

**THE IMPACT OF
STUDENT TRACKING
ON LATINO/A
STUDENTS AT WHS**

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BACKGROUND ON TRACKING

- **What Is Tracking?**

“Tracking is the practice of dividing students into separate classes for high, average, and low achievers; it lays out different curriculum paths for students headed for college and for those who are bound directly for the workplace”

- **“Mode of Class Reproduction”**


- “College-Bound” and “Non-College Bound”

- **Tracking Tends to Vary Among Schools Serving Students of Different Backgrounds**

- **Poor and Minority Students Disproportionately Placed in Lower Tracks**



RELEVANT LITERATURE

- Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (2005)
 - Michelle Fine, *Off Track: Classroom Privileges for All* (1998)
 - Jennifer Lucko, *Tracking Identity* (2011)
 - Rebecca Callahan, *Tracking and High School English Learners* (2005)
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SIGNIFICANCE

- **48.4% Latino Population in Washington City**
- **64.7% Latino Student Population at WHS**
- **Promoting an Awareness of the Implications of Tracking at WHS**
 - **35% Latino Enrolled in Higher Tracks, 65% in Regular Track**
 - **Unequal Instruction**
 - **Less Demanding Course Load in Lower Tracks**
 - **Implications for Higher Ed**
- **Latino Population=Fastest Growing in U.S. Over Last 10 Years**
 - **15.2 Million Population Increase (43% Increase)**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS


What has been the experience, both socially and academically, of the Latino/a student population in different tracks at Washington High School?

- **Are Latino/a students aware they are being tracked?**
- **Are these students aware of the implications of tracking?**

METHODOLOGY

- **Observations at WHS**
 - 1 x per week over a 1 month period
 - 1 x per week over a Semester long period
- **Interviews and Focus Groups with Latino/a Students**
 - Current Students (1 Hour)
 - Former Students (1 Hour & via Email)
- **Interviews with Teachers and Academic Coordinator**
 - 30 Minutes
 - Access to Questions Post-Interview

THESIS

- I argue that the experience of Latinos/as in the higher tracks (AP/Honors) has been a daunting, stressful and often intimidating experience with hope of it being beneficial down the road, while Latinos/as in the standard tracks feel more at ease and demonstrate an unawareness of the future implications of being in these less demanding classes.
 - I also argue that involvement in sports has helped Latino/a students decrease the pressure in the environment of the higher tracks, while having Latino/a role models and the feeling of wanting to represent Latinos/as in a positive light; motivates these students to defy the negative assumptions and stereotypes that surround the Latino/a population and forge pathways for others.
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DATA AND ANALYSIS

Observations

- 3 AP Classes, 24.3% Latino/a
- 4 Honors Classes, 23.5% Latino/a
- 4 Standard Classes, 65.4 % Latino/a

Interviews With Teachers

- Mr. Crown and Mrs. Lee

Interview With Academic Coordinator

- Mrs. Smith

DATA AND ANALYSIS CONTINUED

STUDENT PROFILE: JUANKI TORRES

- Current Student
- AP/Honors Classes
- “It was very intimidating being in these classes...”
- Pressure
- Acting White

STUDENT PROFILE: JULIO HERNANDEZ

- Former Student
- Honors Classes
- “I felt like I didn’t belong at first because I realized there were only a handful of us... I knew I had to represent for us.”
- Sports
- Dual Identity


DATA AND ANALYSIS CONTINUED

Interviews With Students

- Themes

- “Pride” and “Culture” (The Fight)
- “Proving Them Wrong” (Defying the Stereotype)
- “Unaware” (I Can Move Up?)
- “The Racial Divide” (The Lunch Room)
 - “Lingies”, “athletes”, and “white kids”
- “Sports” (Bridging the Gap)
- “Seeing More Latinos Do Their Thing” (Role Models)

CONCLUSION

- **Relatively Short Study**
 - **Latino/as Remain Underrepresented**
 - **Educate & Increase Awareness**
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