

Overview

Excellence in teaching directly impacts persistence, graduation, and post-completion outcomes for the post-traditional majority of students. Latinos represent a majority of these students—often balancing work, family, and financial responsibilities as they persist along their educational pathway.¹ Investing in evidence-based teaching techniques, inclusive learning environments, and structured academic support prepares students with the skills and knowledge to succeed and compete in the workforce.

Teaching and Learning Strategies for Latino, and other, Post-Traditional Student Success

Institutional leaders, deans, department chairs, and faculty play a key role in developing inclusive, data-informed teaching and learning strategies. The following strategies strengthen learning and support faculty development, advancing academic success for Latino, and all, students.

- **Promote student-centered professional development through centers for teaching and learning (CTLs):** Faculty members are often hired as experts in their field but may receive limited formal training in teaching and balance additional responsibilities, such as research and service. CTLs can support continuous improvement by equipping faculty with evidence-based, culturally responsive, and student-centered practices that enhance student learning.
- **Support culturally responsive² strategies through incentives for instructional and curricular redesign:** Latino students often navigate bicultural, binational, and/or bilingual identities. Institutions can provide resources and incentives for faculty who redesign curricula and instructional practices to reflect and affirm students' lived experiences, strengthening belonging and academic engagement.
- **Use data to continuously improve teaching and learning:** Students bring varying life circumstances and needs into the classroom. Institutions can invest in the collection of timely, disaggregated course data—such as grades, attendance, and progress—to continuously inform strategies that meet students where they are along their educational pathways.³

Examples of Intentional Teaching and Learning Practices to Support Latino, and all, Students

Institutions are implementing intentional teaching and learning practices that advance academic excellence for Latino and other post-traditional students. These practices advance the teaching and learning process to prepare Latino, and all, students to graduate with the skills and knowledge needed to enter the workforce and pursue meaningful careers.⁴

Investing in Holistic Student Support Alongside Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Institutions are pairing culturally relevant curriculum with structured academic leadership support.

The Puente Project - University of California, Berkeley Puente is an intersegmental academic preparation operation that combines rigorous English, Math, and Ethnic Studies instruction with a **culturally relevant and engaging curriculum**; academic counseling; structured participation in mentoring and student leadership activities, and community service. Through Puente's unique model, pedagogy of *cariño*, and professional development, the

¹ Santiago, D., Arroyo, C., & Cuellarsola, L. (April 2024). Latinos in Higher Education: 2024 Compilation of Fast Facts. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.

² Culturally responsive teaching (CRT): Dr. Geneva Gay coined this term to refer to asset-based strategies and practices that recognize the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.

³ Berry, T.L.*, Dellinger, J*., Fox, K.*, Makkar, A.*, McBratney, J. (2020, August 13) Learning Analytics Strategy Toolkit. Every Learner Everywhere. *These authors contributed equally to the work.

⁴ Rodriguez, A., & Atwill, P. (April 2024). Advancing What Works to Intentionally Serve Latino Students: Opportunities for Action - 2024. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.

program goal is to ensure that every student feels a **sense of belonging** and has a positive academic experience.

- **Outcomes:** Puente Community College Program students maintain enrollment continuity more often than all California Community Colleges (CCC) students statewide, resulting in increased fall-to-spring persistence rates of first-time students.

Leveraging Faculty and Staff Communities to Develop Evidence-Based Pedagogies

Institutions are investing in faculty and staff communities of practice to explore and implement evidence-based, culturally relevant instruction.

Pedagogical Interest Groups (PIGs) - Indiana University Northwest PIGs are evolving **faculty and staff communities of practice** that **explore pedagogical and curricular literature** to find evidence-based techniques relevant to their student body, particularly Latino students. PIGs identified and implemented effective pedagogies and procedures, introducing **summer bridge programs, first-year seminars, cohort models, and redesigned curricula.**

- **Outcomes:** Between 2015 and 2022, the first-to-second-year retention rate for Latino students increased from 62% to 76%, while the overall retention rate increased from 65% to 68%. In redesigned courses, Latine students' DFW rates decreased from 35.5% in 2015 to 27.7% in 2023, and mean GPA increased from 2.20 to 2.57. For all students, DFW rates decreased from 31.6% to 25.6%, while mean GPA increased from 2.41 to 2.65.

Increasing Collaboration Between Students, Faculty, and Families for Academic Success

Institutions are engaging Latino students, faculty, staff, and families for holistic academic support and cultural programming.

Latinx Student Services and Outreach (LASSO), Georgia State University

LASSO expands the academic, social, and leadership opportunities for Latino/Hispanic students at GSU while also increasing **collaborative efforts** amongst Latino/Hispanic faculty, staff, and students. The program emphasizes the **value of family involvement** in a student's educational journey, engaging families through outreach initiatives.

- **Outcomes:** In Fall 2019, students who interacted with LASSO once earned GPAs 7 points higher than non-participants, and those who engaged more than twice earned GPAs 29 points higher. LASSO students earned an average GPA of 3.35.

For more information about evidence-based programs that advance academic excellence for Latino students, visit our [Growing What Works](#) page or contact us: contact@edexcelencia.org