

ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT

LOST IN TRANSLATION: LATINOS, SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY

Juan Villagas

It's too late now. It is. It's like I should have been in eleventh grade right now. Should have been a senior next year. You know and I'm not. Still in the tenth grade. You know? It's too late. Everybody dropping out.

V/O: NOT EVERYBODY, NOT ALL LATINOS - BUT FAR TOO MANY. ABOUT 30% OF LATINO YOUTH DROP OUT WITHOUT GRADUATING OR NEVER EVEN ENROLL IN SCHOOL.

ABOUT 150,000 LATINO YOUTH QUIT SCHOOL LAST YEAR, AND, IF NOTHING CHANGES, THAT NUMBER WILL ONLY INCREASE, BECAUSE LATINOS UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN REPRESENT THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT OF OUR POPULATION.

V/O: MOST AMERICAN CITIES HAVE LARGE LATINO POPULATIONS, BOTH IMMIGRANT AND NATIVE BORN: DOMINICANS AND PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK, CUBANS IN MIAMI, MEXICANS AND CENTRAL AMERICANS IN LOS ANGELES AND MUCH OF THE SOUTHWEST. WHILE DROPOUT RATES VARY AMONG THESE GROUPS, THE OVERALL RATE OF 30% IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP. BY CONTRAST, 9% OF WHITES AND 12% OF BLACKS FAIL TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL.

S/U: WHAT EXPLAINS THIS PERSISTENT AND SEEMINGLY INTRACTABLE FAILURE RATE AMONG LATINO YOUTH? WHO'S TO BLAME? - IS THERE A SIMPLE EXPLANATION? SOCIETY IS ALWAYS ASKING THE SCHOOLS TO SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THIS ONE. MOST EDUCATORS SEEM WILLING TO SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS,

BUT WHETHER SCHOOLS ALONE CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEM IS DOUBTFUL.

(FUNDING CREDITS)

S/U: WHY DO 30% OF LATINO YOUTH DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL? THERE ARE DOZENS OF POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS INCLUDING POVERTY, INSUFFICIENT EDUCATIONAL

OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE LURE OF THE STREETS. BUT LET'S START WITH LANGUAGE.

DIFFICULTY SPEAKING ENGLISH IS THE REASON TALKED ABOUT MOST OFTEN. FOR

IMMIGRANTS, OR THE CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS, LEARNING TO SPEAK AND WRITE

ENGLISH IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

Carlos Jiménez

I think people draw a correlation between knowledge of English and intelligence as well. So if the kid doesn't speak English very well, he must not be very intelligent.

V/O: 3.2 MILLION AMERICAN STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED IN SPECIAL SCHOOL PROGRAMS

DESIGNED TO TEACH THEM ENGLISH. ABOUT HALF OF THEM, 1.4 MILLION, ARE IN CALIFORNIA, WHERE WE LOCATE OUR STORY. CALIFORNIA, LIKE MOST OTHER STATES,

IS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE BEST WAY TO TEACH THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ENGLISH.

THERE ARE THREE COMPETING APPROACHES, ENGLISH IMMERSION, DUAL LANGUAGE AND (THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL) BILINGUAL EDUCATION.

IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION, TEACHING IN THE EARLY GRADES IS IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE, BUT IN ENGLISH IN THE LATER GRADES.

Mary Camp Jenison

And they need to at least have knowledge in their own language of how to read, and how to write. Because many of the skills in Spanish are transitional to English.

V/O: IN THE METHOD KNOWN AS 'ENGLISH IMMERSION,' ALL TEACHING IS IN ENGLISH FROM THE BEGINNING.

Gloria Matta Tuchman

It is really a very simple process in teaching English. If you can speak English, you can teach English.

V/O: IN DUAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS, ALL CHILDREN LEARN TO SPEAK AND WRITE IN TWO LANGUAGES.

Paula Mahan

We are all learning a second language. Some of us are learning English as a second language and some of us are learning Spanish as a second language.

[NAT SOT: Mrs. Jenison reading to her students in Spanish]

V/O: IN 1976 CALIFORNIA PASSED A LAW REQUIRING "BILINGUAL EDUCATION." IN THIS APPROACH, STUDENTS ARE FIRST TAUGHT IN THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE AND MOVED GRADUALLY--OVER THREE OR FOUR YEARS--INTO ENGLISH. THE GOAL IS ENGLISH FLUENCY.

V/O: IN THIS KINDERGARTEN CLASS, AT WOODLAWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BELL CALIFORNIA AT LEAST 90% OF THE DAY IS IN SPANISH.

[NAT SOT: Kindergarten kids listen to Mary Camp Jenison: "Es un libro bien bonito. Que ven aqui? y que es esto el bebe? Un potrio, verdad digame potrio. Este es un 'rooster', gallo, en ingles dicimos rooster verdad."]

Mary Camp Jenison

Bilingual classes work. Children do learn. And they do become fluent in

English. And that's the goal of the bilingual program; is for children to become fluent in English.

V/O: MARY JENISON CO-TEACHES WITH CARMEN IBAÑEZ. AS WITH MOST KINDERGARTNERS, THESE 5 AND 6 YEAR OLDS LEARN THE BASICS: THE ALPHABET, HOW TO COUNT, AND HOW TO WRITE THEIR NAMES.

[NAT SOT: Kindergarten kids listen to Carmen Ibañez: "Lourdes, ah mira una "ese." ¿Es la mayuscula o la minuscula? La minuscula?"]

Mary Camp Jenison

She's doing "S" words and finding the "S" in the children's names. Because one way children learn how to read, especially when they're beginning, is finding letters in their names

[NAT SOT: Kindergarten kids with Carmen Ibañez: ¿Cuantas hay eses en la palabra Julian? Zero. Zero. Vamos a poner zero. ¿Kimberly, tú nombre tiene? Zero. Vamos a poner zero. oh mira Lourdes. quantas? quantas? una. vamos a poner una.]

V/O: ABOUT 10% OF THE DAY IS SPENT DOING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, WHICH IS COMMONLY ABBREVIATED 'E.S.L.'

Mary Camp Jenison

Whatever literature I'm doing in Spanish I try to find something in English that relates, so that I can teach an ESL lesson in my classroom as well that will go with the literature.

V/O: AT WOODLAWN PLAY TIME IS ALSO LEARNING TIME. THESE KINDERGARTNERS HAVE A SUPERVISED PERIOD IN WHICH THEY JUMP ROPE AND PLAY GAMES - IN ENGLISH.

[NAT SOT: Jumping rope activities. Mary Camp Jenison leads the class: Now help me say the rhyme here we go... "Hippidy, hippidy hop. How times

before I stop. Good. Okay Andrea. One. Try again Andrea. One more time Andrea. Count. Everybody help me count. One two three four...]

Mary Camp Jenison

And many children - of these children come from homes where no one speaks English. All they know is what jump is in Spanish, or what run is in Spanish.

[NAT SOT: continued, Jumping rope activities. Mary Camp Jenison leads the class: wow David. Go. Jump. Good job David!]

