"Son como nuestro mapa hacia el futuro, nuestra guia"

Chicana/Latina High School Students' Perspectives on Chicana/Latina Teachers

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Date: Spring 2008
Series Number: IPSW007-X018-2008

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Abstract

How do Chicana/Latina teachers impact Chicana/Latina high school students' development of ethnic and gender identities? This paper explores the relationships among Chicana/Latina high school students and teachers in an urban setting. It analyzes the social pressures that affect Chicana/Latina students as well as Chicana/Latina educators' role in students' development of personal identities. Data collection was based on three methods—short-answer questionnaires, a group discussion, and one-on-one interviews. The data showed that Chicana/Latina high school students believe that Chicana/Latina educators are important role models and demonstrate authentic care for students. However, students agreed that schools fail to validate their humanity. Instead, students want a culturally relevant curriculum that includes their lived realities. In addition, the data suggested that Chicana/Latina students critically analyze their relationships with African American teachers, while completely disregarding the role of white teachers in their educational experiences.

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Chicana/Latina High School Students’ Perspectives on Chicana/Latina Teachers

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Spring 2008
UCLA Teacher Education Program
Master’s Inquiry Project
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How do Chicana/Latina Teachers Impact Chicana/Latina High School Students’ Development of Ethnic and Gender Identities?

Part I: Inquiry and Rationale

Throughout my formal K-12 educational career in the Los Angeles Unified School District, I do not recall ever being placed in a classroom with a teacher who shared my ethnic and racial background. With thirteen years of schooling behind me, it was not until college that I had my first interaction with a Chicana/o or Latina/o educator. This idea has always intrigued me since I attended public educational institutions that overwhelmingly served underrepresented students and that were located in marginalized urban communities.

I wondered what it would feel like to share a cultural, ethnic, and language background with a teacher. Moreover, as I grew older, became politically involved and developed into a socially conscious woman, I wondered if gender could also play a role in making a difference in my search for identity as a Chicana in urban educational spaces that were not constructed with my best interest in mind.

Now, as I have become one of the six Chicana/Latina teachers at Downs High School[1], I cannot help but wonder how my Chicana/Latina students perceive me and the other Chicana/Latina teachers on campus. Furthermore, I wonder how we influence these students' personal searches for (and development of) cultural identity and gender empowerment.

My interest in this matter reached a climax when a young woman in my ESL 2B class expressed through one of her journal entries that she and other female students thought I was giving preferential treatment to the young men in my classroom. She also went on to explain that, consequently, my class had become boring and their least favorite. "We've noticed that you care more about the boys in the class and barely even pay attention to us, the girls. We feel left out by you," she wrote. Initially, I was dumfounded with her straightforwardness. I never thought that I would ever be accused of proliferating gendered favoritism in my classroom space, one that I had hoped would be equally beneficial and safe for each and every student.

Since then, I have embarked on the journey of self-reflection and analysis. How could I, a Chicana feminist educator, allow this to occur? Through my lived experiences as a woman of color and my educational background in Chicana/o Studies as well as sociology, I have learned that many times women are the protectors of much of the sexism that plagues our communities and enhances its continuous promulgation. This social position has also allowed me to understand that, many times, sexist perspectives are unconsciously accepted by those of us who are most affected by them. I have began to wonder how it is that I can contribute to the solution of this social disease that has

[1] The names of institutions and individuals included in this study have been change to protect their privacy and identities.

invaded our classroom space and that I previously failed to acknowledge. It is clear that I must express my concise goals and expectations by being truthful and honest with my students as I accept my unequal, but unintentional, relationships with the young women in the group. Then, I must commit myself and my practice to a continual cycle of praxis—transformative action and reflection.

As a teacher in a school like Downs High School, I constantly find myself buried in bureaucratic jargon and hypocritical pedagogical rhetoric that only makes an already hectic existence more convoluted. However, it is vital that teachers like me make time to critically analyze our privileged position within the classroom and how it directly affects the students we serve.

It is not unusual to come across counterproductive methodologies in a place like Downs High School, however. This school is located in an underserved section of Los Angeles, California. The neighborhood surrounding the school is enduring a critical gentrification wave that has pushed many of its long-time residents out of their homes and has encouraged the entrance of wealthier families who can afford the skyrocketing housing prices and who chose to matriculate their children in private educational institutions. However, much of the neighborhood is still made up of large tenements that house countless families, many who make use of public assistance and live in huge government subsidized housing projects popularly know as "the jungles." These projects are notorious for violence and heavy drug trafficking. Hence, many of our students derive from unsafe spaces that do not provide security and/or reassurance of their wellbeing.

School demographics show that about 56% of the students are African America/Black and 42% are Chicano/Latino, the majority of them living at or under the

poverty line, according to the attendance office staff. In addition, social ills such as teen pregnancy, gang membership and recruitment, violence, drugs, and staggering push-out rates, plague the community. Moreover, almost 40% of students live in homes without their birth parent(s), including foster placements and group homes. Downs High School, unfortunately, is not an unfamiliar sight in the social landscape of urban schooling in the United States.

Furthermore, a particular sub-group of students is often left neglected—Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. At Downs High School, LEP students make up about 300 out of a grand total of 1,500 students. Often times, LEP students fall through the cracks of the schools' counseling system and end up pushed out of school for good. According to the bilingual coordinator, the number of LEP students who abandon school is so high that it is difficult to keep track of. However, he estimated that the number is upwards of sixty percent.

Living in the shadows of a failing schooling system, LEP students at Downs High school still strive to build community and form support groups. Since I work mostly with LEP students as an ESL teacher, I have come to know these students quickly. I am a fan of their spirit of perseverance and thirst for social and academic success. On many occasions, I have observed genuine demonstrations of caring and support for each other. For example, one morning in October a male student in my ESL 2B class shared with the class that every morning he was being harassed by a group of young males when he walked from the bus stop to school. He, therefore, decided to come late to school to avoid being seen by this group of bullies. Immediately, other students began to demonstrate support for him and denounced what he had to endure every morning. By the end of the

day, to my surprise, the majority of the students had collectively developed a weekly schedule to provide rides for this student to and from school. This kind of action is widely evident in the ELD community. Even if they are faced with daily discriminatory practices and harassment on both, systematic and personal levels, these students bond together by a strong sense of community and love for each other. Not only have LEP students exemplified their support for their peers, but for the adults around them as well. As their teacher, I have come to reciprocate that intense love and caring nature.

