

Closing the Achievement Gap in Marginalized Communities

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Context & Results

San Francisco United School District

- ❖ Dee, Penner 2016

Tucson USD

- ❖ Cambium Audit
- ❖ Cabrera, et. al., 2012
- ❖ Cabrera, et. al., 2014

Sleeter, 2011

Context of San Francisco United School District

- ❖ Students were identified in 8th grade
- ❖ GPA < 2.0 or Attendance < 87.5%

Results from SFUSD

- ❖ Attendance increased 21 points
- ❖ GPA increased 1.4 grade points
- ❖ Credits earned: +23 credits

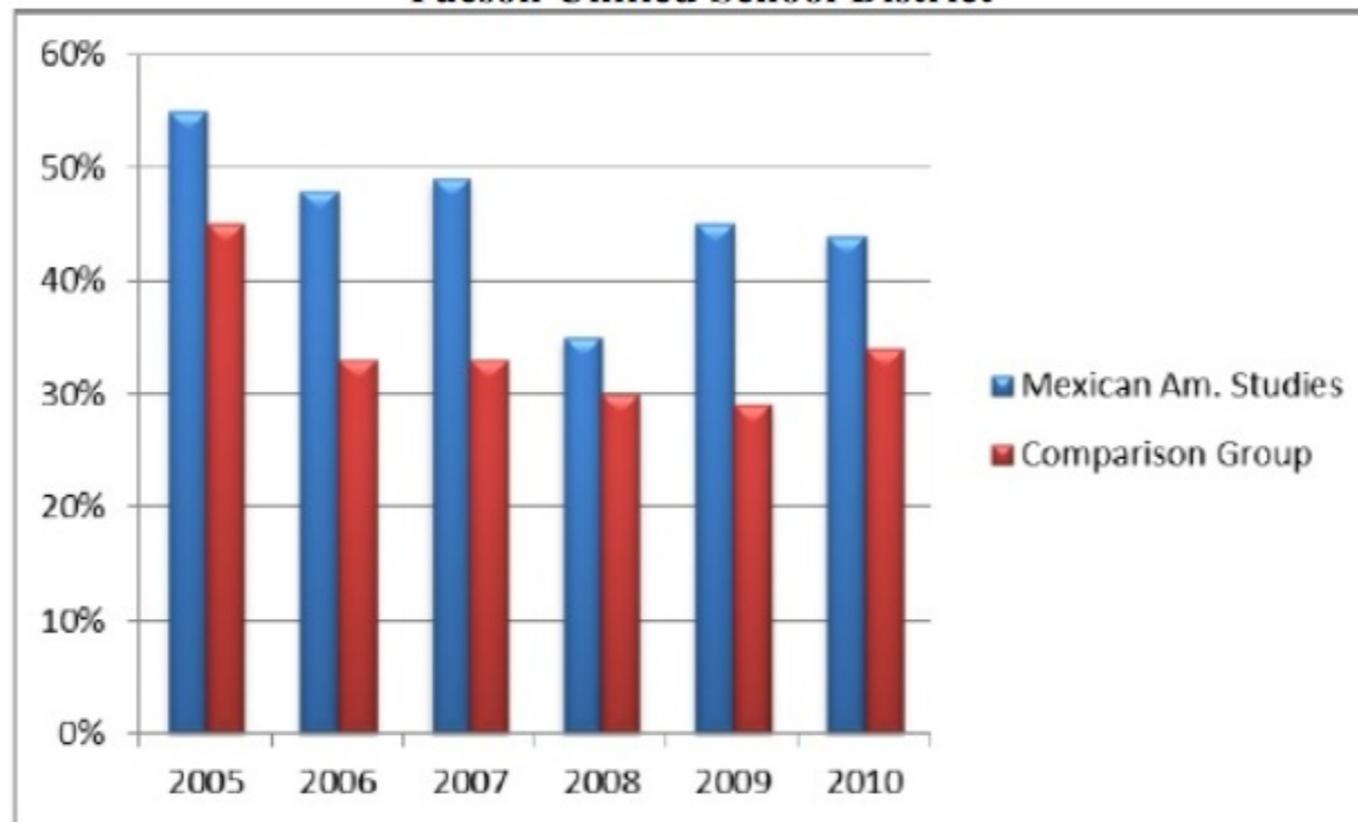
Impact of Ethnic Studies in Tucson USD: 2004-05 to 2009-10

- TUSD students graduated at a rate of **97.5%** compared to a national average of **46.0%** for Mexican Americans and **52.0%** for Latinos
- Over the last six academic years, slightly more than **70%** of our students have enrolled in post-secondary education after graduation vs. the national average for Mexican American college enrollment at **26%**

