

Institute for Social Research
ENLACE in Albuquerque
Chicano Studies Program 2002-03
Results Summary, October 2003

Introduction

The Chicano Studies course is designed to target Albuquerque high school Hispanic students in order to address the high dropout rates of Hispanic students. Culturally relevant teaching materials are used to describe Hispanic role models and leaders in a meaningful manner. These materials include books by Mexican-American authors in order to provide a positive Hispanic image in American history. The program has been implemented by ENLACE at three high schools: Albuquerque High School, Valley High School, and West Mesa High School. The class is offered as an elective.

ISR staff administered surveys at the beginning of the academic year in 2002 and another survey at the end of the spring term in 2003. The surveys were used to collect students' opinions of the class, subject materials, teachers, effects of course subject on self-esteem and attitudes about ethnicity, and any comments about the course in general. In turn, this report examines student response to questions about course materials and subjects, self-esteem, ethnic affiliation, the teachers and the class itself. In addition, data reflecting class enrollment and school descriptives are provided.

Methods

Surveys were administered to students within each classroom at the beginning of the Fall 2002 semester and at the end of the Spring 2003 semester. Table 1 shows the response rates of the surveys received according to class. The number of students in each class was counted using the class list we had obtained from each teacher.

The survey administered in Fall 2002 included a series of questions designed to measure self-esteem and ethnic-identity association. Questions in each series used a four point likert scale that ranged from 10 to 40. Individual scores in each series were combined and then averaged for an overall score. An average score was used to measure self-esteem and ethnic identity association and is discussed in further detail later. Self-esteem and ethnic identity association measures were not utilized in the Spring 2003 survey.

School descriptive statistics are provided for both surveys in tables one through three. Tables four and five only report information from the Fall 200 survey. Student survey responses include responses from the Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 surveys.

Data

In Fall 2002, 94.7% of the respondents were Hispanic students while the spring 2003 survey showed that 77.1% of the respondents were Hispanic. Forty-four percent of the fall term students were male and 55.3% of the respondents were female. In the spring, 60% of the

respondents were male and 31.4% were female students. The majority of the respondents in both terms were junior level students. Tables 1 through 4 illustrate data found regarding survey responses.

Table 1: School Descriptive Statistics

	Fall 2002			Spring 2003		
	# In Class	Number of Surveys	Response Rate	# In Class	Number of Surveys	Response Rate
Albuquerque HS	22	12	75%	18	8	45%
Valley HS	22	10	46%	N/A	6	N/A
West Mesa HS	38	17	45%	32	21	66%
Total	82	39	48%	50	35	70%

Because we had not been able to acquire 40th day class lists at the time this report was written, class enrollment data reflects class lists we obtained at the beginning of each semester from the teachers. A class list was never received for Valley High School’s Spring Chicano Studies class.

Table 2: Students’ Opinion of the Class and Teacher

	Opinion of the Class					Opinion of the Instructor				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Fall 2002 (n=38)	31.6%	50%	10.5%	2.6%	100%	45.7%	48.6%	5.7%	0	100%
Spring 2003 (n=35)	28.6%	54.3%	14.3%	2.9%	100%	40%	28.6%	25.7%	5.7%	100%

In both semesters, most of the students viewed their class **and** instructor as either “excellent” or “good.” Students from West Mesa High School accounted for all the “fair” and “poor” opinions of the instructor in the spring 2003. Only one student from the West Mesa High School class in Spring 2003 considered the teacher “excellent”.

Students revealed that subject matter and class discussions fared better than assigned readings. For the fall 2002 semester, 71% of the students reported they most liked the subject matter of the class. Similarly, 62.8% of the students reported in the spring they approved of the class discussions and relevance of class topics. In addition, the students especially rated Mexican-American subject matters high.

Regarding what the students disliked, the fall surveys revealed that 21.1% of the students did not care for the assigned readings while another 21.1% remained fairly indifferent as to what they mostly disliked. The spring surveys showed that 48.6% of all the students agreed that the readings were boring. While class topics and subject relevance had high approval ratings, reading materials and assignments were unpopular with the students. They were often regarded as “boring” and “uninteresting”.

Table 3: Class Enrollment

	Fall 2002*		Spring 2003*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Chosen as Elective	17	44.7%	14	40%
Chosen as Requirement	16	42.1%	13	37.1%
Enrolled Without Choice	3	7.9%	6	17.1%
Total	38	100%	35	100%

*Missing two responses in each term's survey from all surveys received

Table 3 shows that, on average, most students chose to be in the class at registration, whether it was through an elective or requirement fulfillment. From the fall to spring semester, however, the number of students that enrolled in the class without a choice increased, i.e. they were either forced to register for the class or were assigned the class at registration.

Six students that were enrolled without choice in the spring were students in the West Mesa High School class. There may, therefore, be a connection between unfavorable attitudes and forced registration. Students that willingly enrolled in the course tended to have more favorable attitudes regarding the teacher and class.