Mary Camp Jenison

And they're going to become fluent English speakers. But they need to be -- they need to start out where they are now because they don't have someone at home to help them speak English. And they need to at least have knowledge in their own language of how to read, and how to write. Because many of the skills in Spanish are transitional to English.

[NAT SOT: 2nd grade classroom]

V/O: BY SECOND GRADE, ABOUT HALF OF THE INSTRUCTION IS IN ENGLISH. FOR EXAMPLE, MARIA DOLORES SOLARES TEACHES MATH IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

[NAT SOT: Math Instruction in both English and in Spanish, María Dolores Solares: How would we say the second? \$2.96. Dos dolares con la noventa y seis centavos. What is the first thing we do when we have a problem. Nos fijamos en el signal and that is we look at our signs.]

John Merrow

You were teaching math. You were doing some - some dollars problem...

María Dolores Solares

Yes.

John Merrow

....and you were kind of moving back and forth.

María Dolores Solares

I need to do that because I have some students that their basic language is Spanish and they have not - don't have enough skills in English to be able to understand it all.

V/O: LATER IN THE DAY, SOLARES CONDUCTS A LESSON ON THE SOLAR SYSTEM IN TWO PARTS. FIRST IN SPANISH.

[PICTURE: see writings on the wall of lessons in Spanish]

V/O: ONCE SHE FEELS HER STUDENTS HAVE MASTERED THE BASIC CONCEPTS, SHE TEACHES IT AGAIN, THIS TIME IN ENGLISH.

[NAT SOT: 2nd grade boy reading: I am Mars. I am known as the red planet because of my color.]

María Dolores Solares

Well what we want to do is have the students that their primary language is Spanish learn the basic concepts in their native language so as they're learning their English, you know, then the two will meet eventually.

V/O: THE TRANSITION TO ENGLISH CONTINUES AS CHILDREN MOVE UP. IN THIS CLASS OF THIRD AND FOURTH GRADERS, VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE INSTRUCTION IS IN ENGLISH, ALTHOUGH TEACHER JANICE TAMEHIRO DOES SPEAK SPANISH.

[PICTURE: kids listen to Tamehiro @ head of classroom]

[PICTURE: Writings on the wall in English]

John Merrow

I was looking around the room; on the walls almost everything ...

Janice Tamehiro

The print is in English. And it's - it's the children's print. And they can read it to you; they're the authors. And so you will see that they are functioning in English, but if you ask them in Spanish, they could tell you what they did in Spanish.

John Merrow

When you read books, do you read books in English or in Spanish.

[all]

In both

John Merrow

Well, now I get English, I get Spanish and I get both. Well now who reads in both?

[all hands go up]

Oh, everyone reads in both. Well, how do you choose which one. Can we go back here?

Young Girl

We try to figure out which one is the one that is more interesting.

Janice Tamehiro

I want reading to be a pleasant experience, and I want them to read what they want to read. And so they will choose. Sometimes you'll see them pick English books and sometimes they choose to read the Spanish books.

John Merrow

They choose?

Janice Tamehiro

Yes. And these are books that they take home and read.

John Merrow

Now if you have a question to ask Mrs. Tamehiro do you ask her in English or in Spanish?

[all]

English.

John Merrow

Why?

Girl

Because she wants us to learn more English if we get mixed up.

John Merrow

If you went up to her and asked her a question in Spanish would she answer you in Spanish?

[all]

No. Yes. No. Yes.

John Merrow

She would answer you in English.

Girl

Yes.

John Merrow

Would she make you speak in English?

[all]

No.

John Merrow

You are allowed to speak Spanish?

[all]

Yes.

Janice Tamehiro

I'm trying to help them to maintain their Spanish but to add the English into their language.

John Merrow

So if someone says well what's your goal, or what's the goal of bilingual education, you would say...?

Janice Tamehiro

It is to be able to function in English, in school, and to be able to read and write and continue to work in all the content areas in English.

V/O: BY THE END OF FIFTH GRADE, ABOUT 60% OF THE STUDENTS HERE ARE CONSIDERED FLUENT IN ENGLISH. VETERAN TEACHER SAL CASTRO BELIEVES BILINGUAL EDUCATION WORKS BECAUSE STUDENTS FEEL WELCOME.

Sal Castro

Give them success in whatever language - if it takes - if they come in knowing more Martian give them the Martian language so they'll succeed. Because this is all - educational psychology jargon. They must succeed early. And if they succeed early they'll like school. They'll want to stay in school and they'll want to succeed in school. So it one hand helps the

other that way.

V/O: BUT IN MOST BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, IT OFTEN APPEARS THAT ONE HAND DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THE OTHER HAND IS DOING.

John Merrow

Do you have a sense of whether this school does bilingual education well?

Michael Rosner

I don't think -- I don't think bilingual education is done well here at all.

John Merrow

Why do you say that?

Michael Rosner

Well based upon the number of students who transitioned into English.

V/O: IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, EIGHT OUT OF 950 STUDENTS HAVE MADE THE TRANSITION AT HIS SCHOOL, MENLO AVENUE ELEMENTARY, IN LOS ANGELES.

V/O: IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION, FIRST GRADE INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE IN SPANISH, BUT ANGELA BENSON MCDANIEL DOES NOT SPEAK SPANISH. INSTEAD SHE PROVIDES WHAT SHE CALLS AN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM...IN ENGLISH.

[NAT SOT Angela Benson McDaniel: Tug-boat, tug-boat. Give it the sound of "-dge" Let's blend it. Fudge. Fudge. Fudge!]

Angela Benson McDaniel

I can't do a program, that I don't believe in. I couldn't offer that to my children and give them something that I'm supposed to do but couldn't feel strong about.

[NAT SOT César Garcia talking to a student Los esfuerzos serán a poco

aterea. Huelga. La huelga. ¿Y que más?]

V/O: BY FOURTH GRADE, MOST INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE IN ENGLISH, BUT IN THIS CLASSROOM, THE TEACHING IS ALMOST ENTIRELY IN SPANISH.

[NAT SOT César Garcia talking to a student, continued: ¿Y despues de las huelgas cómo se? Se bajaron un poquito más. Okay.]

César Garcia

I was told that they can't be writing in English, you know, except for ESL, you know I can't tell them, okay we're gonna write a page and I want you guys to write it in English.

V/O: STUDENTS AT MENLO AVENUE HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO ALL SORTS OF INSTRUCTION: ENGLISH ONLY, SPANISH ONLY AND A MIXTURE OF BOTH.

César Garcia

But this year, they're in an all Bilingual class and the teacher speaks Spanish. So they're being flip-flopped in these programs.

V/O: THERE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM.

John Merrow

Do you have books in English?

César Garcia

I don't have books in English. Like the core books, like this history book, I don't have English books and I don't have enough Spanish books to go around.

V/O: BECAUSE LOS ANGELES DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH QUALIFIED BILINGUAL TEACHERS, IT GIVES OUT 'EMERGENCY CREDENTIALS' TO COLLEGE GRADUATES LIKE

CÉSAR GARCIA. GARCIA HAS LITTLE TEACHER TRAINING AND NO TEACHING EXPERIENCE. IN ALL, 36% OF MENLO AVENUE'S TEACHERS HOLD EMERGENCY CREDENTIALS, INCLUDING RIGOBERTO GARCIA, WHO TEACHES 5TH GRADE.