Reading Outcomes

State Standardized Assessment

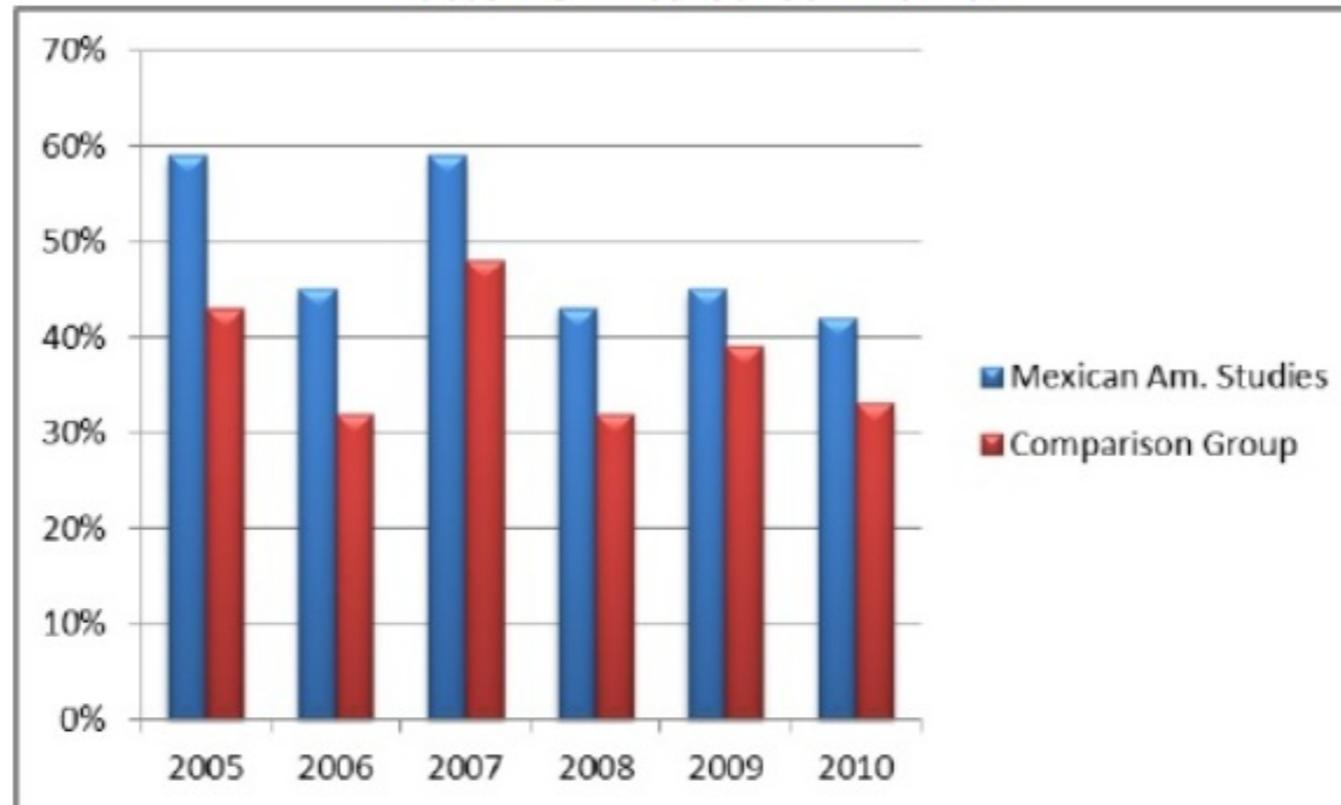
Figure 20
Department of Accountability and Research
Re-Analysis of AIMS Reading Outcomes for Mexican American Studies Students
Tucson Unified School District



Writing Outcomes

State Standardized Assessment

Figure 21
Department of Accountability and Research
Re-Analysis of AIMS Writing Outcomes for Mexican American Studies Students
Tucson Unified School District



2008 - MAS students were **168% more likely to pass** (*than non-MAS students*)

2008 - MAS students were **144% more likely to pass the AIMS Math**

2009 - MAS students were **96% more likely to pass the AIMS Math**

2011 - MAS students were **101% more likely to pass their AIMS Reading test**

2008 - MAS students were **51% more likely to graduate from high school**

2009 - **108% more likely to graduate**

Within this framework, the more Latina/o students see themselves and their experiences reflected in the curriculum, the more likely they are to be engaged in school, leading to greater educational success. Additionally, the MAS program was developed from a critical theory paradigm (e.g., Freire, 2000).

