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Critical Sociology in K-16 Early Intervention: Remaking Latino Pathways to Higher Education

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Abstract: This article examines the pathways to higher education of two working-class Latino students participating in an intervention program at a diverse, metropolitan high school. Using critical narratives from 2 of the 30 student participants, this article exposes several reasons disproportionately low numbers of Latino students gain access to higher education. Furthermore, their narratives identify several strategies to empower and guide first-generation Latino students toward college access.

Resumen: Este manuscrito examina los caminos hacia la educación superior de dos estudiantes Latinos de clase social trabajadora que participaron en un programa de intervención en una preparatoria metropolitana diversa. Usando historias críticas de dos de los 30 estudiantes participantes, este manuscrito expone varias razones por las cuales desproporcionadamente bajos números de estudiantes Latinos obtienen acceso a educación superior. Aún más, sus historias identifican varias estrategias que habilitan y guían a estudiantes Latinos de primera generación para obtener acceso a la universidad.

Keywords: *critical sociology; critical research; Futures Project; intervention programs; Latino pathways; college access*

There are many struggles males of color have to face in the world revolving around segregation, but people never think getting a good education would be one of them.

—Roger Lara, April 24, 2003

Because I was unaware how the system and the laws worked, I did not realize my immigration status would be the greatest obstacle I would have to overcome to access higher education.

—Alejandro Nuno, April 24, 2003

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Despite a widespread belief of universal access to a higher education and millions of dollars spent on countless intervention programs in the United States, equitable college access for students of color remains illusive (Perna & Swail, 1998; Swail, 1999). Gaps in academic achievement in kindergarten to 12th-grade (K-12) schools across race and class persist and, in some areas, have increased (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Latino and African American students graduate from high school and attend 4-year universities at rates well below White and Asian students (Wilds, 2000). In California, almost 70% of all Latino and Latina high school students are enrolled in classes that do not meet the minimum course requirements for in-state 4-year universities. National data on the graduating class of 2000 reveal that Asian and White students earned diplomas at the rates of 80% and 86%, respectively, compared with only 72% of African American and 52% of Latinos (Garcia & Figueroa, 2003; Oakes & Collatos, in press). More specifically, Latino males have one of the lowest college-going rates for under-represented students (Solorzano, Ledesma, Perez, Burciaga, & Ornelas, 2003). These figures suggest that the ideals of equal opportunity and a meritocratic educational system are more myth than reality.

In a study conducted to investigate how well California public high schools prepare students for higher education, only 22% of their 2002 Latino and Latina high school graduates completed the courses required to attend California's 4-year public universities (California Opportunities Indicators Project, 2002). In contrast, 40% of White students and 58% of Asian students completed the necessary courses in the same year (California Department of Education, 2003). When Latino course-eligibility rates are disaggregated by gender, we see that only 19% of Latino males were course eligible, whereas 24% of Latina females met their 4-year university course requirements.

A vast array of college access programs has been created to decrease the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students during the last 5 to 8 years. Although few intervention programs have been rigorously evaluated, existing studies suggest most intervention programs are only marginally successful (Gandara & Bial 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). In his description of intervention programs as "academic triage," Tierney (in press) pointed out that schools should prepare youth with the academic and cultural skills necessary to successfully complete high school and increase access to higher education. Researchers have identified several impediments to the success of most college access programs including low high school retention rates, short intervention periods, individualistic models, and a lack of consistent financial aid (Gandara & Bial, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). The project described here serves as an example of an alternative intervention program established on the recommendations and findings grounded in the college access and intervention literature: accountable adults to work with students over time, access to rigorous coursework,

long-term involvement with students, inclusion of students' cultural background in all academic and social activities, the creation of peer support groups, and the provision of financial assistance.

The current study examined the efforts of the Futures Project, a college access intervention program designed to disrupt patterns of low academic attainment and to increase access to higher education. Futures does this by creating an academic environment where students can participate in a collaborative student/faculty approach to critically examine social issues affecting minority pathways to higher education. The major emphasis of this article is on the critical narratives (Chapman, 2003) of two Latino students involved in the Futures program that help to illustrate the barriers immigrant Latino students must overcome throughout a K-12 educational system. Their narratives describe strategies they used to successfully overcome overt, as well as covert, social/educational barriers negatively affecting their access to a 4-year university. Although research indicates students are denied access to 4-year universities because of financial reasons, alienation, and poor high school academic achievement (American Council on Education, 2002; Gandara, 1995), the students' narratives challenge and push on these assumptions. In their own words, the two students explain how social and cultural capital, immigration status, poor counseling, and academic tracking negatively influence Latino student achievement and enrollment in higher education.