Rigoberto Garcia

It's eased up a bit in the sense that I know what I'm supposed to be teaching, I know the curriculum. At least the fifth grade, I'm not an expert in it, but um I heard you don't become an expert teacher until you got at least a couple years under your belt. I only have a couple months, so I am working my way up there.

John Merrow

How old are you

Rigoberto Garcia

I'm 22.

John Merrow

This is your first teaching?

Rigoberto Garcia

Yeah, this is my first assignment, yes.

V/O: AT THE END OF THE YEAR, GARCIA'S STUDENTS WILL BE TESTED. BUT HE HAS NOT BEEN TOLD IF THE EXAM WILL BE IN ENGLISH OR IN SPANISH.

Rigoberto Garcia

Yeah, it's a little vague we right we don't know what we are going to be testing on I got information at the beginning of the year, at least when we started that we were going to be testing both languages were going to be taking the Stanford 9 and Aprenda. Stanford 9 is in English, Aprenda is in Spanish. Now, um I just got word, or maybe it's a rumor or what have you that the district is kind of swaying the whole district to just take the Aprenda exam.

[NAT SAT: Rigoberto Garcia talking to class: Okay bueno. Antes de empezar el examen que vamos a tomar. Vamos a hacer un poquito de repaso de algunos de los conceptos que vamos a encontrar en el examen.]

John Merrow

Mr. Garcia seems like a nice man.

Yesinia

Yeah he's a nice man.

John Merrow

He's new though.

Yesinia

Yes.

John Merrow

Who was your teacher at the beginning.

Yesinia

The first one started teaching but he was a police so he sleep.

John Merrow

A policeman.

Yesinia

Yeah. So he worked at the night so in the morning he came to sleep.

John Merrow

To sleep during class.

Yesinia

Yeah. He said do Math at page 31 then we start it then he see that everyone doing Math he started to sleep.

John Merrow

He would fall asleep.

Yesinia

Yeah.

John Merrow

What do parents say about this?

César Garcia

You know, for the most part parent in these communities, kinda don't know what's going on, they feel that the school's taking care of it, they know what they're doing, you know. If they tell them your son's gonna be doing better in this Bilingual program then they're gonna say, 'okay, you know best.'

John Merrow

Latino parents tend to respect the authority of the school.

César Garcia

Yeah , exactly...

John Merrow

But do you think they're getting...

César Garcia

I don't think they really understand what's going on.

V/O: WHAT PARENTS MAY NOT UNDERSTAND IS THEIR SCHOOL'S TRACK RECORD: IN THE PAST TWO YEARS ONLY EIGHT MENLO AVENUE STUDENTS HAVE MADE THE LEAP TO ENGLISH FLUENCY.

V/O: DISAPPOINTING RESULTS, LIKE THOSE AT MENLO AVENUE, HAVE GIVEN BILINGUAL EDUCATION A BAD NAME, BUT BILINGUAL EDUCATION, GOOD OR BAD, IS USED IN ONLY 30% OF CALIFORNIA'S CLASSROOMS. MOST LATINO STUDENTS HERE ARE EXPOSED TO A HODGEPODGE OF PROGRAMS. AND 16% RECEIVE NOTHING AT ALL. KRIS GUTIERREZ IS PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AT UCLA.

Kris Gutierrez

If you go and study Latino schools as I do, and you see a range of schools throughout the city it won't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the opportunity to learn and the kinds of context for learning that these kids have are so qualitatively different than other kids.

Roberto Suro

The distribution of educational resources is a more powerful determinant for example than racial prejudice.

V/O: ROBERTO SURO, A REPORTER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST, IS THE AUTHOR OF "STRANGERS AMONG US," A BOOK ABOUT THE IMPACT OF LATINO IMMIGRATION IN THE

UNITED STATES.

Roberto Suro

When you look at a community like the Latino immigrant community in various parts of this country, the kind of education that they're offered is -- is the most powerful force in determining where that second generation is going to end up.

[PICTURE: election results from the papers.]

V/O: INSTEAD OF PROVIDING MORE TEACHERS AND BOOKS TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL BILINGUAL EDUCATION, CALIFORNIANS VOTED, OVERWHELMINGLY, TO BAN THE PROGRAM, IN JUNE OF 1998. WHEN A COURT CHALLENGE FAILED, THE BAN WENT INTO EFFECT. WHEN MENLO AVENUE AND WOODLAWN OPENED IN AUGUST, TEACHING WAS IN ENGLISH. WOODLAWN HOPES TO SAVE ITS BILINGUAL PROGRAM, BUT PARENTS HAVE TO VOTE FOR IT.

V/O: PROPOSITION 227 SPECIFICALLY ENDORSES THE APPROACH TO TEACHING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS KNOWN AS "ENGLISH IMMERSION," WHICH IMMERSSES STUDENTS IN ENGLISH FOR THE ENTIRE DAY. AS WITH BILINGUAL EDUCATION, THE GOAL IS ENGLISH FLUENCY.

[NAT SOT: Jan Tuin's classroom.]

V/O: WHEN JAN TUIN'S KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ENROLLED AT TAFT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SANTA ANA, 6 MONTHS AGO, MOST OF THEM SPOKE NO ENGLISH.

[NAT SOT: Jan Tuin reading to her class: Not "a" but "an egg." Here we go.
Kids: They go to a star.]

Jan Tuin

No it is definitely not a sink or swim program. We use all kinds of visuals for the children we model everything very closely. We do use the sign language.

V/O: TEACHERS OFTEN USE SIGN LANGUAGE TO ILLUSTRATE THE MEANINGS OF WORDS. MOST OF TAFT'S 42 TEACHERS ARE NOT BILINGUAL.

John Merrow

Do you speak Spanish to them.

Jan Tuin

I don't speak Spanish, but Ms. Laras our assistant does speak Spanish with the children and if there's something that they need to convey like an idea, feeling, something more abstract. Then I have them talk to her. She translates for us.

Jan Tuin

How many of you can speak English now? (Me! [hands go up]) How many of you like to speak English? See they like to speak English.

[NAT SOT: Gloria Matta Tuchman reading in English to a group of students.]

John Merrow

Would you characterize yourself as an English only person?

Gloria Matta Tuchman

Oh heavens no. I love being bilingual. In fact I'm working on becoming trilingual. No, English only? I would characterize myself as being an English literacy advocate.

V/O: FIRST GRADE TEACHER GLORIA MATTA TUCHMAN, WHO IS MEXICAN-AMERICAN, HAS BECOME NATIONALLY KNOWN FOR HER SUPPORT OF ENGLISH IMMERSION.

Gloria Matta Tuchman

English immersion -- sheltered English immersion -- is nothing new that has been created. I mean it's been around for generations and generations, decades and decades. And it is really a very simple process in teaching English. If you can speak English, you can teach English.

