

First-Generation Latinos and the University Library

Catherine Haras
Loyola Marymount University Library
Los Angeles
February 17, 2015

Caveat

I am a classroom practitioner, interested in better teaching and learning, not a trained social scientist.

We were curious

- How did Latino students view the University library?
- What were library-use patterns like prior to coming to college?
- Was library use correlated with the development of research skills (i.e. information literacy)?
- No recent studies answered our questions.

We observed

High use of the university library by our Latino students

Research agenda

- 2005 Seed grant to study 105 first-year Latino students at California State University, Los Angeles
- 2007 Spencer Foundation grant to study high- and low-achieving students at Garfield High school, a Cal State LA feeder
- Study continued

Study model

Ronald Gallimore (UCLA)

- Longitudinal literacy development of immigrant Latinos
- Explores when cultural beliefs and practices change among parents

Goldenberg, C., & Gallimore, R. (1995). Immigrant Latino parent's values and beliefs about their children's education: Continuities and discontinuities across cultures and generations. *Advances in Motivations and Achievement*, 183-228.

Mixed methods

Testing qualitative findings using
quantitative methods

Primarily a qualitative mixed-methods project

QUAL → quan

- QUAL
 - To hear stories and capture voices
- quan
 - To validate these

QUAL → quan

- Two phases of data collection
 - Held six focus groups
 - Created a 56-item survey based on data
 - Administered the online survey to 105 first-year Latino university students

Focus groups

- Administration/logistics
 - IRB
 - Identified first-year Latino students via campus solicitation
 - Signed agreement
 - Focus groups:
 - Latina student guide
 - Taped 1.5 h
 - Food/stipends

Survey

- Modified self-efficacy instrument
- Administration/logistics
 - Library computer classroom
 - Signed agreements
 - \$5 stipend

We found

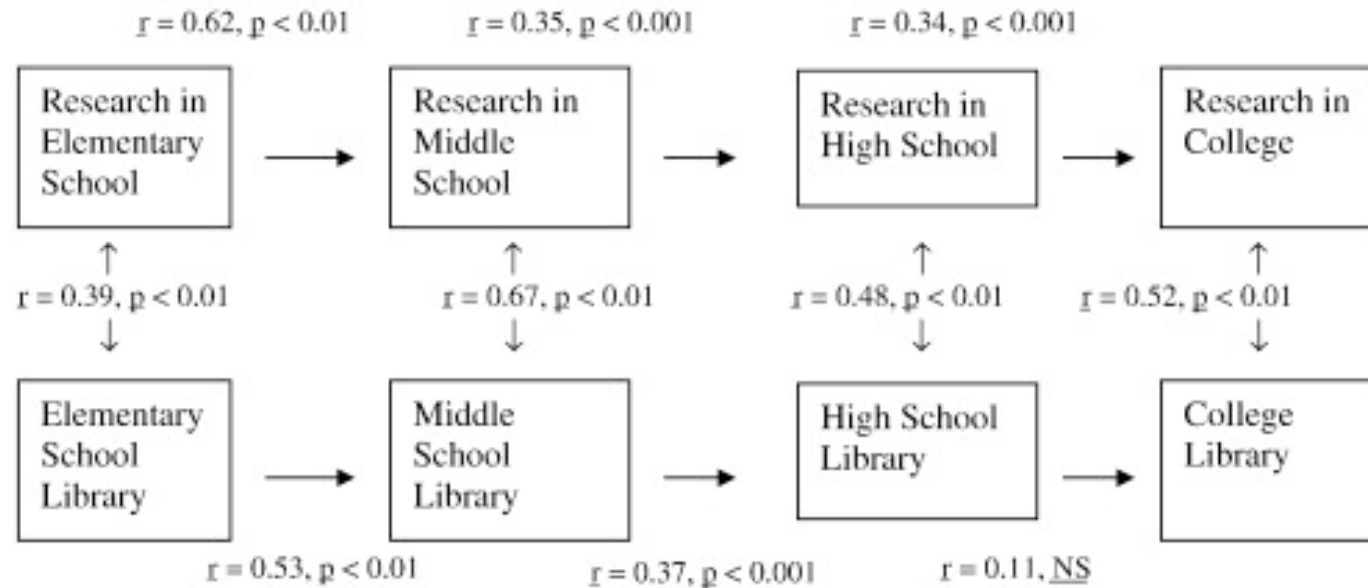
- Homogenous sample of students from largely Central American backgrounds
- Children of immigrants
- Spanish-dominant
- Compelling student narratives (noisy homes meant more time in the library)

We found

Data confirmed:

- K-12 library use and information literacy development were correlated, except for high school
- Notions of “doing research” were associated with use of the academic library
- English-dominant students did report learning to do ‘research’ before high school.

We found



Haras, Lopez & Ferry, 2005

Cross-sectional

The high school bottleneck was worth investigating.

- Study continued at Garfield High School in 2007
- Similar mixed methods design (focus groups informed a paper questionnaire)
- Confirmed first study's finding—that high school was a pivotal time for the development of information literacy

Library curriculum

Research findings guided library curriculum design:

- We developed outreach to the high schools.
- We scaffolded library instruction via games.
- Where possible, we addressed affect and self-regulation (metacognition)—these ‘non-cognitive’ behaviors play a greater role in academic tenacity than once thought.

What I Learned

- My own agency in the process mattered.
 - Authenticity and mindfulness
 - Researcher behaviors
 - Do not take notes while interviewing
 - Use your eyes, remain open
- Instrument design
 - The question you ask is often not the right question.
 - The answers students give can resemble 'presenting problems'.

What I Learned

- Research, done well, acts as a powerful form of evidence for your library.
- Research has a shelf life.
- *Educación* includes moral development and familial responsibility. (Gallimore, 2000)

Catherine Haras, Director
Center for Effective Teaching and Learning
California State University, Los Angeles
charas@calstatela.edu

CSU Symposium on University
Teaching, CSU Los Angeles
March 13 and 14, 2015