The Futures Project

The Futures Project was intended to study and intervene in the pathways that urban students, in a highly diverse educational setting, follow from high school to college (Collatos & Morrell, 2003; Morrell & Collatos, 2002). From the 9th through the 12th grades, Futures worked with a cohort of 30 African American, Latino, and Southeast Asian students attending a comprehensive high school where educational opportunity fell disproportionately along lines of race and class. By all predictive measures (i.e., standardized tests, socioeconomic status, race, and course enrollment), Futures students had mediocre prospects for completing high school, qualifying for entry into a 4-year college, and successfully engaging in a curriculum leading to a baccalaureate degree.¹ The project was conceptually driven by several theoretical frameworks: sociocultural learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), which views learning as changing participation in changing communities of practice; critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1989), which views schools as social and political institutions and works to develop dialogues between teachers and students that may lead to individual and social transformations; and critical sociology, which seeks to develop citizens who are able to use the language and tools of sociology not

just to describe but to transform the social order (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Throughout their 4 years in high school, Futures students participated in a variety of activities that characterize most college access programs: mentoring, academic tutoring, assistance with class scheduling, college field trips, parent information sessions, and assistance with college applications. However, Futures added to these traditional activities a highly unique curriculum that was centered upon collaborative research and discourse. Each year, the Futures students participated in learning communities that studied educational (in)equity and access as part of their high school social studies classes. In addition, during the summers from 1998 to 2000, students participated in a series of academically rigorous research seminars held at a nearby university that introduced them to the field of sociology of education (Morrell, 2004). High school as well as university personnel were involved with the Futures Project on a variety of levels.

The summer research seminars provided an environment where students could learn to become action researchers in the sociology of education. For three consecutive summers (1998 to 2000), a majority of the Futures students engaged in a curriculum designed to increase their qualitative skills and their knowledge of social theory. Topics ranged from issues related to language and power, familial conceptions of education, student resistance to learning, and the potential relationship between youth culture and curricular offerings for urban students. Each seminar culminated with a formal presentation of student findings to educators, administrators, community members, activists, lawyers, university outreach staff, policy makers, and family. Although students received university credit for their enrollment in the final seminar, presentations of their work extended beyond the seminars into the community, graduate seminars at research institutes, and national conferences. In general, the goals of the Futures program/seminars included increasing academic skills while preparing and qualifying students for college through their involvement in a community of scholars that used research as a tool for social change.

Of the 30 students in the Futures project, 29 graduated from high school and 25 gained acceptance to 4-year universities (see Table 1). By fall 2001, 16 had enrolled in 4-year universities, 9 enrolled in 2-year colleges, 2 enrolled in technical schools, 2 entered the workplace, and 1 joined the military. These rates of high school graduation, college acceptances, and college-going for the Futures students are significantly higher than similar minority students at their school as well as in California and in the nation (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1998).

Although further analysis is necessary to document the powerful reasons multiple students did not make use of their university admission, the rates of retention remain consistent. In the fall of 2003, 15 students are still

Table 1
Futures College Acceptances and Fall 2001 College-Going Rates

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Total Students</i>	<i>Accepted to a 4-Year University</i>	<i>Enrolled in a 4-Year University Fall 2001</i>	<i>Enrolled in Higher Education Fall 2001</i>
Latina females	12	11	6	12
Latino males	8	6	4	7
African American females	7	6	4	6
African American males	2	2	2	2
Southeast Asian males (no females)	1	0	0	0
Total students	30	25	16	27

NOTE: Higher education is defined as a 4-year university or college, a technical institute, a vocational school, or a 2-year community college.

enrolled at 4-year universities, and 25 of the 30 Futures students are involved in higher education.

Critical Sociology and Action Research

Critical sociology served as the organizing principle driving the Futures Program intervention and the type of action research conducted by students and university professionals. The concept of critical sociology is based on the premise that the language and tools of sociology, largely used to explain the workings of social systems, can also be utilized to transform those very social systems. In the case of the Futures Project, students, parents, and teachers were seen as marginalized participants in many K-12 schools. Eventually, the group came to encompass students, teachers, and university professionals, all of whom were interested in transforming structural inequities that prevented access to higher education for African American and Latina and Latino students. Moreover, the critical nature of the approach also implies that those tools associated with sociological research can be utilized by participants who are marginalized within major social institutions (e.g., schools, colleges).