[NAT SOT. Gloria Matta Tuchman in class: Okay just a minute. Do you see. Show me where the tin box is. And what does it say on the tin box here? Kids: "Go fish." What do you think is inside that box? Kids: "Fish." What did he do? Kids: "He eat the fish!" He ate the fish.]

John Merrow

You're widely recognized as an opponent of bilingual education. Why are you so critical of bilingual education?

Gloria Matta Tuchman

Because it really delays the learning of English. That's it in a nutshell. It does not teach English.

V/O: IN SECOND GRADE, EMPHASIS ON SPEAKING AND LEARNING TO READ IN ENGLISH INTENSIFIES.

Nancy Marosi

At our school we have them divided into three groups for English Immersion. I have the beginning level. Just a second, Jesus.

[NAT SOT: Marosi roaming the room going over the story and reading with her class.]

Nancy Marosi

So we are going over all day long how to decode the words how to define what these words mean, how to write in English. And they've come a long, long ways.

[NAT SOT: Marosi roaming the room going over a story: Let's see if you can remember what is the sign for "cat." If you remember it from yesterday show me the sign language sign for "cat."

She tickled him. Who can tell me what does tickle mean. Who can show me. Yolanda show me what tickling would be. Do you use your hands when you tickle? And when you tickle someone what do they do? If you tickle someone what do they do? Yolanda: They giggle.]

V/O: MOST OF THE STUDENTS IN NANCY MAROSI'S CLASS HAVE EITHER TRANSFERRED FROM A BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AT ANOTHER SCHOOL, OR RECENTLY ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES.

John Merrow

Do your parents like you to speak English

Christopher

Yeah.

John Merrow

Tell me.

Christopher

Mine does

John Merrow

Why?

Christopher

Because they want me to have, they want me to read, write and like to speak English better to talk a lot better in English.

John Merrow

Why do they want you to do that?

Christopher

Because I was in Mexico and I didn't know how to read in English and write in English and speak English

John Merrow

But you learned and you are only in second grade?

Christopher

Yeah!

John Merrow

Is it hard to learn English?

Christopher

No.

John Merrow

No?

Christopher

No.

John Merrow

How about your mother and father do they speak English?

Christopher

My sister and my brother do but not my mom.

John Merrow

Do you worry that the kids will lose their Spanish?

Nancy Marosi

I don't worry too much because most of these boys and girls have Spanish at home. They are getting a lot of Spanish at home. I have had parents in the past tell me that they are concerned cause their children start using English at home and they feel like there is a separation between them. What do I say to a parent who gets worried...ah, I usually tell them to encourage their children to know both English and Spanish because it is very important to know two languages.

[PICTURE: exterior sign to show we are entering Tamura's 3rd grade classroom.]

John Merrow

So you are teaching math.

Linda Tamura

Yes this is math. Lots of oral language in math

John Merrow

Are you teaching English at the same time?

Linda Tamura

All day long. All day long. Everything is in English.

[NAT SOT: Tamura teaching math: Boys and girls this week we have been talking about fractions. Remember we've been talking about fractions? We have 2 words here: Numerator and Denominator. So if we have a set of six children my denominator can be six. Tang. What part of my set are girls? Tang: 3. So three out of the six. So what is my fraction? Tang: Three-six. Tamura: Three-six are girls good.]

[NAT SOT: Manley's class following directions.]

V/O: MARLEEN MANLEY IS TEACHING HER FOURTH GRADERS TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. FOR HER NEW STUDENTS, IT'S ALSO A BASIC ENGLISH LESSON. SUPPORTERS OF ENGLISH IMMERSION CLAIM THAT IT HAS ANOTHER IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE: IT WORKS WITH STUDENTS FROM MANY LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS.

Marleen Manley

We have one student who is new to this country. About two weeks ago he got here from Vietnam. We do have a Vietnamese aid who is helping, instructional assistant. and takes him to the side and re-explains what I've already explained. So not only is he hearing it first in English but then he is hearing it in his native language also.

John Merrow

That's the young boy over there.

Marleen Manley

Right

John Merrow

I was watching him, he looks lost.

Marleen Manley

Right. He does look lost, but as he watched the students around him he was able to do the actions.

[NAT SOT: Manley giving directions to her class. One boy looks lost. He can not keep up with the other students. Manley: Hands behind you. Hands up. Hands down. Hands forward. Oh, listen with your ears as I am telling you the directions.]

Marleen Manley

And so when he, its only his second week here, and so as he starts hearing what I'm saying and watching the other students as they're reacting to me he's going to be able to pick them up and he is getting a lot of extra help.

V/O: STUDENTS AT TAFT DO ACQUIRE ENGLISH SKILLS. TAFT HAS SOME OF THE HIGHEST TEST SCORES IN THE ENTIRE SANTA ANA SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND THE SCHOOL PROMOTES ENGLISH IMMERSION AS A MODEL FOR THE ENTIRE STATE.

BUT JUST AS THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF BAD BILINGUAL EDUCATION, BAD IMMERSION PROGRAMS EXIST, ONES WHICH SIMPLY DROP KIDS INTO ENGLISH-SPEAKING SITUATIONS AND EXPECT THEM TO LEARN ENGLISH. THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED TO JACKIE DOMINGUEZ AS A KINDERGARTENER.

Jackie Dominguez

Well the first time I cried, you know because I didn't even know what -- what they were saying, you know, so I was like nervous.

John Merrow

Scared.

Jackie Dominguez

Yeah. I got over with it.

Angelica Reyes

It's like you're taking the opportunity of their success away right there as a child. You're telling them Spanish is bad.

Kris Gutierrez

I once interviewed a colleague for an article. He had a wonderful

story. He talks about the importance of bilingualism and biculturalism in education.

And he said you know I came to kindergarten, and I walked in with my "Maleta," which means suitcase. And he said and it was filled with all my treasures, my language, my experiences, my stories. But when I got to kindergarten, they didn't let me use any of them. And moreover they didn't even let me bring my Maleta into the classroom.

And I think what he was describing sort of profoundly was that experience of never being able to insert myself, my own social and cultural and linguistic experiences into this process that must be effacing over time.

V/O: BUT GLORIA MATTA TUCHMAN MAINTAINS THAT THE SCHOOL'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO TEACH STUDENTS TO READ, WRITE AND SPEAK ENGLISH.

Gloria Matta Tuchman

I feel it is the family's responsibility to maintain the home language, yes. The culture and home language. Appreciation and respect for someone's culture and language is something else.

John Merrow

In this school I met a fourth grader, and I asked her to read to me. And she read to me in English, she is Latina. She read haltingly but she could read. And then I asked her to read to me in Spanish.

[PICTURE: Inter-cut with Images of Blanca reading.]

[John Merrow: Try this first word. Blanca: Animal. John Merrow: That's animal in English. In Spanish it would be? Blanca:Futuro? Oh no. John Merrow: Animál? Blanca: Animál. John Merrow: What does animál mean? Blanca: An animal. John Merrow: And what is this word? Blanca: Future? John Merrow: Fuerte. Blanca: Fuerte.]

John Merrow

.....And she couldn't do it. And she said, I wish the school could teach me to read and write in Spanish.