However unfortunate, Downs High School houses a culture of academic and social failure that does not support students' necessities and fails to provide them with a holistic education that will prepare them for life after high school. This culture is evident when data from standardized tests, drop out rates, and post high school tracking is analyzed. This data demonstrates that only 11%-13% of the general student population scores proficient on the English portion of the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and that Downs High School has a 48% dropout rate

LEP students, some of the brightest and most diligent students on campus, are often trapped in a never-ending cycle that prevents them from obtaining a high school diploma, attending a college or university, and moving on to a career of their choice. When I survey my classes in the beginning of each semester I repeatedly find that most of my students in ESL 1A and ESL 2B are unaware of the requirements for high school graduation and are not informed that after three years of ESL and a process of re-designation, they must still fulfill four years of mainstream high school English. In addition, LEP students are scheduled into a large number of elective classes that do not allow them to begin working on content graduation courses in math, English, history, and

science subject matter. For example, during a recent ESL department meeting, we discussed various ESL students who are registered for more than one period of "service" instead of being enrolled in academic courses. In "service" classes, students are placed in a class or an administrative office where they are supposed to provide aid to the teacher or overseeing staff. For the most part, however, students end up running errands or sitting in a corner doing nothing for the one hundred and ten minute period. In addition, LEP students are encouraged to attend adult school to fulfill most of their subject matter graduation requirements. Adult school, however, further conflicts with some of my students' familial duties and restricts students' ability to socialize with their peers. Many students have to work twenty to thirty-five hours per week to support their families and are forced to choose between school and the external duties.

The support that Downs High School provides for LEP students does not work. Administrators know it, data supports it and still no tangible plan is put forth to ensure our students attain their long and short-term goals. Downs High School's LEP re-designation rates are almost nonexistent. Students must fulfill three requirements to move into sheltered English courses that count towards high school graduation: Passing each ESL level with a grade of C or better, a proficient or advanced score on the CSTs and a proficient score on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Many LEP students pass their ESL courses with high grades, but remain in ESL 4 and elective courses since they cannot score proficient on the standardized tests. It is important to note, however, that school-wide only 13% of Downs High School students score proficient or advanced on these same standardized examinations. It is even more difficult for LEP students to score proficiently given the lack of cultural relevance evident in these

standardized tests. Ironically, some of the students who meet the requirements to re-designate into the mainstream English track are forced to repeat ESL 4 or are simply not enrolled in an English course because as one counselor bluntly put it, "there is just not enough space."

The young women in my ESL classes, however, have come together to form tight-knit groups that support each other emotionally, socially, and academically. For many female students, these groups function as the primary networks connecting them to their newly attained social positions in a new country. This is where they obtain the bulk of the information necessary to navigate a complex space such as Downs High School. I have noticed that even if ESL levels divide the groups, they still serve the same support purposes. These networks especially benefit the young women who are recent arrivals to this country and are placed in beginning ESL levels. Most of them congregate in my classroom during nutrition and lunch break. Many times I overhear their conversations and have come to notice that they construct strong support circles that supply reciprocal encouragement to be successful academically and otherwise.

In class, I have observed these support systems in action as students who have been in this country for longer periods of time encourage more recent immigrants, explaining unclear subject matter, and providing social comfort. For example, female students encourage young women who are shy and intimidated to speak in class. Whenever students laugh or taunt someone's accent or erroneous pronunciation of words, an outspoken one says, "hey, be quiet! We all started that way. Don't you remember? So, don't laugh!" Even though most of my LEP students participate in these groups, the young women are more straightforward than the young men. The young men follow a

mainstream masculine social construction and are not willing to demonstrate support for each other in public spaces such as the classroom.

In addition to academic and social support, the young women often share with each other cultural traditions that help develop their ethnic identities in the new social spaces that they have encountered in the United States. In class, the young women share anecdotes about their native countries and attempt to find bonding factors amongst their peers. It is not uncommon to have students celebrate each other's birthdays or cultural traditions in my classes. For example, a group of mostly ESL 1A female students has recently asked me if my class can be used as a dance room where they can share and learn the diverse typical dances from their countries as well as practice some of the contemporary dances that inform an ample part of Latina/o popular culture in the United States. Once the dance routines are learned, these young women plan to present their skills to the entire school in an upcoming Latino Heritage assembly. It fills me with joy to observe the acceptance and celebration of difference among these young women.

As much as my classes have become collages of personal and shared histories as well as spaces where support enclaves flourish, however, it is evident that mainstream social notions have also taken root within our shared space. In a time when television and popular media target young women to buy into a socially constructed notion of beauty, I have observed many of the young women in my ESL 1A course grappling with this idea and choose to follow it or not. Many come into class holding magazines in Spanish and English that show photographs of petite, blonde, blue-eyed models that look nothing like them. One particular student in that class, Laura, is a prime example. She possesses the most advanced English language skills in the group and is also the most popular young

woman in the class. She's the one who is physically petite, has many friends in mainstream courses, is the owner of the most expensive technological gadgets, and wears the latest fashion trends to school every day. In addition, Laura has had many boyfriends throughout the school year and even spoke about being sexually active during a class discussion on healthy lifestyles. The majority of the young women in the class are not as "popular" as Laura and do not demand as much attention as Laura from the young men in the class. However, many of them still carry pictures of women who fall into this notion of beauty in their binders and as one of them accepted during a conversation with me, "Laura sets a standard" for them to follow.

On one occasion, I remember asking Elisa, an ESL 1A student, who the women on the cover of her binder were and she answered with a simple "I don't know who they are, but I want to be as skinny as them. I'm just too fat." It turns out she was carrying photos of two of Hollywood's most controversial women, Paris Hilton and Nicole Ritchie. It is important to note, additionally, that the latter has recently been reported as suffering from a sever eating disorder. Furthermore, I found it troubling that in a free-writing exercise, Elisa wrote about how much financial hardship her family faced and that she was thinking about obtaining a job to help her family and "have the nice clothes that the rest of the girls have."

When I compare the young women in my ESL 2B class and the ones in ESL 1A, I realize that the students in the more advanced ESL level have already given into this hegemonic idea of beauty. Often times, I have to temporarily confiscate expensive make up and fashion accessories that interfere with classroom instruction. It is also true that young women in my ESL 2B course have their own group of tight-knit friends and

vehemently refuse to mix with the beginning ESL students as if doing so will set them back in their assimilation route.