Based on a critical theory perspective and action research traditions, one major goal of the Futures Project was to democratize the tools of research by having students engage in a study of their own schooling conditions. Furthermore, the methodology employed was guided by the principles associated with action research; that is, students and teachers alike should be intimately engaged in research on teaching and learning processes (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; McNiff, 1988; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). In line with critical research as advocated by Kincheloe and McLaren

(1998), university researchers were interested participants who had close working relationships with the Futures students and their families.

Learning From Critical Narratives

Our article highlights the narratives of two Futures student researchers, Lara (2003) and Nuno (2003), to illuminate the complex issues facing two low-income, immigrant Latino students in pursuit of a higher education and to represent the transformative power of engaging in critical discourse. The narratives document how these two students examined how schools prepare minorities for graduation and college enrollment while simultaneously creating a multicultural college-going identity (Oakes, 2003).

The Futures classroom and research seminars offered a learning environment that encouraged students to use their biographies, identities, and experiences as intellectual resources (Bruner, 1996). Futures participants continually examined stories of the past, present, and possible future as an opportunity to reflect and examine the relations of power and marginalization within schools. Chapman (2003) referred to these stories as critical personal narratives created to use individual experiences as a means to question power relations and to work toward change. Critical personal narratives may be used as a political tool that permits the writer and the reader to “move between private histories and more public examinations” (Burdell & Swadener, 1999, p. 25; see also Chapman & Sork, 2001). The use of critical personal narratives in the Futures Project proved essential to allow Futures students to take on new roles within their school and to develop empowered identities as scholars and activists.

Lara and Nuno’s personal narratives reflect a series of strategies necessary to navigate the kindergarten to college (K-16) pathway. As Latinos, they struggled successfully to access language proficiency, social and cultural capital, official and unofficial college access information, and a college-going identity in spite of their schooling experiences.

Both Nuno and Lara’s critical narratives speak to the role of the research in helping them to make sense of their own experiences as culturally and linguistically marginalized students, the navigational strategies they developed within a dominant institution, and the impact of a critical early intervention program on their K-16 educational success. The first section of the narratives reveals how both students deconstructed schools as reproductive institutions through excerpts taken from Nuno and Lara’s personal narratives. The second section focuses on how they navigated their schools as gatekeepers to economic and social empowerment. Finally, the last section of narratives helps us to better understand, from the student perspective so often missing in assessments, how this program affected students.

Deconstructing Schools as Reproductive Institutions: Excerpts From a Critical Narrative by Roger Lara

By examining the struggles students encounter in pursuit of a quality education, researchers look for positive solutions in public education. Our educational environment affects us tremendously: It affects our future, our life opportunities, and our character. Likewise, our home environment greatly affects our schooling. When raised in a low-income neighborhood, you have a completely different view of what is essential to live and what to worry about compared to fellow students growing up in a wealthy community—daily worries such as how safe it is for me to walk home, what to do when confronted by a gang member, and how to make it until tomorrow. These are daily worries I faced, and these thoughts interfered with my concentration in school. When I voiced my concerns on campus, I was told to leave my worries outside the walls of school, but I felt that this was impossible. To deny these realities, I would have denied my family, my community, and, in turn, my identity. My development as a critical researcher in the Futures Project helped me make sense of all this.

There are many struggles males of color have to face in the world revolving around segregation, but people never think receiving an education would be one. Education is supposed to be the “great equalizer.” As a young Latino male, I always believed that the school system was a stepping-stone for higher education—not the quicksand that slowly eats away lives. During my high school freshmen year, I was introduced to the Futures Program and began to study the sociology of education. This background information and foundation in theory allowed me, and continues to allow me, to see how inequality exists in society. It opened my once blind eyes to the world of educational separatism. . . . I examined how minority students with “inherited poverty” are held back by the schools as well as by their own negative self-image. The concepts of cultural and social capital helped me to make sense of my educational experience.

My research group examined how language can promote or prohibit access to a better education. I researched how having English as a second language (ESL) affects a student’s education, how teachers handle situations where there are students unable to communicate well in class, and what types of programs exist to help language minority students. We found it is hard for non-English speakers to function and to learn in a predominantly English-speaking school environment. Although many schools have ESL-like programs to assist Spanish-speaking students to learn basic subjects, the students still fell behind. Sadly, if there was no program at a school, students of color were placed into lower tracks, ignored, and assumed slower because of their struggles with the English language.

