ELs, inferring that the loss of bilingual teachers is negatively impacting EL outcomes. Using a mixed methods approach, this study will provide the first broad-scale examination of the practices of teachers of ELs and assess the impact of policies that precipitate declines in the number of teachers pursuing bilingual credentials.

**Mei-Ling Malone**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Over-Incarcerated and Undereducated: Examining the Rise of the School-to Prison Pipeline for Blacks and Latinos in California*

The prison system and the education system are separate institutions with distinct purposes. Despite the stark differences, research, reports and the emerging “school-to-prison pipeline” field demonstrate that these two institutions co-construct each other and have formed a problematic relationship that disproportionately impacts African Americans and Latinos nationwide and in California especially. In efforts to investigate this problem, a deeper understanding of how a school-to-prison pipeline develops is urgently needed. Thus, this study conducts a comparative analysis, examining the history and relationships of California prisons, incarceration rates, criminal legislation and school discipline policies and practices.

Finally, interviews on student experiences around discipline and school climate will be drawn from individuals who attended one urban high school in Los Angeles from the 1960s to the 2000s.

**Maxine McKinney De Royston**  
**UCB, Education**

*Teaching to the Spirit: Unpacking the ‘Hidden’ curriculum of African centered Education*

African American students' place at the center of discussions about the "achievement gap" and "equity" highlights the lingering salience and pernicious role of race in schools (Hilliard, 2003; Noguera, 2003). Independent Black Institutions (IBIs) have historically utilized comprehensive approaches to combat issues of access and racism in schools by validating students' racial identity and cultural knowledge (Asante, 1991; Mudhabuti & Mudhabuti, 1991), and equipping them with protective factors to cope and combat racism (Boykin & Toms, 1985). To illustrate and analyze this process, this study is situated within a 31 year-old African-centered elementary school with a long history of teaching to the "whole child." Distinct from other IBIs, this school also employs a racially diverse teaching faculty. Using a mixed methods approach, this study examines: 1) what are the pedagogical philosophies and practices within this school that are intended to disrupt racism? That is, what are the critical elements of this schooling environment geared towards disruption; and 2) how does racial socialization occur at this school? Using the principles of African-centered pedagogy (Lee, 2008) and the lens of racial socialization (Boykin & Toms, 1985) as analytical frameworks, this study contributes both to our understanding schooling practices that seek to disrupt racism and of schooling conditions that are designed to empower and foster African American students' success.

**Erica Morales**  
**UCLA, Sociology**

*Class and Black Student Experiences within Higher Education*

Abstract: The study of intra-group differences among Black students has been an overlooked topic within higher education research. Yet these important within-group differences can work to create different experiences at the university for Black students. Utilizing critical social theory and intersectionality frameworks, I examine how class shapes the lives of Black undergraduate students at UCLA. Drawing upon sixty-two, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with Black students, I focus on the experiences of students in three groups: solidly middle-class, lower middle-class and low-income. I analyze how class influences the ways students experience: financial challenges at the university, relationships with their Black peers and access to Black student organizations. This research can inform university policy and programs that can be designed to better support Black students from different class backgrounds as they navigate higher education.

**Gabriela Segade**  
**UCB, Education**

*Making and Not Making Sense: The Development of English Language Proficiency among Immigrant Community College Students*

Large numbers of immigrant students are attending community colleges, where they enroll in English as a second language courses hoping to later transfer to a four-year institution. Statistics indicate that many of these students never accomplish their goal and often languish in ESL classes. This dissertation relies on qualitative research methods, including extensive video and audio recording of classroom activities and student interviews, to examine how students at an urban community college make sense of the language and language practices they encounter in an ESL course. A preliminary analysis suggests that students who previously attended US schools bring with them practices and patterns of course participation that may be detrimental to their language development, and that course activities may encourage those practices. The findings, by informing ESL curricular and pedagogical design, can help create the rigorous programs that are critical to helping students fulfill transfer requirements.

**Daisy Verduzco Reyes**  
**UCI, Sociology**

*Latino Student Politics: Constructing Ethnic Identities in Organizations*

My dissertation examines the process of constructing and expressing identity in Latino student organizations on three different college campuses. Using data obtained through ethnographic observations, 72 in-depth interviews and organizational member surveys, I develop an understanding of 1) how three universities —varying resources, diversity, size, and selectivity ¾ shape the Latino student organizations that emerge on campus; 2) what resources and ways of understanding Latino identities student organizations provide their members; 3) how groups draw boundaries for membership into a Latino group; 4) how groups define a Latino community's concerns; and 5) how Latinos integrated in institutions of higher education identify ethnically-racially. The fundamental goal of this dissertation is to examine the diverse racial-ethnic identity constructions and experiences that emerge in Latino student organizations on a Southern California campus today.

**Fanny P. Yeung**  
**UCLA, Education**

*Legacy of Immigration on Second-generation Immigrant Students in Higher Education*

The Purpose of this dissertation is to explore the college experiences of second-generation immigrants and how immigrant histories and family responsibilities influence their postsecondary experiences. The educational outcomes of second-generation students are highly polarized depending on parents' educational attainment, degree of manual labor required of their parents' occupational positions, and are further polarized by students' academic preparation in under-resourced schools and unfamiliarity with the American educational system. Most research has thus far consolidated first- and second-generation immigrants or has generally focused on first-generation, foreign-born immigrants; overall, little is known about the long-term adaptations of second-generation immigrants in education. Utilizing Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth and an adapted relational accountability framework, this dissertation incorporates three phases of qualitative investigation (semi-structured interviews, photographic documentation, and case studies) with 40 second-generation immigrant college students and selected family members to explore how the family's immigrant experiences influence students' experiences and retention in college.

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