This perspective means the MAS version of ethnic studies was more than celebrating racial/ethnic difference and positive identity (Cammara & Romero, 2014).

The high school diploma becomes important in this context because it helps stem the dropout rate, provides students economic opportunities, paves pathways to higher education, and can improve the material conditions of the community (Cammara & Romero, 2014; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Increased Engagement in Literature

(e.g., Bean, Valerio, Senior, & White, 1999; Brozo & Valerio, 1996; Copenhaver, 2001).

Increased Literacy

e.g., Krater & Zeni, 1995; Krater, Zeni, & Cason, 1994; C. D. Lee, 1995, 2001, 2006, 2007; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty, 1993; Rickford, 2001)

Higher Achievement in Math & Science

(Lipka, 1991; Lipka, Hogan, et al., 2005; Lipka, Sharp, Brenner, Yanez, & Sharp, 2005; Matthews & Smith, 1994).

Two bilingual/bicultural indigenous literacy curricula have been examined in relationship to their impact on student achievement:

Rough Rock English-Navajo Language Arts Program (RREN LAP)
& McCarty 1993

- ❖ After four years in the program, students' achievement on locally developed measures of comprehending spoken English had increased from 51% to 91%
- ❖ Reading scores on standardized reading tests rose steadily after the second year
- ❖ Students who participated in the bilingual/bicultural program for 3–5 years made the greatest gains.

Christine Sleeter (2011) offered an assessment of the character of ethnic studies by suggesting 5 consistent themes of the field:

1. explicit identification of the point of view from which knowledge emanates, and the relationship between social location and perspective;
2. examination of U.S. history, as well as how relations of race and class continue to play out;
3. probing meanings of collective or communal identities that people hold; and
4. studying one's community's creative and intellectual products, both historic and contemporary. (p. 3)

Each of these components were integrated in the overall structure of the MAS program (Camarota & Romero, 2014).

Based on a survey of 544 university students, (Mayhew, Grunwald, and Dey, 2005) found that students—and especially students of color—judge the extent to which their university values diversity primarily based on willingness to integrate diverse racial and ethnic perspectives into curriculum.

In a survey of 8,051 entering freshmen in three large universities, (Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, and Landreman, 2002) found that very few - only about 6% of the students - had taken a diversity class in high school.

Only 1 school district—Tucson Unified Public Schools—***had*** a full-fledged ethnic studies program.

Surveys

- ❖ 98 African American and 41 Latino students in three low income - grades of students with the highest racial-ethnic identity dropped the least (Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee, 2006)
- ❖ 606 African American students from four predominantly Black high schools, students most likely to graduate and go on to college expressed high awareness of race and racism and high regard for being Black. Those least likely to stay in school expressed low awareness of race and racism, low personal regard for being Black, and a perception that other people do not value Blacks (Miller and MacIntosh 1999, Sanders 1997 & Chavous, et.al., 2003)
- ❖ 185 Latina/o 8th graders in three low-income middle schools where students ranged from being recent immigrants to second and third generation; most were of Mexican descent. Students who identified little with their ethnic origin tended to achieve poorly. (see Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke 1997 for similar findings with African American students & Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee, 2008)
- ❖ From the time of immigration through subsequent generations, Latino students identify progressively less with their ethnic community, often resulting in a downward spiral of achievement.

Similarly, Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) explain that in Peach Springs, Arizona, teachers worked with parents, elders, and linguists to develop a writing system for the Hualapai language, then developed culturally relevant teaching units and materials across the academic subject areas in Hualapai.

- ❖ While, initially, non-Indian teachers objected to this curriculum, they relented when they saw children's positive responses, improved academic learning, ability to work in English, and **100% high school graduation rate.**

Vasquez's (2005) case study examined the responses of 18 college students to a Chicano literature course, in which all of the selections were authored by Chicana/os and dealt with topics such as immigration, migrant labor, poverty, and Catholicism:

- ❖ Eleven of the 18 students were Latino/a. The Latino/a students all said that they identified with the texts, and that the texts filled in blanks in their understandings of their families' biographies.
- ❖ They reported developing a sense of community-based recognition of similar experiences and hardships.

Several years later, Halagao (2010) reported a follow-up survey of 35 who had participated in the curriculum about 10 years earlier:

- ❖ 30 were Filipino American and five were Euro-American
- ❖ **All had completed college** and were working in various professions
- ❖ Students reported that what remained with them was a "deeper love and appreciation of ethnic history, culture, identity, and community."