Deconstructing Schools as Reproductive Institutions: Excerpts From a Critical Narrative by Alejandro Nuno

I believe many students of color fail to reach higher education because they lack the necessary language skills, proper guidance from counselors, and the tools necessary to survive in an educational system full of inequities. When I began my education in the United States, I was unaware how the educational system worked. I believed that as long as you achieved good grades, you would graduate from elementary school, move to middle school, and advance to high school. I thought if I graduated from high school, I would automatically go to college, and I was oblivious that you needed an advanced degree to become a lawyer, an architect, a doctor, or a psychologist. I was unaware of tracking and that certain courses did not count for college. I did not know grades were weighted in honors classes and that standardized tests, such as the SATs or ACT exams, were necessary to compete for college access.²

As a Futures student, I participated in a variety of activities that enabled me to understand how schools privilege some students and disadvantage others. As a researcher, I studied families, youth access to a livable wage, and creating a student bill of rights.

With the help of Futures team members, my parents became informed and built meaningful relationships with the other adults. This was a critical aspect of the college pathway, because parents' involvement is essential to break the cycles of social reproduction. Despite language or socioeconomic status, the more critical knowledge parents have about the school their children attend, the more they will ensure their children are given the same opportunities offered to more privileged students.

Navigational Strategies: Excerpts From a Critical Narrative by Roger Lara

Because of my research, I feel well educated about teachers' perceptions of language minority students and how language affects academic success. . . . The summer seminars were a chance for change; a change toward an equal education system where any student could have the opportunity to receive a quality educational experience. These were students who knew what problems they faced daily, and they were now provided with the environment to create solutions. For the first time, the teachers wanted to help them with the struggle, work alongside them in the battle. The adults wanted to teach and learn about the problems, to reach out to their own students and give them a better education. It was liberating to know that we were being listened to and accounted for. Knowing that my opinions

counted motivated me to speak more, participate in groups, and have confidence that my work meant something.

Engaging in critical research helped me navigate through my secondary and postsecondary institutions. The literature, studies, and information I read about inspired me to investigate further. I never felt the urge to actually read before, and now I did. I wanted to get the answers to the questions I pursued. My emerging motivation led to an increase in my self-confidence. Because of the advanced readings and the complexity of the material in the research program, I started to believe that I was smart and could go to college, as well. I continue to use this confidence in my undergraduate studies.

Navigational Strategies: Excerpts From a Critical Narrative by Alejandro Nuno

Because of my experiences as a critical researcher, I learned navigational strategies that enabled me to develop a college-going identity and retain my culture while taking rigorous courses. Futures established a difference between knowing all the requirements to attend a 4-year university and knowing how to access them. Even though I had a 4.0 grade point average, a teacher or counselor never encouraged me to enroll in Advanced Placement courses. Before Futures, no school representative ever informed me about SATs, ACTs, or SAT IIs or practice courses I could utilize to prepare for such high-stakes tests. Financial aid, scholarships, and fee waivers were foreign concepts. Futures teachers kept us informed about all the requirements, and every semester my classmates updated a 4-year report and charted our progress toward a 4-year university. We discussed these pathways in class as well as in regular, individual conferences. Most important of all, the Futures team guided me through a road of uncertainties and struggles because of my legal status here in the United States.

Impact of This Critical Sociology Early Intervention Program: Excerpts From a Critical Narrative by Roger Lara

Ultimately, my experiences as a critical researcher continue to lead me toward my goal to achieve a college degree. The summer before my junior year, I participated in the 1999 Futures Research Seminar at the University of California, Los Angeles. Working with other Los Angeles-area students, we were able to experience an educational program where the teachers and students worked as equals on educational research topics.

Prior to these high school summer seminars, I was not challenged academically. During these seminars, I really felt I was doing something. Researching the questions about language, social reproduction, social inequality, and tracking in the school curriculum was important, not only for

research purposes but for my own knowledge, as well. This first summer is especially clear in my mind, because it introduced me to the concept of educational injustice. It was not the normal tedious busywork; it was new and exciting because it pertained to my life.