Gloria Matta Tuchman

The school will teach her to read and write in Spanish. Do you know when? When she gets perhaps to junior high school or intermediate school or high school. I mean what is stopping anyone from taking language classes at that point, whether it be Spanish, whether it be German, whether it be French or whatever the language.

Paula Mahan

Why -- why wait until high school or wait until college to take Spanish One and Spanish Two? They've learned more than I can learn in Spanish One, Two and Three, and they're just in first and second grade.

[NAT SOT: Paula Mahan in class going over her lesson to native Spanish and English speakers.]

V/O PAULA MAHAN USES AN APPROACH CALLED DUAL-LANGUAGE. WHAT SEPARATES DUAL LANGUAGE FROM BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH IMMERSION IS THE INSISTENCE THAT ENGLISH ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH. SPEAKING AND WRITING IN 2 LANGUAGES IS THE GOAL. MAHAN CREATED THE DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM HERE, AT GRANDVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN LOS ANGELES.

V/O: MAHAN TEACHES THIS SCIENCE LESSON TO NATIVE SPANISH AND ENGLISH SPEAKERS ENTIRELY IN SPANISH. ABOUT 70% OF HER DAY IS SPENT USING SPANISH

[Mahan: Ya yo quiero que ustedes pueden pensar. Que piensan ustedes?
Girl: La zanahoria? Mahan: La zanahoria va a subir? Girl: No el raiz.
Mahan: El raiz va a subir? Class: El agua. Mahan: Ah. Y que va a pasar? Marsela? Que? Cultitas de color? Un hunh.]

Paula Mahan

We are all learning a second language. Some of us are learning English as

a second language and some of us are learning Spanish as a second language.

John Merrow

Now this is the first English I've heard you speaking.

Paula Mahan

That's right. I -- in fact I'm very uncomfortable speaking English in front of my class this way. When we have our English time what is it we do?

Child

We touch the button.

Paula Mahan

We touch the button. And then we change into English. And I didn't touch the button and change into English.

[NAT SOT classroom question and answer session:

Mahan: Porque cuando un raiz esta creciendo en un jardin o la tierra?

Girl: Tierra

Mahan: Muy bien.

Joey: It just goes in the tierra and then the plants like suck it up so the weeds don't get it.

Mahan: Tu tienes razon.]

John Merrow

Now a couple of times in the question and answer a couple of the children were speaking in Spanish and then slipped into English and then back into Spanish.

Paula Mahan

Right.

John Merrow

And you, however, stayed in Spanish.

Paula Mahan

Right. That happens a lot. Particularly in the lower grades where the children will be stronger in one language or the other, and they'll fall back into that language. So -- because in the primary grades we're working mostly on Spanish, I'll reinforce the Spanish by either repeating what they say or like I asked Joey to try to say it in Spanish. And he did a pretty

good job.

[Mahan: Y que va a pasar otra vez en Español Joey?

Joey: Se va um, los um, los um, rutas

Mahan: Raices.

Joey: Raices. Se van a um, tocar este agua y se..... estaba tomer, tomarlo, y,y,y, that's how it grows.]

John Merrow

Talk about bilingual education it's to get the Spanish speaking kids into English. This is not that.

Paula Mahan

No.

John Merrow

It's a different approach?

Paula Mahan

It's -- it's very different from that. The reason being, when it's to get them, as you say, into English it's an indication that there's something wrong with where they are. What we're saying is there -- it's nothing wrong with where they are. In fact where they are is in a real plus place. They have a language. And when we can take that language and in a situation like this of half English speakers, half Spanish speakers, share the language with each other.

[Mahan: En este mundo es muy importante para tener dos lenguajes, ¿verdad?]

[Joey: I can speak three languages, and I like to speak my language.

Because, I like French and I like Mexican and English.....

Mahan: And why do you think it's important to know three languages?

Joey: Because, and then if you read 3 books of languages then that opens a new world for you.]

V/O: IN A FEW YEARS THESE STUDENTS WILL BE IN JULIE KAUP'S 5TH GRADE CLASS, AND ALL WILL BE BILINGUAL AND BILITERATE. HALF OF THEIR DAY WILL BE IN SPANISH, THE OTHER HALF IN ENGLISH.

[DISSOLVE INTO PICTURE: Kaup walking around her fifth grade classroom, instructing students in English.]

V/O: DUAL LANGUAGE STUDENTS DO BETTER ON TESTS THAN STUDENTS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH IMMERSION, AND PROPOSITION 227 ALLOWS PROGRAMS LIKE THIS ONE AT GRAND VIEW IF MOST PARENTS VOTE IN FAVOR.

Julie Kaup

So if a parent were to a - you know ask me why should I put my child in this immersion program ...

John Merrow

My Anglo child ...

Julie Kaup

... my Anglo child to have two -- to learn two languages, I'll say well look at these Spanish speaking kids. They're going to have two languages so wake up you know. This is what's going to happen. Your child will be monolingual; this Latino kid will have two languages. So if you want to compete you should have two languages too.

S/U: BECOMING BILINGUAL IS IMPORTANT, BUT MOST OF THE DROPOUTS WE MET SPEAK TWO LANGUAGES. THEY DID NOT DROP OUT OF SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T GET ALONG IN ENGLISH. WE BEGAN WITH A QUESTION: WHY THE HIGH DROPOUT RATE AMONG LATINO YOUTH? IT SEEMS THE ANSWER HAS MORE TO DO WITH POLITICS AND ECONOMICS THAN WITH EDUCATION.

V/O: JOANN INIGUEZ AND JACKIE GUTIERREZ, BOTH 17, ARE CLOSE FRIENDS. THEIR PARENTS CAME TO THE UNITED STATES FROM MEXICO. JOANN AND JACKIE WERE

BORN AND RAISED IN LOS ANGELES.

John Merrow

Tell - tell me about school. What school was like.

Jackie Gutierrez

School's boring.

John Merrow

Did you ever like school?

Joann Iniguez

I used to always ditch. I dropped out when I was in the eighth grade and I went back to high school with my baby. But I didn't like it. I just wanted to take care of my baby.

V/O: JOANN'S 11-MONTH-OLD BABY GIRL IS NAMED DESTINY.

John Merrow

When did you drop out?

Jackie Gutierrez

In the eighth...

John Merrow

How old were you?

Jackie Gutierrez

I was thirteen.

John Merrow

Did you go back at all?

Jackie Gutierrez

No.

V/O: BECAUSE SCHOOLS IN LOS ANGELES ARE OVERCROWDED AND UNDERSTAFFED, SOME YOUNG PEOPLE, LIKE JOANN & JACKIE, SEEM TO FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS.

John Merrow

Did somebody come from the school and say 'Hey Jackie, where are you?'

Jackie Gutierrez

No.

John Merrow

Because they're supposed to.

Jackie Gutierrez

They're supposed to?

John Merrow

Sure.

Jackie Gutierrez

Not to me.

Joann Iniguez

Not to me either.

John Merrow

I wonder why?

V/O: JOANNE AND JACKIE ADMIT THAT THEIR SCHOOLS DID SEND NOTES HOME, WHICH THEY INTERCEPTED AND THREW AWAY. THEIR PARENTS COULD NOT HAVE READ THEM ANYWAY - THE NOTES WERE IN ENGLISH.