Given the myriad of assimilation issues amongst the young women in my classes, my job as their Chicana ESL teacher, and some of these young women's complaints about me, I question my position in this equation. I wonder how it is that Chicana/Latina teachers influence the development of Chicana/Latina students' ethnic and gender identities? Do we serve as counter-hegemonic role models? In order to answer this complex question I decided to formulate a number of branching "sub-questions" to further guide my inquiry. The questions are as follows:

- What general thoughts do Chicana/Latina students house about their Chicana/Latina teachers and non-Chicana/Latina teachers?
- What are these students' expectations of Chicana/Latina teachers and non-Chicana/Latina teachers?
- What are the major differences perceived by the students between Chicana/Latina teachers and non-Chicana/Latina teachers?
- Do Chicana/Latina teachers and non-Chicana/Latina teachers serve as role models to these students?
- Do Chicana/Latina students feel that Chicana/Latina teachers and non-Chicana/Latina teachers care about their wellbeing?

Part II: Theoretical Underpinnings

Early in the research process I realized that if I truly wanted to find out how Chicana/Latina educators impact the development of Chicana/Latina students' ethnic and

gender identities I had to critically analyze my position. I had to leave my preconceived notions behind and focus on my students' needs and perspectives. Most of all, I had to respect my students and recognize their humanity before I even began to attempt to answer any of my guiding questions. Furthermore, I had to be critical of the privileged role of teacher-researcher that I was about to assume. I assured myself that I would not use my position and personal opinions to speak for my students. Instead, I decided to allow this inquiry project to become a window through which my students' own voice would shine. I prepared myself to do so by selecting theoretical frameworks that would allow me to analyze my students' critical perspectives about my Chicana/Latina colleagues and me. I decided to use care theory and *educación* as well as critical pedagogy and the Freirian notion of dialogue to inform my approach to the broad question I aimed to answer. These schools of thought are particularly important due to their politicized roots, integration of culture, and humanizing perspectives.

Care Theory and Educación

The first theoretical framework I used to guide my inquiry is Noddings' (1992) care theory which suggests that caring involves the recognition of students' social, emotional, and academic needs. She defines caring as the process of seeing, listening to, and feeling the most pressing needs, dreams, and desires of students. Valenzuela (1999) expands Noddings' definition by explaining that authentic caring also involves the recognition of students' social position in contemporary society, validation of students' concerns and needs, as well as the wealth of information that they bring into the classroom space.

Unfortunately, I am convinced that it would only take a person who is unfamiliar with the social and academic landscape of Downs High School a day or perhaps two before they acknowledge the culture of personal and academic failure that is widely accepted at this institution as well as the widespread lack of authentic care. The most evident observation to be made at Downs High School involves the troubled relationships that play out daily. There is an endless battle between adult figures and students that is fueled by an overwhelming notion of disrespect and upheld misconceptions that are acted upon by both groups. As Valenzuela claims, the mostly white school staff "sees students as not sufficiently *caring* about school, while students see teachers as not sufficiently *caring* for them" (p. 61). Time and time again, I listen to teachers complain about their students' lack of interest in academic subjects and "disrespectful" attitudes toward them. I've even been told by a young, white, male teacher that his students "will amount to nothing more than social leeches who suck the resources out of our society" because they supposedly refuse to learn. In his final statement in our conversation, he argued that he is beginning to believe that his students "are just plain stupid." Students, on the other hand, demonstrate their disapproval of teacher attitudes by resisting the institutionalized notions that have plagued their countless years of schooling in underserved communities. My students are very vocal about their rejection of these dehumanizing attitudes and practices. They are no strangers to the notions about them that are held by many of their teachers. I've had students tell me that other teachers frequently call them "stupid" and remind them that they will not "go farther than a jail cell or on welfare."

Unfortunately, Noddings (1992) claims that "the structures of current schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care is perhaps greater than ever"

(p. 20). This claim indeed rings true at Downs High School. When 90 percent of our students are performing below average on the CST, we hold a 49% push-out rate, and a large part of our students are lured into street gangs (amongst other ills), there is certainly a lack of authentic caring underway. Our students are looking elsewhere for respectful, caring, and reciprocal relationships.

When it comes to Latina/o-Chicana/o students and authentic caring, one must clearly understand the notion of *educación*, an idea deeply grounded in Latino culture. This notion transcends the accepted definition of education. In Spanish *educación*, refers to a concept that Valenzuela defines as:

> …a conceptually broader term than its English language cognate. It refers to the family's role of inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility and serves as the foundation for all other learning. Though inclusive of formal academic training, *educación* additionally refers to competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others (p. 23).

Educación, thus, differentiates from the idea of formal education that is the norm in U.S. schools in that it consists of an array of ideas joined together to form a well-rounded individual. *Educación* goes far and beyond the classroom. It is a way of life for many of the Latino students at schools like Downs High School. The relationships between teachers and students also form a large part of the concept of *educación*. If authentic caring relationships are not established between both parties, students tend to respond to negativity by rejecting the mainstream notion of formal education that contemporary institutions accept. Here is where, as Valenzuela explains:

> Non-Latino teachers' characteristic lack of knowledge of the Spanish language and dismissive attitude toward Mexican [Latino] culture makes them unlikely to be familiar with this cultural definition of *educación*. Thus, when teachers deny their students the opportunity to engage in reciprocal relationships, they simultaneously invalidate the definition of education that most of these young people embrace. And, since that definition is thoroughly ground in Mexican [Latino] culture, its rejection constitutes a dismissal of their culture as well" (p. 23).

This might explain why some teachers at Downs High School fail to recognize their white privilege and neglect the central ideas that define their students' ways of life. In other words, there is a wider process of dehumanization that is occurring in urban schools that serve underrepresented ethnic groups. No longer are schools educating children, instead they are schooling them to conform to social norms that serve to oppress them while striping students of their identities.

Knowing the perspectives held by some Downs High School teachers, I attempted to find out if Chicana/Latina students feel that they are being cared for more by teachers who share their gender identity and ethnic background than other teachers. I wondered if Chicana/Latina educators could positively impact the development of Chicana/Latina students' gender and ethnic identity through demonstrations of authentic caring and the development of humanizing reciprocal relationships that oppose the school-wide, uncaring sentiment.

Critical Pedagogy

The second theoretical lens that informed the approach I took toward my inquiry question is critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy, as defined by Leistyna and Woodrum (1996), refers to the critical analysis of the relationship among ideology, power, and culture to transform the current social conditions of our students. Furthermore, they explain that critical pedagogy is:

> …an interdisciplinary process that changes with each unique social/classroom context and creates a space for teachers and students to engage in critical dialogue in which the objective is the production of their own ideas and values rather than the mere reproduction of those of the dominant groups (p. 7).

