

English Language Learner Students: Uncovering the Strategies, Policies, and Practices that Promote the College-Going Culture

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The Problem

Studies show that one in five students in the U.S. come from a home in which a language other than English is spoken at home, and the percentage of children whose first language is not English is expected to grow to 40% of the K-12 population by 2030 (Crawford, 2000). When analyzing the English Language Learner (ELL) student population and their college-going rates, data demonstrates very low numbers. Nationally, only 18% of ELL students transition to a four-year college or university within two years of graduating high school (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). With these stats in mind, we need to uncover the strategies, policies, and practices that promote a college-going culture for ELL students at the high school level.

Results

- Creating more awareness amongst school personnel of the different ELL student populations.
- Providing more language access to students and their families.
- Schools need to hire more culturally proficient counselors, teachers, and administrators to be able to provide more culturally responsive practices and support.
- Creating more social-emotional awareness within ELL student populations and their families.
- More parental involvement and engagement in schools and the college-going culture.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to uncover the strategies, policies, and practices used by high school counselors that promote a college-going culture for ELL students. This study seeks to answer the following: Examining the perspectives of high school counselors who work with English Language Learner (ELL) students to uncover the strategies, policies, and practices designed to promote a college-going culture for ELL high school students.

Methodology

- Qualitative semi-structured study conducted with three high school counselors in Southern California who work directly with ELL students.
- The data was collected through one-hour semi-structured Zoom interviews.
- A series of ten questions were asked covering themes such as work experiences with ELL students, the college-going culture, and recommendations.
- Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling method. They had to meet the following criteria: (1) be a high school counselor, (2) work directly with ELL students.
- Inductive analysis was used to identify common themes and formulate conclusions when analyzing the data.

Implications

- The results of this study provide insight on what high schools can do to help improve the college-going culture for ELL students.
- The studies findings formulate five main themes:
 - Awareness of different ELL student populations
 - Providing language access
 - Hire more culturally proficient counselors, teachers, and administrators
 - Creating more social-emotional awareness
 - Parental involvement and engagement