V/O: JUAN HERNANDEZ WAS ALSO BORN AND RAISED IN LOS ANGELES.

Juan Hernandez

When I dropped out I was seventeen. Learning or doing my work wasn't a problem. It was like when I start thinking different you know. I started hangin with the other bad boys.

V/O: ALL THREE - JUAN, JOANN AND JACKIE JOINED GANGS

John Merrow

Is that automatic?

Juan Hernandez

Like I not... basically I just got in because when I was fourteen I wasn't like thinking I guess, so I just got in a gang.

John Merrow

Why did you join a gang?

Jackie Gutierrez

I wanted to.

John Merrow

Why did you want to?

Jackie Gutierrez

I don't know - I've been - I was kicking in with them for a long time so...

John Merrow

Oh so you were hanging out with them.

Jackie Gutierrez

Yeah.

Joann Iniguez

I grew up with them. My family - my cousins.

John Merrow

What do you do in a gang?

Juan Hernandez

Basically what I did was like - just like bad stuff - steal cars, go mess around like with people like go look for trouble with like other thugs and like stuff like that. That's what I used to do.

John Merrow

Are you going to go back to school?

Juan Hernandez

Me? Basically I've been trying to enroll at this adult school but the truth I haven't even went. The truth - I can't lie you know. Why should I lie? I haven't even went to enroll or anything you now?

John Merrow

So how long has it been since you've been in school?

Jackie Gutierrez

Like four years.

John Merrow

Four years? And has it been a good four years?

Jackie Gutierrez

Yeah. It's been all right.

John Merrow

What does that mean?

Jackie Gutierrez

There are good times and there are bad times.

John Merrow

Tell me about the good times.

Jackie Gutierrez

I partied.

V/O: JACKIE SAYS SHE PARTIES WITH HER GANG AT NIGHT. BUT DURING THE DAY, SHE LOOKS AFTER HER NEPHEWS WHILE HER OLDER SISTER IS GOING BACK TO SCHOOL TO EARN A DIPLOMA.

Jackie Gutierrez

I pressure her because at times she gets lazy like the alarm rings and she doesn't want to get up. I tell her get up. Because she does have kids - to support.

John Merrow

So wait a minute here: here's Jackie the dropout ...

Jackie Gutierrez

I don't have kids you see.

John Merrow

... so because you don't have kids you don't need to get -- need to ...

Jackie Gutierrez

Right now I don't care.

John Merrow

....you don't need to get a life?

Jackie Gutierrez

NO, I need to get a life, yeah. But not right now.

John Merrow

What makes you scared, what makes you feel afraid?

Juan Hernandez

What makes me feel afraid. Just stay out here. Any day like, every day makes me feel afraid, 'cause I don't know what's coming for me in the future, my future that's what I'm afraid of too. Like I never know where I might be in the future, you know what I'm saying. I might not have a home, kids, you know. I might be out in the streets or something for me not going to school or something like that. Something bad happening to me.

John Merrow

When you sit around and talk about life, what kind of things do you talk about?

Jackie Gutierrez

Life?

John Merrow

Yeah I mean do you ever sit and say you know what -- what would you like -- what would you -- what would you -- what do you dream about?

Jackie Gutierrez

No.

John Merrow

If you could be anything.

Jackie Gutierrez

Anything?

John Merrow

Yeah. Like ten years from now.

Jackie Gutierrez

Um. I don't know.

John Merrow

Do you have a ...

Joann Iniguez

My dream? My dream is - I don't know.

Kris Gutierrez

One of the saddest experiences I had was with this group of students, and had a very similar response and I asked them, if you could tomorrow just - I asked them, if you could tomorrow just - I could declare and allow you to become anything you'd like to be, what would you like to be? What would

you like to do? The young women could not give me one response. And I said now remember; this is - we're doing magic here. We can become anything. And they could not even imagine a career and a future. And that was one - singularly one of the most depressing experiences I've had.

John Merrow

When you look in the mirror at yourself, what do you see?

Juan Hernandez

I see a guy right there, you know that doesn't know his future. That doesn't know what he is going to have in the future. And that's all I see, you know. I see myself and my reflection.

Kris Gutierrez

Where has the hope gone? What has created the conditions? Have they been participating in, even in schooling, that would lead to such hopelessness or despair, or, or lack of imagination about what to become.

Carlos Jiménez

I think that part of it probably does have to do with a curriculum that is very very - they feel like they're always studying about somebody else.

V/O: CARLOS JIMÉNEZ BELIEVES THAT SOME LATINO STUDENTS CAN NOT IMAGINE AN INTRIGUING AND BRIGHT FUTURE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BEING TAUGHT ABOUT THEIR OWN HERITAGE.

Angelica Reyes

You don't know your history. You don't know where you come from. You don't know what to be proud of.

V/O: TO LEARN HER HISTORY, ANGELICA REYES ENROLLED IN THE

MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES CLASS TAUGHT BY JIMÉNEZ AT GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL IN EAST LOS ANGELES.

[NAT SOT: JIMÉNEZ'S CLASS: What's the key concept here? Spanish and Indian together. What's the key concept here? The people are known as....? Mestizos. Mestizos.]

V/O: JIMÉNEZ, WHO HAS BEEN TEACHING HISTORY FOR OVER 20 YEARS, WROTE THE TEXTBOOK HIS CLASS USES, BECAUSE OF WHAT HE SAW AS THE OMISSION OF LATINOS FROM CONVENTIONAL TEXTBOOKS.

Carlos Jiménez

I think it's a disgrace that kids in the United States are more familiar with Egyptian pyramids than they are of Mexican pyramids. Or they know more about the French Revolution than the Mexican -- Mexican Revolution.

When California used to be a part of Mexico. It's our neighbor to the south. We're tied together with them through NAFTA now. But we're completely ignorant of that country, it's history, the people. And I think it has devastating effects on -- on the young people in terms of their own self image.

Angelica Reyes

Like I never knew about my history. And I never cared to know. I always thought that Mexicans were inferior and everything.

V/O: MARIANA LARA IS ALSO TAKING JIMENEZ'S CLASS.

Mariana Lara

It's good to learn all of this because you have to know the past to like to

understand the future.

V/O: INTRIGUED BY WHAT SHE LEARNED ABOUT HER OWN HERITAGE, MARIANA JOINED AN AZTEC DANCE GROUP.

[NAT SOT: Mariana Lara in Aztec Dance class]

V/O: JIMENEZ'S CLASS HAS AWAKENED ANGELICA'S INTEREST IN RECENT HISTORY.

Angelica Reyes

Until this class. Yeah I knew who César Chavez was. Yeah they named a street over this guy. Big deal. But I never knew what he did. I never knew about the farm workers about our civil rights movement which was a civil rights movement.

Mariana Lara

Like learning our culture we could teach other people about it and then - so they won't look down on us or not only us but other races.

Angelica Reyes

It has made me a proud Chicana. It has made me want to strive for more. It's like - it has opened many doors for me.