To analyze Chicana/Latina teachers' roles in the development of Chicana/Latina students' ethnic and gender identities, I had to evaluate if the relationships held by these two groups involve the radical notion of dialogue which will lead to liberation and empowerment. Since many of my young female students unknowingly reproduce the hegemonic social notions that serve to oppress them as a group, I wondered if Chicana/Latina teachers critically participated as agents of change by engaging in self-empowering, counter-hegemonic, reciprocal relationships with these students.

More importantly, critical pedagogy intends to bring about personalized methods of education that go against the counter-productive accepted methodologies that simplify teaching to a discrete science. Instead, critical pedagogy calls for the creation of methods that allow students and teachers to be active participants in education. That is, instead of the teacher being the sole holder and distributor of information, critical pedagogy insists that students and teachers engage in a reciprocal relationship through which knowledge

can flow in both directions, from one group to the other. Leistyna and Woodrum argue that the mechanization of education "focuses exclusively on preparing students for the workforce, abstracts education from the challenges of developing a critically conscious, socially responsible, and politically active student body and citizenry" (p. 1). As a result, standardized methods of education, such as the ones in place at Down High School, inhibit students from becoming critical thinkers in contemporary society. Instead of including student and teacher voice into the curricula that is being taught, many out-of-classroom educators believe in a "top-down" model that defines what students are to learn and how teachers are to teach that material.

Furthermore, critical pedagogy departs from popular ideas of multicultural education. Instead, critical pedagogy calls for an in-depth analysis of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation within the classroom space. Unlike multicultural education, critical pedagogy intends to make oppressed groups the focal point of its educational methodology through action. Rather than simply romanticizing the communal experiences of groups that are left in the margins of society, critical pedagogy calls for radical social transformation of social apparatuses that define, produce, and support social injustice and inequality (Leistyna and Woodrum, 1996).

In addition, critical pedagogy is concerned with the notion of integrating culture into current educational methods. Critical pedagogy debunks the idea of a common culture that is pushed through mainstream educational practices. Instead, it encourages the acknowledgement of counter-hegemonic resistance and the different perspectives of culture that these relationships create. Leistyna and Woodrum (1996), claim that "as people interact with existing institutions and social practices in which the values, beliefs,

bodies of knowledge, styles of communication, and biases of the dominant culture are imposed, they are often stripped of their power to articulate and realize their own goals (p. 3). It is the resistance to this process that defines what culture means to each individual involved.

Critical pedagogy encourages teachers to work outside of the hegemonic paradigms. Instead of conforming to the socially acceptable models of education, teachers encourage their students to define their own realities and participate in critical thinking as well as the transformation of their current realities. Teachers should not perceive their students as passive recipients of knowledge. Instead, they should be seen as equal shareholders of knowledge that is valuable and recognized within the classroom space. Only then, can there be authentic, transformative, and honest relationships inside the classroom.

Dialogue

Freire (1970), believes the idea of dialogue is vital to the processes of humanization and liberation of oppressed groups throughout the world. The notion of dialogue must include the acknowledgement of the word. The word, as Freire points out, is more than an element needed for dialogue. Instead, the word is a process through which the world can be transformed. For dialogue to occur, the true word must equal praxis—action and reflection. If either of the two is missing, then the word is no longer true and it looses its ability to bring about change. According to Freire, “human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection” (p. 88). A human being has to reflect as well as to commit to action to bring about widespread transformation and

liberation. There simply cannot be change without a continuous process of action and reflection.

Furthermore, for dialogue to develop genuinely, everyone must name her own world, to define the word according to her lived experiences. No one should be denied the right to name her world. One group of people must not silence the other if true dialogue and transformation is to occur. Freire also argues that those individuals whose right to the word has been negated must “reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression” (p. 88) through transformative action. Freire warns that if action or reflection are missing from the formula, true dialogue is impossible and becomes idle chatter.

In the case of students, they must demand their right to be heard over imposed norms. Students are also to become part of the dialogue that defines who they are as well as their lived realities. In the classroom, dialogue—reflection and action—must occur so that students are validated and humanized. In contrast to hegemonic educational practices, Freire claims that “dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s ‘depositing’ ideas in another, or it can become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants” (p. 89). Like critical pedagogy, the Freirian notion of dialogue asks that students become active participant in the conversations, decisions, and presentation of knowledge that occurs within the classroom. Again, the notion of dialogue calls for the validation of student knowledge as being vital to the creation of a safe, liberatory classroom community.

Freire defends the notion that for dialogue to occur, there must exist a trust between all stakeholders in this dialogue. This mutual trust can only be developed if the

foundations of love, humility, and faith are present. It would be counter-productive to engage in dialogue without assuring that the preconditions for trust are established. When these foundations are present, they facilitate the mutual "naming of the world" (p. 91) and give way to true and honest dialogue.

Part III: Methodology

To more accurately collect information and gain concrete understanding of the perspectives held by Chicana/Latina students, I decided to use three methods for gathering information— open-ended questionnaires, a group discussion, and one-on-one interviews. I chose these three methods to accommodate and facilitate the various ways in which my female students best communicate. In addition, I felt that qualitative data would best support my research since my goal was to dive into the anecdotal experiences of my students and how these have influenced the interpersonal relationships they might have built with their Chicana/Latina teachers.

In addition, I chose these data collection methods due to the diverse settings in which they unfold. I hoped that these methods would allow students to participate in at least two different methods through which they could voice their opinion on the topic at hand. I purposely chose to follow the written portion of data collection by the discussion part. I expected student writing to support the oral discussions that would follow and allow students to expand their ideas.

The following is a table that explains the methods I used:

Table 1

Data Collection Methods

Method	Number of Participants	Times Administered or observed	Data Collection Method
Questionnaire	24	1	Printed, Open-ended questionnaires
Group Discussion	14	1	Field Notes
One-on-on Interviews	4	4	Field Notes

Questionnaires

In my classes, there are young women who express themselves very well through writing rather than through oral language. To accommodate these students, I distributed questionnaires to the Chicana/Latina students enrolled in my homeroom and three ESL courses—ESL 1A, ESL 2B, and ESL Math. In total, I distributed twenty-four questionnaires during the first day of the 2008 spring semester. The questionnaires were passed out during a lunch meeting that I organized for participants. Most of the students chose to complete their questionnaires at home to re-think the questions and better formulate their answers since a half-hour lunch proved to be insufficient time. Those questionnaires were returned to me on the following school day.