In the summer of 2002, I had the opportunity to change my role from a student participant to an adult ethnographer and mentor for the seminar students. It was inspiring to work with students from different high schools and hear their passionate struggles for an equal education. For instance, the language barrier was still a common struggle for Latino students. As I worked with the student researchers, I realized that language is a form of cultural capital that divides English- and non-English-speaking immigrant students. It is incredibly difficult to learn in a new language and also adjust to a new educational setting. I was able to increase their social capital by advising them of advocates on their campus—those to whom they should talk about problems with academics and language and those teachers who want to see all students succeed.

Although I appreciate the privileges I received through the Futures Program, I continue to question why these opportunities are limited to so few students. Programs like Futures give students opportunities by teaching them about how schools are structured and help students achieve a better understanding of how to navigate dysfunctional school systems.

Impact of This Critical Sociology Early Intervention Program: Excerpts From a Critical Narrative by Alejandro Nuno

Because my father and mother grew up in México and worked since the ages of 15 and 12, respectively, they did not have the opportunity to further their formal education in high school and college. Therefore, they were unaware of the complexities of accessing higher education. They believed the schools would guide me properly. Looking back, I did not know reaching higher education meant I would have to learn how to navigate through the school system itself. Fortunately, I was able to do both. As a Mexican immigrant attending a diverse, suburban, high school that failed 50% of all Latino and African American students, I learned I had to struggle to overcome all the obstacles presented within public education. When I entered Pacific Beach High School, I lacked the essential information that I needed to gain college access.

Fortunately I was not alone in this struggle. Besides my own hard work, I was able to navigate and survive the educational inequities because I was a member of the Futures Project.

Through Futures and Families, my parents became aware of college-going statistics for minority students and different reasons why Latino students do not gain college access. Meetings addressed tracking and course el-

igibility, and they discussed cultural differences between Latino families and a predominantly White, Pacific Beach High School faculty. As informed advocates, the parents held counselors accountable for schedules, met with teachers, and challenged some of the administrative decisions at Pacific Beach High School.

I learned working hard is not enough to have a successful future. My most important role as a first-generation college student is helping my younger siblings access similar strategic pathways to higher education. I can make sure my sister and little brother do not face the same obstacles I did or at least assist them to minimize the barriers. Counselors, teachers, and administrators need to encourage all students to work toward higher education and give them the tools necessary to achieve. It should not take a research intervention program to guarantee what we already promise we are doing: providing all students with a quality education. Once a student is guided academically, personally, emotionally, and legally, schools can increase the opportunities for all students to reach higher education.

Concluding Remarks

This critical sociology and research language and these navigational skills proved essential for helping Lara and Nuno through high school, but they are equally important in university contexts that present many of the same challenges. Further, the critical sociology and research were not only important for individual success but were also geared toward a larger project of social justice.

One of the most important outcomes of using critical sociology as a set of tools was that it afforded students the opportunity to simultaneously deconstruct schools as reproductive institutions and navigate schools as gatekeepers to economic and social empowerment. Although we were adamant about college access as a goal, we did not want to reinforce deficit ideologies that blamed the students and families for their own failure (Valencia, 1997). To create a multicultural college-going identity and college-going culture (Oakes, 2003), each student must be prepared with the tools and opportunities necessary to attend and graduate from a 4-year university and to participate as a democratic citizen. All students, regardless of race, class, and gender, should be provided with a space to critically challenge the structures and practices of schooling. Furthermore, teachers and educators can work to create a curriculum that challenges meritocratic and deficit model thinking. Rather than focusing on what low-income students lack, educators can implement a strength-based model to locate their students' K-16 pathways in the strength and agency found within their families and communities. By focusing on the strengths students bring to school, a classroom can serve as a space to create a multicultural college-going identity rather than a site that subtracts cultural resources (Valenzuela, 1999).

As educators, we can implement critical approaches to our curriculum and pedagogy. Regardless of subject matter, every teacher can include an analysis of inequality in schools and provide realistic strategies to navigate through them. Low-income and first-generation college-going students especially need mentors and advocates within their schools to assist them with college access. At a minimum, this mentoring process needs to start the first day of high school and continue until a student enrolls in a postsecondary institution. Programs like Posse are one of the few intervention programs that systematically link high school graduates with college students as mentors attending their prospective universities (Gandara & Bial, 2001). Too often, intervention programs stop after high school graduation, marginally track progress, or fail to assist their alumni.

