

Ewingleben Lecture Symposium  
April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**THE EXPERIENCES OF UNDOCUMENTED  
LATIN@ STUDENTS WHO  
DEMONSTRATE RESILIENCE  
NAVIGATING HIGHER EDUCATION**

By  
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# Research Questions

- *How do undocumented Latina @ college students demonstrate resilience as they navigate higher education?*
  1. How does being undocumented shape a student's college experience?
  2. What factors contribute to overcoming challenges these students encounter in higher education?

# Study Background

- Problem Statement and Significance
  - Economic, Ethical, and Humanistic
- Purpose of Study
  - Hearing directly from students → Informing practice for serving undocumented students
- Sample
  - 16 participants
  - Two rounds of interviews
  - Various four-year institutions across the U.S.
  - *Testimonios*
  - Narrative inquiry
- Literature Review

# CRT and LatCrit

- Critical Race Theory (CRT)
  - A lens used to examine the relationship amongst race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).
- LatCrit
  - Examines “immigration theory and policy, as well as language rights and discrimination based on accent or national origin” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 6).

**“The ‘gift’ of CRT is that it unapologetically challenges the scholarship that would dehumanize and depersonalize us”  
(Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 272).**

# Resilience Theory

- Adapting to risk factors successfully as a result of protective factors and actively dealing with stress and adversity
- “Individuals with resilience capacities can prevent, minimize, and even overcome adversity” (Beltran, 2011, p. 7).
- Educational resilience theory
  - “Commonly refers to the ability to succeed in school despite difficult or adverse circumstances, often through the presence or development of protective factors” (Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003).

# Findings: Question 1

- Perception of campus climate
  - Sense of belonging
- Educator and non-peer interactions
  - Unaware and unsupportive educators
- Emotional challenges
  - Stigma
  - Fear
- Academic and career limitations
- Organizational involvement

# Findings: Question 2

- Environmental Factors
  - Family
  - Maintaining ties to home community
  - Peer relationships
  - Involvement in organizations
  - Mentor and supporter relationships
- Personal Factors
  - Future oriented
  - Effective coping behaviors
  - Effectively navigating the system
  - Embracing the connection between the personal and political

# Suggestions for Practice

- Educator efforts
  - Raising awareness
  - Support network
  - Ethic of care
- University resources
  - Personnel
  - Physical spaces
  - Inclusive practices
- Building connections external to the institution
  - K-12 and community college partnerships
  - Community groups including religious organizations
  - Family involvement



# Thank you!



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