Carlos Jiménez

I had five girls in one of my AP History classes last year get into Wellesley College. And some of them have told me now that at Wellesley there's sort of this unstated thing where people sort of look at them and say, 'oh affirmative action huh.' That that's how you got in. Like you really don't belong here.

And so I think you really need to be well grounded and real solid in your self image to be able to withstand the kind of stereotyping that a

Latino - a lot of Latinos are the victims of still in the United States.

V/O: JIMÉNEZ SAYS THAT MOST LATINOS NEVER GET THE CHANCE TO STUDY WHO THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY CAME FROM.

Carlos Jiménez

Right now maybe you know at Garfield we probably have 5,000 students and there are probably only 75 or 100 of them that are actually in a Mexican-American studies elective class.

V/O: LATINO YOUTH ARE MORE LIKELY TO LEARN ABOUT THEMSELVES FROM THE MEDIA. JIMÉNEZ BELIEVES THAT MOST OF WHAT THEY SEE IS NEGATIVE. [PICTURE: popular culture images.]

Carlos Jiménez

It's still the problem like in mainstream television shows. There aren't any -- there aren't any Latino families. You know there's no like -- has never been anything like a Cosby show with -- with Latinos and that's why there's so many stereotypes. You know?

V/O: SAL DELGADO - A JUNIOR AT GARFIELD - IS ALSO STUDYING MEXICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY.

Sal Delgado

Basically you come to a society where it's all European, all white. You turn on the television, all the popular shows are for white people. Then when you see the Mexican, he's a guy who robs a liquor store or the guy - the bum on the street. And so you do see Hispanic - shows on Hispanics, but usually they're portrayed in negative ways. Or they make fun of themselves. And it only aggravates the problem of being apathetic to

education.

[Mexican-Americans love education, so they go to night school and they take Spanish and get a "B." [PICTURE to cover bottom bites: images from: American Me, Colors, Dangerous Minds, Up in Smoke, Cheech & Chong's Next Movie, and Extreme Prejudice]

Mariana Lara

We have the image of oh getting the worst jobs. Like the gardener or the cook or the janitor; work like work that other people don't want to do.

Angelica Reyes

I mean I'm not saying like all whites are racist, you know. But like sometimes I would say they feel superior. And they feel like all Mexicans you know they just migrate over here, and they're here to take our welfare. And you know all these things when it's like not true. You know most people that come here are here to work, hard.

V/O: JIMÉNEZ SAYS LATINOS MAY LEARN TO BELIEVE IN THEIR OWN INFERIORITY.

Carlos Jiménez

I was reading the names once at a graduation ceremony. Kid hands me his name on a card and he says, "say my name in English please." That's a direct quote. In other words, don't pronounce it the right way. Don't say Agrridondo, say Aridonndo. That's how he wanted it pronounced.

John Merrow

Which says he didn't think all that much of himself.

Carlos Jiménez

Well you know I think it's - I think it's sad when we're not proud of who we are or even what our names are. Hey the schools used to -- you know if I had gone to school maybe five years earlier, Carlos would have become Carl. And that would have been my official name. You checked into school, María became Mary. Ricardo became Ricky. And that was your official name on the school transcript all the way through school. It wasn't a choice.

The schools did it.

V/O: THAT'S NOT ALL THE SCHOOLS DID. VICTORIA CASTRO IS NOW PRESIDENT OF THE LOS ANGELES SCHOOL BOARD. BUT WHEN SHE WAS A STUDENT IN HIGH SCHOOL IN THE 1960'S, SHE TOLD HER GUIDANCE COUNSELOR THAT SHE WANTED TO GO TO MILLS, A TOP FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE. HER BROTHERS WERE WELL EDUCATED - ONE WAS GETTING HIS DOCTORATE WHILE ANOTHER WAS AT ANTIOCH COLLEGE...BUT HER COUNSELOR HAD OTHER IDEAS.

Victoria Castro

She pulled like my transcripts or my record. And she actually voiced to me, 'I think you should go to the community college, and if you do well, you can transfer to a four year.' And she actually said, 'If you do well, you can.'

And so pretty much what I am reflecting on is that I didn't have self esteem to be assertive and say, 'No, I investigated. I've got the grades. I'm going to go to Mills.' Instead, I retreated. And I never shared that story with my brothers and so I sort of made my own compromise and went and got my own application to Cal. State Los Angeles.

So I sort of compromise my goals because I really thought she had something there that said I couldn't do it. That changed my life. That changed my ideas about public education.

John Merrow

So you've been working that off ever since.

Victoria Castro

And quite not yet -- because I hear students repeat that story. Today. And in fact just about two months ago, there was a student from Jordan High School who was addressing the Board as to her concerns. And she says, 'You know I feel really bad all the time that I have to defend myself that I can go to college. And I can make it.' And I go, 'Well who do you defend yourself with?'

And I said, 'Is it your peers,' that's what -- she says, 'Oh no. I

have to talk to my counselors and my teachers and tell them this is what I want to do.' So thirty years later it exists to the same extent in many children's lives here.

John Merrow

The misting over in your eyes. Is that remembering for yourself or is that thinking about kids today?

Victoria Castro

I think that's for kids today. I somehow overcame that. But when you work very hard, you hate to hear the story repeated.

Daria Diaz

When I was in - I used to go to Virgil, just because I was in the gang and everything some - my math teacher you know she just came up to me. She thought like, What are you doing here.? That I should drop out, that I'm no good. That what am I doing here. I'm just like taking my seat for some other person that wants to learn.

V/O: DÁRIA DIAZ DID DROP OUT FOR TWO YEARS. LAST YEAR SHE CAME BACK TO SCHOOL AND IS NOW ON THE HONOR ROLL.

V/O: ARE THOSE EXPLANATIONS - AN INDIFFERENT BUREAUCRACY, A CURRICULUM THAT IGNORES LATIN-AMERICAN HISTORY, AND THOUGHTLESS (AND PERHAPS EVEN RACIST) ADULTS - ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN THE CONTINUING FAILURE OF SO MANY LATINO YOUTH? THE ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE THAT MAY TIE ALL THESE EXPLANATIONS TOGETHER IS POVERTY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS.

Sal Castro

The poverty syndrome. It's not a Latino, a part of the Latino culture, it's part of the poverty culture. Because in Appalachia they feel the same

way. So because the rich or the upper middle class or upper classes in Mexico and other Latin American countries, they send their kids off to school real fast.

V/O: BUT LATINO IMMIGRANT CHILDREN MAY MISS SCHOOL ALTOGETHER OR GO FOR ONLY A FEW YEARS. SAL CASTRO TEACHES HISTORY AT BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL. MANY OF HIS STUDENTS COME FROM LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS. SOME HAVE TO WORK TO HELP SUPPORT THE FAMILY.

Sal Castro

When we go to the homes and tell the - tell the parents to allow the young people to go to school, they all -- they come up with they have a responsibility to the home and to the family and this and that.

Robert Bautista

I think the parents do see it as the right way to - they do see the value of education. But they also want to have financial support. And when they can't make it, well they have no choice. They have to sacrifice the education to make it financially.