Self-Esteem & Ethnic Identity Assessments

To further measure the course's effects on students, self-esteem and ethnic identity were assessed. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was utilized to evaluate each student's level of self-esteem in Fall 2002. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale is commonly used to measure the self-esteem of adolescents. Scores range from 10 to 40, with 40 being the highest level of perceived self-esteem. Table 4 reports students' average score and related statistics.

Table 4: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scores

Statistic	Score
Average	22.7
Standard Deviation	2.7
Maximum	30
Minimum	15

The average score, as shown in Table 4, of the students is below the normal range (25-35). Twenty-six of the students, or 72%, reported low self-esteem. Scores indicate that students mostly disagreed with statements of negative affect, such as having feelings of failure, lack of self-respect, pride, and lack in feelings of general usefulness. This indicates some perception of moderate to high self-esteem regarding agreement with positive self-perception.

However, 58% of these students were also inclined to disagree with statements of positive affect, such as perceiving self-worth, good qualities, and self-satisfaction, indicating lower self-esteem. Thus, these scores roughly reflect, however low, somewhat normal scores. Table 4 shows that scores differed between each other, on average, only slightly ($SD=2.7$). Overall, students did not differ greatly from their peers. There was no significant difference between students' feelings.

Using the MEIM (Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure), scores were based on students' level of agreement on certain items. These items can be broken down into two themes: **Ethnic Identity Search** (level of effort students choose to learn about, participate in, and understand their ethnic background) and **Affirmation, Belonging, and Commitment** (level of pride and sense of belonging to an ethnic group).

Scores ranged on a scale of one (Strongly Agree) to four (Strongly Disagree). Along these lines, students reported an average score of 1.7. On average, students basically **agreed** that their ethnic identity was fairly positive.

Student Survey Responses

• Fall 2002 Responses

Twenty-six percent of the class reported that they expected to learn mostly about cultural topics when they enrolled in Chicano Studies. Another 21% students reported that they expected to learn about Mexican-American history. The following quotes illustrate some student's expectations of learning:

- *"I want to learn more about my culture and Mexico because they don't teach [us] all of it [here]."*
- *"I expected to learn about the history of the Hispanic/Latino people."*

Favorite readings, as reported by 24% of the students, included readings about Mexican and Spanish histories, especially those about the Mayans and Aztecs.

When asked to freely share about the course, only 26% of the students replied. However, they either reported that the course's subject materials/lectures were interesting or they would recommend the class to others:

- *"I believe that this class should be offered in all schools to everybody. History class doesn't focus on our history, [only on] other countries."*
- *"I think the Chicano Studies course is an excellent idea because it's about time [others are] interested in us succeeding and becoming something great in the future."*

• Spring 2003 Responses

Students had one opportunity in this survey to freely comment about the course. Fifty-seven percent of the students surveyed replied to this question of which 17% students commented about their respective teacher:

- *“I enjoyed the way my teacher taught us our history. Films...made it easier and more interesting to learn and understand.”*
- *“The teacher did an awesome job at explaining the material...”*
- *“I love this class but I think that there are more teachers that can be prepared.”*

While 43% of the students did not reply to the comments section, most of the students, 34% in fact, commented about the class in general:

- *“I liked this class because it taught me about my culture. The teacher is a good person and teaches well...”*
- *“The class is good...I liked the class a lot because I’m Cuban and in this class, I learned the history of another country and it’s very interesting.”*
- *I’m not Chicano but I like the class. I learned a lot about this culture and it’s a good culture.”*

Discussion

There seems to be some correlation between students’ opinion of instructor and choice of class enrollment. Students from West Mesa reported poor opinions of the teacher and reported a high enrollment in the class without a choice. Overall, however, students freely chose to be in the class and had positive opinions of the class and teacher. Despite some responses indicative of unhappiness regarding students’ opinion of the class, some still recommended that it be offered as an elective, regarded the historical and cultural perspectives of the class to be beneficial, and despite ethnicity, found that the class educates indiscriminately.

The class, subject materials, and teacher did not decrease students’ agreement of their own ethnic identity. Scores indicated that, overall, students had a positive identity with their ethnic affiliation and, at least at the beginning of the school year, had a moderate level of self-esteem.

Students’ opinions of subject materials suggest that readings should reflect historical topics. Such readings seem to be highly interesting and popular with the students, especially those highlighting indigenous Mexican cultures and peoples. In addition, subject materials utilized also seem to bear upon opinions of the teacher. Teachers that use films, interesting text, and facilitate lively class discussion tend to reflect more positive opinions than utilization of mere text. Likewise, class enrollment shows a relationship between class opinion and free will in class registration. Freely choosing to register for the Chicano Studies course produces positive attitudes amongst the students more so than assigning or forcing students to enroll in the elective.