I consciously chose to make the ten questions open-ended. This way, students were not constrained to particular answers. Open-ended questions gave students the freedom to respond clearly and to the opportunity to provide ample information. In addition, I translated each question into Spanish. Since all of the participants are bilingual

or soon-to-be bilingual, it was important to assure that they fully understood what was being asked (See appendix A).

The open-ended questionnaire proved to provide ample insight into the issues that are important to my Chicana/Latina students; however, if I were to do this research again, I would initially supply a multiple choice or short answer survey. In so doing, I would have gained quantitative information that might have supported my qualitative findings.

Group Discussion

A week after all of the questionnaires were turned-in, I gave the participating students a letter expressing how excited I was to read their responses and that I wanted to follow up with a small group discussions. As an incentive for participation, I provided pizza, drinks, and snacks for the participants. On a Monday afternoon, fourteen participants met in my classroom for about two hours after-school. Ten of the young women were unable to attend due to after-school activities, employment, and parental restrictions.

Initially, I hoped to divide the students into groups of four. In preparation for the small groups, I asked three Chicana/Latina teaching assistants to help with the collection of field notes from each group. I was hoping to move from group to group while the other adults took concrete field notes. However, when the students arrived to my classroom, they asked to have a single discussion. One of the participants, Britney, claimed that they "want[ed] to know what the other girls think, not just four." After some thought and a student vote, I opted to modify my method of gathering data and followed the students' request. I thanked two of the paraprofessionals for their interest and asked them to leave

the room to create more of a safe space for the young women. I figured that the least number of adults in the room would allow the students to feel more comfortable and honest with their responses.

Moreover, I wanted our conversation to come about as organically as possible, but I was aware that I would have to have some sort of guiding method. Since their conversations around their relations to Chicana/Latina teachers was not something that these students often came across, I decided to use the questionnaire questions as a starting point to the conversation. I provided students with photocopies of their questionnaires in order to prompt dialogue. To create a more balanced discussion space, I organized the desks into a large circle in the middle of the room. This way, everyone could see who spoke and nobody was in front of anyone else.

As to not interfere with student conversation and perspective as well as to facilitate space to take field notes, my teaching assistant, Ms. Moreno and I shared the role of facilitator. However, we soon found that students took full control of the conversation and only referred to me when further clarification on the questions was needed.

One-On-One Interviews

Following the group discussion, I randomly selected four students to participate in one-on-one interviews with me. Through the interviews I planned to penetrate student-thought in depth. One-on-one interviews allowed me to understand and gather specific examples of how the development of Chicana/Latina student ethnic and gender identities was affected by Chicana/Latina educators.

The personal interviews varied in length from an hour to two hours. Each interview occurred on a separate day, time, and place. Two of the interviews occurred after school in my classroom while the other two occurred on a Saturday and Sunday at local restaurants.

Part IV: Findings

I began writing this inquiry with preconceived notions of what the perspectives of my Chicana/Latina students would be. My rationale based, in great part, on my own lived experience as a Chicana/Latina high school student in Los Angeles a mere six years ago. However, as I dove further into the collection and analysis of data, I realized that even though my hypotheses were not far from the truth, there were still some vital elements that I failed to acknowledge. Upon reviewing the data I collected, I noticed that my female students were extremely passionate about their development as young Chicana/Latina women and were yearning for caring relationships to build with the adults that impact their everyday realities. The information they provided proved to be captivating, insightful, and even overwhelming at times. There were many instances throughout the three-week research period that I forgot I was dealing with high school students as they spoke with such eloquence regarding their lived realities in an urban and complex social context.

From the questionnaires I obtained, I began to notice some recurring themes that concern Chicana/Latina high school students and the influence that Chicana/Latina teachers exert over these students. However, even though many questionnaire responses touched upon similar themes, their answers were simplified and lacked explanation. I

took note of these recurring themes in order to search for them in our group discussion and prompt further dialogue about these particular issues. As expected, many of the themes were again present during the group discussion. However, I noticed that they seemed to be generalized and applied to entire groups. That is, during the group discussion, the majority of the young women spoke from a group perspective rather than from a personal point of view. The majority of the participants used words such as “we,” “us,” and “them” constantly throughout the dialogue. Moreover, those same overarching themes drove the one-on-one interviews that I conducted. Instead of speaking in plural terms, this time students primarily made reference to personal experience. For almost every question, the interviewees replied with a personal anecdote and were not shy to name specific teachers, places, and events.

The information gathered throughout this inquiry process was so abundant and rich that I had a problem focusing on the way that I wanted to present the information that I gained. Ironically, it was one of my homeroom students and research participants, Mayra, who suggested that I present my findings based on the same recurring themes that I found. Like many other students, she was anxious to read what I was writing about them and would ask about my progress every day with no exceptions. Being the very inquisitive senior that she is, Mayra came into my classroom one day, as she did many times, and asked me if I had already completed the research. I informed her that I was done collecting information, but that I faced the challenge of organizing it. She then proceeded to ask the same question she asked everyday, “What did you find out about us Miss?” In response to her question, I informed her that I found many recurring themes and that many students shared similar opinions as well as experiences. She was quick to

blurt out “Why don’t you just list those themes and write about how they all show up throughout?” As simple as that, I found the solution to my dilemma. Hence, in the following pages I present the overarching themes that informed my students’ responses regarding Chicana/Latina teachers’ influence on their development of gender and ethnic identity.

Chicana/Latina Students Agree that Chicana/Latina Teachers Serve as Positive Role Models

Overall, throughout the three methods of data collection, I found that students used the words “role model” as one of the key descriptors of their Chicana/Latina teachers. Even though twenty of the twenty-four participants included this descriptor more than once in their answers, they mostly generalized the term and did not provide a concrete definition. For example, one young woman wrote, “Ms. Santos is the single role model who I look up to because she is always there when I need her, something that nobody else does. She just understands me.” Through the group dialogue I attempted to dive into the significance of “role models” for my students. As I expected, Jenny, one of the most talkative participants was quick to mention the words as soon as the dialogue was underway. “Latina teachers are major role models to us,” she claimed. Still, however, the students did not clarify the meaning of role model. That is when I decided to ask them myself. Even though I did not intend to guide their dialogue, I wanted to get a clear meaning of what being a role model means to my students. “What does it mean to be a role model? What are the major characteristics of a role model?” I asked.