We also learned that college access was more than knowledge about the application process; many students were also denied access to the literacy tools that they needed to access college curricula. The Futures' social studies classes and the summer research seminars foregrounded the importance of literacy development for academic advancement and for social change. We encourage other college intervention programs to create spaces for students to express their frustration and critiques of the very schools that they need to navigate. Although this may seem counterproductive at first, we found that the critical conversations allowed for more honest dialogue between Futures staff and students. We encourage college intervention programs to work with and on behalf of students to challenge the material conditions that prevent higher levels of achievement. Through the Futures Project, we have endeavored to show that this does not have to be an either/or proposition and that programs can work for students and against inequitable conditions in schools at the same time. Finally, we advocate that college access programs help students to acquire the academic and critical skills that they need to flourish as students and as citizens. Well into their 3rd year at the university, both Lara and Nuno have maintained grade point averages well above 3.0. Equally as important, both students were still concerned with working toward change within their former school and community.

Although we have not tried to present the Futures Project as a model for other intervention programs, its success warrants a consideration of the unique features of the program. This study took place in a racially and economically diverse high school; however, we believe every high school creates policies and structures that privilege select groups of students (albeit smaller at some sites) over others. Within seemingly homogenous schools, these differences may exist across class, immigration status, cultural background, language minority status, or special education classifications. When any student group within a high school is perceived as college-going versus non-college-going, teachers, administrators, and districts develop intellectual justifications for failing to provide all students with a college-preparatory curriculum and opportunities to compete for college access.

The results described here offer several observations to challenge the traditional practices and structures of intervention programs. For example, having the students travel through their social studies classes as a cohort, allowing the students to participate authentically as college students, and requiring high-level academic products are all important. Further, developing extended programmatic relationships with parents is also crucial. Educators and intervention programs must work with students' families to educate them about the college access process and the increasing expectations placed on college-going high school students. Working with families as partners will provide parents and guardians a voice in their child's educational future and allow them a space to access critical information and assistance. Too often, low-income parents are stereotyped as not caring about education. In contrast, the Futures parents went to incredible lengths to provide their children with access to a quality education. Collaboration with the parents of first-generation college-going students allowed them the opportunity to care in ways that produce and exchange cultural and social capital within public high schools. When possible, we also advocate that university professionals spend time with students at their schools and in their classes and communities.

Finally, we also advocate that college intervention programs find ways to involve successful graduates in the work of the programs. One of the program's great fortunes is that through affiliated summer employment and other similar opportunities, Lara and Nuno (among others) have been able to maintain involvement with successive generations of high school students even as they continue to receive mentoring and support. As "near peers," program graduates who transition successfully to college are able to contribute a perspective that many of the other adults cannot. As the narratives indicate, the challenges and learning opportunities for our students do not end with their acceptance and entrance into a university environment.

Appendix

Additional Resources and Related Research

(See Reference List for Full Citations)

Morrell, E., & Collatos, A. (2002). "Toward a critical teacher education: High school student sociologists as teacher educators."

This article documents the experiences of high school students trained in the sociology of education who provided mentoring to preservice teachers enrolled in a university teacher education program. The authors propose a model of critical teacher education that foregrounds authentic dialogue between preservice teachers and urban students.

Collatos, A., & Morrell, E. (2003). "Apprenticing urban youth as critical researchers: Implications for school reform."

Using several case studies, this book chapter describes how the Futures students used their experiences as researchers to challenge the educational policies and practices within their school site.

Morrell, E. (2004). *Becoming critical researchers: Literacy and empowerment for urban youth*.

This forthcoming book contains an in-depth analysis of the Futures summer research seminars and how becoming critical researchers increased literacy and fostered empowerment for the participants.

For descriptions of annual summer research seminars, visit the Teaching to Change LA Web site at www.teachingtochangela.org.

For further information about college access pathways, see Pathways to College, a series of online articles based on work with the Futures students: www.tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/reportcard/college/index.html.

For more information on the Futures Project and continuing Futures research, access the Futures Project-UCLA/IDEA Web site at <http://www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/projects/futures/index.html>.

Notes

1. According to the California Indicators Project College Opportunity Ratio, 68% (56/82) of White and Asian graduating students at the focal high school in 2000 completed all the courses required for University of California and California State University admissions compared to 28% (20/72) of the African American, Latino, and American Indian students.

2. A-G requirements refers to the courses California high school students must complete with a C- or higher to meet the minimum course eligibility requirements to attend a University of California or California State University school.

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