Sal Castro

See the families have to know that in a highly technical country like this you must have an education because otherwise you'll be hitting the glass ceiling very fast.

Roberto Suro

If no one in your family went beyond fifth or sixth grade, and your kid gets to tenth or eleventh grade, and speaks English fluently. Your sitting there going you know this is a lot more education than - I mean you understand things no one in our family has ever understood.

John Merrow

How much school does your mother have?

Juan Hernandez

Oh, she went to school in Mexico, but she like dropped out in like when she was like young 'cause she had to help her mother out, 'cause over there in Mexico it's like something different it's like you got to help your parents out.

Joann Iniguez

My Dad - he told me he went to the second grade.

Jackie Gutierrez

My parents did too.

Joann Iniguez

Second grade.

John Merrow

How about your Mom?

Joann Iniguez

She never went to school.

V/O: BUT OTHER LATINO PARENTS WHO DID NOT GET MUCH SCHOOLING WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO GO AS FAR AS THEY CAN.

John Merrow

What's the level of education for your Mom and Dad?

Mariana Lara

Like elementary. I'm the oldest in my house. And I'm going to be the first one to go to college. It's a very scary feeling.

Angelica Reyes

It's like I can't - I can't really go to my parents for homework. It's like a lot on myself.

John Merrow

So there's not a tradition of 'well of course Angie you're going to go.'

Angelica Reyes

Oh but don't get me wrong. I have a lot of support from my parents and my family. They're like they worked hard to get me what they never got. And they're always telling me, 'You know what, you're going to college and you're going to be successful and everything.' You know whatever they didn't get, they want me to have it.

[NAT SOT Angie at home with her parents: ¿Oye hija de cual de esos dos colegios te interesas más? I think I am going to end up going to Sonoma. Just go there for two years then transfer to a major university.]

V/O: IRONICALLY, MANY LATINO YOUTH HAVE A READY, AND UNCOMPLICATED ANSWER TO OUR QUESTION.

John Merrow

Why is it that so many Latinos, Latinas, don't finish high school?

Daria Diaz

I don't think it's the school.

Jackie Dominguez

It's our fault - the students.

Daria Diaz

It's our fault.

Juan Hernandez

I think it was my fault first of all, not going. I don't think it was their fault. They would have loved me to go everyday have perfect attendance you know. So, it was my fault.

John Merrow

Why do they drop out? 'It's on them,' 'They could have made they decision to work harder,' That, they....'

Kris Gutierrez

Do you find that surprising?, that they would kind of internalize that failure?

John Merrow

So that's what they've done. They've internalized that failure?

Kris Gutierrez

Well I mean I think there's - there's the whole culture of school that is certainly alienating. And if you haven't been very successful, I think it's not surprising that they would see themselves as a failure rather than seeing that it might be a whole series of things, including, including, of course, their own role and their responsibility to take in the learning process. Which is not to be minimized.

V/O: PROFESSOR GUTIERREZ COULD BE TALKING ABOUT THIS YOUNG MAN.
JUAN
VILLAGAS, WHO IS NOT IN A GANG, JUAN IS A SOPHOMORE AT BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Juan Villagas

I like school but to mess around sometimes. To come and mess around, not to really learn anything. To mess around. See the girls or something. Meet girls or ditch class or something, I don't know.

John Merrow

He's bright?

Sal Castro

Yes he is. Yes he is.

Juan Villagas

They think I'm smart but like I don't show it. I don't think I'm smart. If I want to I'll be smart but I don't want to. Just like messing around.

Juan Villagas

That ain't in me you know, like be somebody. I wish I could be somebody, but, you know, it's hard.

John Merrow

If you could be somebody, who would you be?

Juan Villagas

Who would I be? I don't know. That's the thing. I don't know what I want to be yet, see.

John Merrow

He's appealing, he's got a outgoing personality.

Sal Castro

Yes, yes, yes - he's got charisma. Yes of course.

John Merrow

He has zero aspirations.

Sal Castro

Yeah and exactly - exactly.

Roberto Suro

I mean I've known kids like that. And they've never - they don't have expectations because they've never seen something they could grasp. I mean no one's ever said to them 'look, you want to be a doctor? Here's how you do it. And you can do it. And we'll help you do it.' No one's ever given them a sense of possibility.

V/O: PROVIDING THAT 'SENSE OF POSSIBILITY' -SOME TEACHERS SEE THAT AS THEIR JOB, AS IMPORTANT AS TEACHING MATH OR HISTORY.

Robert Bautista

Why'd I make it? My Mom would say you made it because you wanted to, and I would tell her that's not - that's not the whole truth. The whole truth is some people took an interest in me. Like I told you the story with Sal right here. As a matter of fact it was down on that track right there. Right about the forty yard line right there.

John Merrow

Tell me the story.

Sal Castro

Robert by some - by some miracle I said a couple of words to him and it turned it around.

Robert Bautista

'Well what do you want to do?' I said - I remember clear and bright too. I said, 'I want to be a regular person.' He looked at me and looked up at the sky and he called me this name, and he said, 'What do you mean, a regular person? What is a regular person?'

My idea was to work nine-to-five like my Dad did. I thought that was a regular person. He says, 'No, I want you to come to my office.' And I went and saw him that same day.

Sal Castro

I raised hell with him. I raised hell with him because he said he was, I think, going to go to work; didn't know exactly what he was going to do, and I more or less grabbed him and handed him some college applications.

V/O: ROBERT BAUTISTA WENT TO SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY. AFTER GRADUATING, HE CAME BACK TO BELMONT HIGH AS A COACH.

Sal Castro

Well that's the payoff. That's - that's the payoff. The hard work. And it really wasn't any hard work. It was a couple of sentences and going here and going there. Doing that little extra. And it really paid off. And it's nice. There are several kids that that's happened to. And we don't get paid much as teachers but that's, that's our big payoff.

Robert Bautista

I was these kids when I was - when I was in high school. I did play out there in lunch out there playing basketball. That was me. So that - I see a reflection of myself when I see a kid here walking around, whether he's six foot tall or five foot. I see a reflection of me. I see what his thought process is, you know.

V/O: THE REFLECTIONS BAUTISTA SEES ARE THE MILLIONS OF LATINO YOUTH WHO

ARE CHANGING THE FACE OF AMERICA AND PRESENTING A CHALLENGE TO US ALL.

Victoria Castro

It's about our democracy. It's about the standard of living in this country. It's about the type of society that we live in. And understanding that we're a diverse society and that some way, somehow, what goes on in the public education is going to affect your life.

S/U: LET'S GO BACK TO OUR ORIGINAL QUESTION, 'WHY THE HIGH DROP OUT RATE AMONG LATINO YOUTH?' IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT WE CANNOT PLACE ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY ON EITHER THE SCHOOLS OR YOUNG LATINOS. WE CAN'T BLAME THEM AND SOMEHOW AT THE SAME TIME EXPECT THEM TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. THIS IS NOT SIMPLY AN EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE, IT'S A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MORAL ONE. AND TO PRETEND OTHERWISE IS TO TURN OUR BACKS ON AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF AMERICANS.

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