Immediately, the young women began to shout out characteristics. They all spoke at the same time and still I couldn’t understand what they were saying. That is when

Jenny picked up a marker and began writing their ideas on the board. When about ten characteristics were listed. She said, “Ok, now let’s put this into a statement so we can give it to Ms. Santos.” Collectively they defined a role model as someone who shows them how to think critically and make positive decisions about their lives. They also argued that the ability to think critically and make positive personal decisions, in turn, leads them to feel proud of being “young brown women.”

Quickly, however, the conversation shifted. Many of the young women expressed that even if Chicana/Latina teachers served as role models, they do not have many positive role models in their homes or communities. For example, Marlene, a tenth grader in ESL 2B argued that her “foster mother is too busy to pay attention to [her], while [her] biological mother is in and out of jail and trying to deal with drug problems.” Hence, teachers are the closest individuals to a maternal figure that many of these students have. Marlene also went on to state that there are very few “Latina women who are successful out in the working world.” She argued that it is empowering for her to see young faces that look like her who “aren’t carrying around a bunch of children and who do something that they are passionate about.”

My homeroom student, Mayra, then posed a question to her peers. “What should be done about it then? Because we all know girls who can be doing so much more with their lives, but simply settle for less” she stated. “Why don’t we pay it forward?” asked Jenny. “You know, like that movie *Pay it Forward*. Each one of us has a Latina teacher role model who we look up to for guidance right?” The majority of the class nodded yes in response. “Then, why don’t we all ensure that just like we have a role model, we are teacher role models to younger Latinas too?” “I know it sounds corny,” argued Cindy, a

quiet ESL 2B student, “but imagine if all Chicanas and Latinas took other Chicanas and Latinas under their wings. We would really make a difference, don’t you think? That way, its not only teacher role models, but also housekeepers, store clerks, you know, regular everyday people” The rest of the group nodded their heads in agreement and one of them even clapped after the comment was made.

During my one-on-one interview with Diana, and ESL 1A student from Mexico City, I asked her what she thought about the conversation on Chicana/Latina teachers as role models. In Spanish, she agreed that especially for students like her who are in this country with distant relatives and friends, teachers who share some of her cultural background and language mark an important point.

> “Para ser honesta, si no fuera por usted Ms. Santos, yo ya me hubiera regresado a Mexico. Vivo aquí con mi tia que es muy buena y todo, pero me deja sola en la casa cuando va al trabajo. Me siento como un perro abandonado a veces. Por eso es la razon por la que quiero venir a la escuela diario porque se que usted me ayudara con la tarea y otras cosas que uno debe saber en este pais” (*To be honest if it wasn’t for you, Ms. Santos, I would have probably already gone back to Mexico. I live here with my aunt who is nice and all, but she leaves me home alone when she goes to work. I feel like a dog, an abandoned dog sometimes. That is why I look forward to going to school everyday because I know that you will help me with my homework and other things that one needs to learn in this country.)*

She also went on to state that to her, a role model is someone who shows her how to make positive choices, but who also gives her the space to make errors and learn from them.

Chicana/Latina students are in Search of Authentic Caring and Receive it Primarily From Their Chicana/Latina Teachers

Through all three methods of data collections, I noted that students mentioned "care." Immediately, I was taken back to Noddings and Valenzuela's work. Many of the young girls who participated in my study made mention of Chicana/Latina teachers "caring" for them. Forms of care presented by the students included "straight forward and direct" dialogue, as one of them stated in her questionnaire. "Latina teachers who care about you," explained Gladis "will not beat around the bush when you're messing up. They will tell you shit the way it is. Nobody else does that. And it's not like they're lecturing you, its like they want to help. They truly let you know they care."

Other forms of caring included a home-school connection initiated by Chicana/Latina teachers. Many of the questionnaires presented anecdotes that involved a teacher taking time to call parents and let them know how their child is doing. Many of the young women argued that they felt as if a teacher cared for them when they called home to try to come up with joint solutions to problems or simply to make themselves available to parents who speak Spanish. "I've noticed that Latina teachers want to get involved with the parents," wrote Wendy "they're the ones who want to know where we come from and the situations that we deal with at home."

In agreement with the notion of *educación*, Wendy, who I interviewed, explained to me that she felt that only Latina teachers accepted all of who she is. She explained to

me that due to her *cholita*[2] way of dress and makeup teachers had often criticized her. "They think that because I chose to dress like this or wear my make-up a certain way, I'm stupid or something. I can do math, read, write, and think like anyone else here" she announced to me. During our conversation at a local restaurant were she works, Wendy explained that even though she is not a member of a gang, her brothers are. Therefore, she's immediately associated with their gang. She also told me that a number of times teachers at Downs High School compared her to her brothers or made negative comments about them. She explained how her ninth grade English teacher even asked her when she was going to get pregnant like "all the other *cholitas.*" In retaliation, Wendy stopped attending English class and failed her second semester of ninth grade English. I asked Wendy if any of her Chicana/Latina teachers had ever participated in the negative comments. She told me she was unsure because once a Chicana teacher made a comment about her make-up, but she didn't know if it was to compliment her or to make fun of her in front of her classmates. Wendy related to me how one day in art class the teacher said "Wendy, nice make up." Not knowing what to think of it, since she mostly received negative comments about it, she simply stood quiet, confused whether to thank her or simply walk away. Wendy chose the latter and turned her back while other students giggled under their breath.

Overall, the young women agreed that Chicana/Latina teachers tell them how much they care for the students' wellbeing. During the group dialogue, most of them concluded that a teacher must let the students know that they are not "enemies" and have the students' success in mind. They also claimed that they would like more teachers to

[2] *Cholita* is a term used in the Chican@/Latin@ community to refer to females associated with youth gangs.

become invested in their students' daily lives. For example, they stated that teachers who attend, support, and sponsor extra-curricular activities demonstrate genuine care for their students. "Many teachers tell us that they don't get paid to come to after school activities. That's when we know who is here for us and who is here simply to get paid, so we start treating them accordingly," mentioned Mayra. Her peers immediately responded with "umhum" sounds of agreement.

Chicana/Latina Students Want Validation of Their Position as Women in Contemporary Society, but Fail to Find it Within the Larger Social Context They Face

When asked how Chicana/Latina teachers influenced their gender development, many students mentioned the topic of sexism and machismo. Through their questionnaires ten students mentioned experiencing unequal treatment and lower expectations from their relatives, teachers, and peers. Five of them made mention of sexism and machismo as larger social ills that affect their development as young women.

