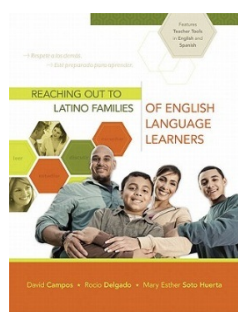


Professional Book Review

Campos, D., Delgado, R., & Soto Huerta, M. E. (2011). *Reaching Out to Latino Families of English Language Learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 221 pp., ISBN: 978-1-4166-1272-8 (pb). \$30.95

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Latino students across the nation experience some of the lowest educational outcomes of all ethnic groups. Among Latinos, those who are classified as English language learners make up a large portion of these struggling students and represent a growing subgroup among the Latino population. Despite the challenges and disheartening statistics that Latinos face, a significant body of research has shown that parents and other family members can play a significant role in the academic success of Latino students. *Reaching Out to Latino Families of English Language Learners* offers teachers and other educational practitioners insights into the Latino culture and provides practical tools and strategies to foster the inclusion and engagement of the families of Latino English learners in the schooling process.

This book serves as a guide to assist school personnel in building on the significant strengths and assets that Latino English learners bring with them to the classroom. Written from the perspective of three educational researchers of Mexican heritage whose second language is English, this book offers a unique opportunity to understand the topic of family involvement from the point of view of both educators and Latinos. The authors share a wealth of inside knowledge that will benefit educators interested in increasing family involvement among Latino families. In particular, practitioners who are unfamiliar with the Latino culture will benefit greatly from this book.

The book is divided into eight chapters. Each chapter takes on a different aspect of family involvement and includes practical applications for each topic. The book addresses the following themes: Exploring Self and Culture, Engaging Latino Parents through an Ethic of Care, Partnering with Latino Families, Using Multiple Sources to Gather Information, Using Cultural Knowledge for Asset-Based Instruction, Involving Latino Families in Homework, Identifying Community Assets, and Designing Campuswide Plans for Parental Engagement. The book concludes with a significant set of appendices and resource lists that provide samples, resources, and reproducibles that will facilitate the implementation of the strategies and ideas described in the book.

The authors begin by inviting readers to learn more about the Latino culture and their individual students. They point out that although there are many similarities among Latinos, teachers should be careful not to make assumptions about their students. They call attention to some of the many differences that exist within the Latino population and recommend that educators involve their students and parents when

learning about the Latino culture. Some of their suggestions include asking those who have learned a second language to share their experience, getting a list of key vocabulary in the students' native language from the parents, asking families about the cultural activities and holidays they celebrate, and reaching out to the community to identify the institutions and cultural events that students experience.

Reaching out to facilitate parent involvement is a major theme of this book. The authors explain the importance of using a bottom-up rather than top-down approach when it comes to parent engagement. They explain the steps to creating a parent group and how to turn over the direction of the group to the parents so that parents can gain a voice in the schooling process of their children. In addition, the authors promote the creation of parent-friendly schools where Latino parents feel welcome and are able to access school personnel and educational information in their primary language. The book includes several tables and charts that give ideas for the practical application of the strategies explained in the book. Some of these include guidelines for home visits, a directory of useful websites for parents, and a list of many useful phrases for educators in Spanish.

Throughout the book, the authors invite teachers to involve parents in designing programs as well as their children in planning lessons. This strategy not only gets parents involved, but also addresses their concerns and helps make classroom instruction more relevant to students. In addition, an entire chapter is dedicated to the inclusion of parents in monitoring homework. The book provides teachers with reproducibles that they can use to explain to parents the benefits of homework, homework policies, tips for creating a place for homework at home, homework planning sheets, as well as notes that can be sent home to communicate how students are doing in completing their homework. Each reproducible is included in English and Spanish so that it can be easily used with both English- and Spanish-speaking parents.

The book concludes by encouraging teachers to reach out to the community to identify the resources and assets that are available in the school neighborhood. One practical recommendation is to take a neighborhood walk similar to the one that might be taken before purchasing a home. This is a strategy I used when I was a new teacher first assigned to an unfamiliar school site. This activity gave me the chance to better understand the community where my students lived and understand what they experience on a daily basis. Finally, the authors provide a guide for teachers and school personnel interested in a campuswide plan for parental engagement. This guide includes relevant information of the educational and civil rights of English learners as well as explaining how to create a school taskforce for increasing parent involvement.

Overall, this book provides teachers and educators with a comprehensive guide to strategies and ideas to increase parent engagement. The book's greatest strength may be in how it facilitates the implementation of these ideas and strategies by providing an appendix full of reproducibles and resources that make it easy for educators immediately to implement each suggestion. Although this book would benefit anyone interested in increasing Latino parent engagement, it is most beneficial for those individuals who are relatively unfamiliar with Latino culture and the Spanish language.

While this book would benefit teachers interested in increasing Latino parent engagement and would be especially useful for individuals who are relatively unfamiliar with Latino culture and the Spanish language, its easy-to-use guide and vast appendix make this a book that all educators who work with Latino English learners should have on their shelf.