Based on their group dialogue, I was able to conclude that many of these young women acknowledge the notion of sexism that is present in their community, homes, and school. When the topic of gender development arose, many of the participants raised their hand to show that they had experiences to share. That day, I heard countless stories about how sexism is very real in these students' lives. For example, Wendy, the same student who self-identifies as a *cholita*, shared that because she is an only daughter with two older brothers, she's expected to go to school, do homework, complete household chores, and work a part-time job. She explained that she felt as if though she had to rebel against many things because she was angry at the situation she faced. During our one-on-one

interview she explained that she's learned to be a strong and "tough" young woman because she's forcefully had to deal with many struggles in her life. Her family's financial situation is unstable, forcing her to work instead of participating in other activities such as softball, which she is passionate about. "It's just not fair," she said "my brothers are good for nothing and I'm stuck with the hard work." When I asked her about college and her future educational plans, she told me that her parents wanted her to do a "*carrera corta"* (short career) so that she could get to work as soon as possible. "They tell me they don't want me to be in hard jobs like them, but they wont let me be what I want to be," she continued. Wendy's parents want her to go to cosmetology school or find a clerical job. She, however, wants to attend a four-year university to study business. "I've heard CSUN has a good business program, but nobody thinks I can make it," she explained.

Wendy's comment regarding other's thoughts about her and business school prompted me to ask her if Chicana/Latina teachers had ever talked to her about it. She, very matter-of-factly, told me Chicana/Latina teachers were the only ones who believed her when she made mention of her educational and career goals. "As a young Chicana, it makes you feel good to have someone who has your back. Sometimes, I'm shy to go to the college office because my friends will think I'm a nerd, but I know for sure that I can always go to you and Ms. Sanchez and ask for help," stated Wendy.

"We're proud to see young Chicanas teaching and as vice-principals," stated Maria, an ESL 1A student. "*Como mujeres, ustedes son un ejemplo a seguir. Son como nuestro mapa hacia el futuro, nuestra guia"* (As women, you all are an example to be followed. You are like our map toward the future, our guide"), she concluded. Her

comment was echoed by many young women who claimed that, again, Chicana/Latina teachers and other professionals served as role models that made them proud to be "brown and down" as one student cleverly put it. As I listened carefully to each and every one of their narratives, I realized that in reality we might be the only people who they know who have degrees of higher education and who are a bit more liberated from the ills of sexist social expectation that these students are induced to believe in and accept.

While re-reading their questionnaires, I counted fifteen out of twenty-four young women who claimed that school is the only place where they feel validated as women. It is important to note, however, that not the entire school serves as a safe space for young women. The participants cautioned that they knew exactly where, when, and with whom to express their feminist and counter-hegemonic ideas. Failure to do so could put a young woman in a dichotomized position, either labeled as unappealing to young men or as a "tough cookie," as they are called, who must not be messed with.

Chicana/Latina Students are in Search of Classroom Spaces Where Culturally Relevant Material is Presented and Where They Can Freely Express Their Cultural Wealth

When I asked my students to tell me how Chicana/Latina teachers influenced their development as young Chicanas or Latinas, I encountered responses that I did not expect. The overwhelming majority of participants claimed that Chicana/Latina teachers allowed them to personally feel empowered and proud to be Chicanas or Latinas, but they also made it very clear that they rejected the fact that Chicana/Latina teachers taught culturally irrelevant curriculum. The conversation became lively when a student, Xochilt, made the powerful statement claiming "Latina teachers have to sell-out sometimes. Shit,

we all have to do it at one point." The rest of the room, including myself, gasped as we reflected upon her comment. "Yeah," she continued, "It's simply the truth. They have to sell-out and pretend to be someone they're not in order to keep their jobs. They have to teach white shit." Suddenly, a rush of hands went up in the air and everyone wanted to speak. Most of the comments that followed were in opposition to Xochitl's position. "That was disrespectful and untrue!" yelled a girl. I could see Xochitl's face turning red and her eyes widening. Other students looked at me as if they expected me to stop the conversation. Loving the dialogue, I simply asked them to be mindful of the times they had spoken and to give others a chance to speak. When it was Xochitl's turn again she explained that she didn't mean to be disrespectful, but that she believed that Chicano/Latino culture was not presented enough in their classes "and its not like teachers don't want to. We all know Ms.Santos would rather teach Chicano Studies, but she can't." She asked her peers to think back to the last time they studied Latin American history or read something by a Latina/o author other than in Spanish class. Then, the tone of the conversation changed. Once Xochitl explained her point, others began to agree.

To break an awkward moment of silence, I asked them to raise their hands if they felt as if Chicano/Latino perspective was missing from their schooling. Every single young woman in the room raised her hand. The conversation proceeded and we dove into the idea of culturally relevant curriculum. "We would come to school everyday if what we learned was more diverse," argued Wendy. "Latina teachers try to make us feel comfortable by speaking to us about our culture and relating to us in that way, but we would like them to put that information into the class," followed Britney. The students

agreed that Chicana/Latina teachers could do more inside the classroom space to make them feel welcome and validate the cultural wealth that they bring into the class.

Chicana/Latina Students are Critical of Their Relationships with Black Teachers, but Collectively Fail to Critically Analyze Their Relationships to White Teachers

I had been warned from the beginning of this process that at times teacher-researchers come across data that does not answer their initial inquiry question, but that provide insight into notions that inform students' lived realities. Through this process I learned that my students accept a social idea of "otherness," of dwelling and surviving in the margins of society. They do so in that they fail to acknowledge race relations in a holistic way. That is, they accept a brown versus black ideology that does nothing to bring about collective empowerment and racial solidarity.

When writing about their comfort with non-Chicana/Latina teachers, all of the students mentioned Black teachers. The majority of the students shared negative experiences and attitudes toward Black female teachers. "Black teachers simply don't care about us, what we have to say, or who we are. They just care about Black students," wrote a ninth grader. However, what captured my attention was their lack of analysis of White female teachers. One-third of the faculty of Downs High School are White female teachers, but still none of my students made mention to any of them. Ironically, I noticed that the majority of the teachers who voice their low expectation for these same students are White teachers.

It was clearly evident, through their writing, that with the lack of analysis of White female teachers and their over-criticism of Black female teachers, students were accepting the notion of white being the norm. This idea was corroborated when I

mentioned my discovery to the students during the group discussion. Many showed surprise, but the majority accepted that they didn't think of White teachers when the read "non-Chicana/Latina teachers" on the questionnaire. When asked why they thought they failed to analyze their relationships with White teachers one of the students mentioned that they "simply don't have any problems with White teachers."

I find this "we versus they" idea to be extremely problematic, since Downs High School is a school whose students are all students of color. This notion interferes with students' ability to build cohesive networks outside of their ethnic and language enclaves. Their passivity when it comes to dialogue about race is notable when all they know is brown and black. Even though it is evidently present, whiteness is not acknowledged as part of the racial complexities that prevail at Downs High School. This dichotomy prevents students from examining larger social structures such as racism that are put into play to keep communities of color oppressed.

From the students' responses I gathered that whiteness at Downs High School is accepted and unquestioned. Throughout the research process the notion of whiteness was only touched upon once, when Xochitl claimed that teachers had to teach "white shit." I was completely in awe when time and time again, students wrote and spoke negatively about Black teachers, while dismissing their White teachers.

Part V: Implications

Throughout this inquiry process I learned more about my students' perspectives and needs, than I learned in all of the time that I've been teaching at Downs High School.

Initially, I thought that my topic was a bit narrow and would not provide sufficient and/or insightful data. However, soon I was happily proved wrong.

I learned that Chicana/Latina students are sending a message—a call to action—to the adults in their lives. This call to action is one that will bring about clear transformation of their lives and their entire communities. Our students are yearning for acknowledgement and validation, in and out of the classroom.

It is our duty to change the environment that students face in our classrooms. We must create an atmosphere that welcomes each and every student and validates her entire sense of self—her humanity. First and foremost, as educators, we must evaluate our positioning and privilege. An ongoing personal process of praxis is necessary, as it will give way to the initial steps in this wider transformation. Then, we participate as advocates for our students. We should engage in critical dialogue that will allow us to find out what our students' thoughts, feelings, and needs are.

However, we must be careful not to use our power to, as Freire would agree, "name the world" for our students. That is, we must not be tempted to speak for our students. Instead, we must facilitate their ability to engage in self-determination and empowering activities that will allow them to break free from their ties to oppressive schooling. The classroom can no longer be a silencing place where students are soaking and regurgitating irrelevant information. Instead, students are to be regarded as equal shareholders of knowledge. Student voice must be heard and validated as much as the teachers'. Furthermore, students' lives should be reflected in what is being taught inside the classroom with the intent to empower these students. Doing so will allow us to build reciprocal relationships that involve trust, honesty, respect and most of all, love.

Once these relationships have been established, a critical dialogue must take place. Through this dialogue student voice should be acknowledge as being important. For example, at Downs High School, it is necessary to begin dialogue around racial issues that divide the student population. Students must understand that whiteness is an important part of their everyday life and affects them directly. It is not until these conversations occur, that students will develop a wider perspective on race and racism instead of being trapped in a brown v. black dichotomous state which fuels racial tensions and does not allow for larger community empowerment. Most importantly, these dialogues should be filled with truth and honesty if they are to reach the larger transformative goal.

Furthermore, this dialogue must not remain within the classroom walls or the school gates, for that matter. It is vital that teachers participate and engage in community activities that provide insight into the realities of our students. If this is not done, educators will inevitably fail to acknowledge students' complete sense of being. For example, at Downs High School there is a vibrant group of parents, students, teachers, and community members whose purpose is to transform the relationships and atmosphere of failure that play out at Downs High School and which affect the community at large. Known as the Downs Family United (DFU), this group of stakeholders includes grassroots organizing strategies to bring about change and empowerment to students. Even though, it is faced with constant harassment and tension from district and school administrators, this group is committed to bring about change.

It is at DFU that I have found an uplifting sight of positive transformation. Through DFU, we engage in continuous dialogue through which the voices of all

stakeholders are heard and validated. Even though we do not always agree, it is clear that we are all striving for student-centered education that acknowledges student needs and realities. Together, we attempt to bring to light the countless battles that students are faced with and try to find ways through which students can be successful in conquering these battles. It is in this space that I feel welcomed and allowed to openly advocate for the needs of Chicana/Latina students and those of LEP students in general. As a new teacher, more than one teacher has warned me that it could be "potentially dangerous to get too involved with groups that call for change." I know that I must be careful with my actions but I am not intimidated because I know that what I am doing is right and that I cannot be reprimanded for being an advocate for my students. Furthermore, I do all that is in my power to involve my students in DFU actions so that they are the ones who, along side parents, teachers, and community members, demand equal access to education and social change.

It is time that the decision-making adults in these students' lives listen to their loud and clear call for action. We can no longer ignore their cries for advocacy and change. As critical pedagogy urges, teachers must not align with educational norms that further the oppression and silencing of our students. There cannot be a middle ground; it is now time to ask yourself "which side am I on?"

Appendix A

Questionnaire: Cuestionario

1. What do you think about Latina teachers at your high school? *Que piensas tu sobres las maestras Latinas en tu escuela?*

2. What are the expectations that you have about Latina teachers? *Que esperas tu de las maestras Latinas en tu escuela?*

3. What are the differences between your Latina teachers and non-Latina teachers? *Cuales son las diferencias que tu vez entre tus maestras Latinas y las que no son Latinas?*

4. Is your confidence level the same with Latina teachers than with non-latina teachers? Why? *El nivel de confianza que le tienes a maestras Latinas es el mismo que le tienes a maestras que no son Latinas? Porque?*

5. Do Latina teachers serve as role models to you? How? Why? *Las maestras Latinas son modelos a seguir para ti? Como? Porque?*

6. How do Latina teachers influence your identity as a young Latina? *Como joven Latina, como crees que te influyen tus maestras Latinas?*

7. Do your Latina teachers influence the way you practice your culture as a Latina? *Tus maestras Latinas influyen en tu practica de la cultura Latina?*

8. As a young woman, how do Latina teachers influence your development as a woman? *Como mujer joven, como crees que las maestras Latinas influyen tu desarrollo como mujer?*

9. In general, how do you think that Latina teachers influence Latina students? *En general, como crees tu que las maestras Latinas influyen a las estudiantes Latinas?*

10. Do you have any additional comments regarding the relationships between Latina teachers and Latina students? *Tienes otros comentarios sobre las relaciones entre maestras Latinas y estudiantes Latinas?*

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