AN INTERNAL ANALYSIS ON ADVOCATING FOR LATINO/A ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL (ALAS)

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Family and Human Services
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

May 2024

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Isabella Miki for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of Family and Human Services to be taken June 2024

Title: An Internal Analysis on Advocating for Latino/a Achievement in School (ALAS)

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Advocating for Latino Achievement in Schools (ALAS) is an afterschool program designed for Latino/a immigrant English Language Learners at Springfield High School. This program aims to prevent dropout, promote academic success, and promote college/career readiness through providing academic support and enhancing critical consciousness. After analyzing ALAS student survey responses and interviews with ALAS team members, I explore themes that are important to consider in the continuation of the ALAS program: language barriers, transportation barriers, community building, and commitments of higher priority. I suggest future goals for the ALAS program: continuing teacher coordination, and implementing formal critical consciousness lessons.

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Background

Immigrant students on average in the United States struggle more academically and in college-career-readiness than their non-immigrant colleagues, and 44% of immigrants identify as having Hispanic or Latino origin (McWhirter et al., 2019) (Johnson, et al. 2021). In addition to initial support, interventions addressing immigrant concerns need to be developed. Some problems immigrant students face include: having families who speak many different languages and not enough in-school translators to facilitate communication, English language learners not doing well learning English and showing no improvement on state achievement tests, and discrimination from non-immigrant students (Adelman & Taylor, 2015).

Perceived discrimination is indirectly linked to students' academic success, as reported in a study on Latino adolescent boys by Alfero et al. (2008), whose findings were replicated through longitudinal data. Alfero et al. (2008) found that as students reported experiencing higher levels of discrimination, they reported lower levels of academic motivation, consequently lowering their GPA. McWhirter et al. (2019) explains further that English learners aged 14-21 living in the United States are more likely to drop out of high school than their fluent English speaking peers. Moreover, they are more likely to be "male, Hispanic, noncitizens, and living below the poverty line" (p. 609). In Oregon specifically, it is more likely for English learning high school students to be suspended or expelled than fluent English speaking high school students. Because of this, immigrant Latino/a high school students learning English are a population vulnerable to dropout. Also, McWhirter et al. (2019) found through the American College Testing (ACT) website that fewer college and career readiness benchmarks are met by Hispanic students. High school seniors learning English were "less likely to be involved in college preparedness activities, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and take

college entrance exams than their English-proficient counterparts" (p. 609). This calls for evidence-based interventions to support immigrant Latino/a immigrant students learning English.

The Advocating for Latino/a Achievement in Schools (ALAS) Program

Advocating for Latino/a Achievement in School, or ALAS, is an "innovative intervention [that] aims to prevent dropout and to promote academic success and college career readiness through a combination of academic support and enhancing critical consciousness" offered at Springfield High School, where 33.3% of students identify as Hispanic and with a 71% graduation rate (McWhirter et al., 2019). It is guided by two theories: Social cognitive career theory (SCCT), and sociopolitical development theory (SPDT). SCCT includes "three intricately linked aspects of career development: (a) the formation and elaboration of career-relevant interests, (b) selection of academic and career choice options, and (c) performance and persistence in educational and occupational pursuits" (Lent et al., 1994). Watts et al. (2003), explains SPDT as a process by which people obtain the "knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and the capacity" for political action and change in social systems necessary to recognize and resist oppression (p. 185).

According to the pilot study implemented in 2010, "ALAS participants must be current high school students at Springfield High School and identify as Latina/o (or any varied, related identities such as Hispanic, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana/o, El Salvadoran, etc.)" (McWhirter et al., 2019). The program is designed for English language learners. ALAS was piloted in 2010, but was not continued until 2016 due to a lack of facilitators and tutors. After a Spanish specialization was added to the Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Oregon, the number of "Spanish-competent graduate students with an ability and interest to facilitate ALAS" increased, allowing ALAS to be reinitiated (McWhirter et al., 2019). ALAS was not active during the COVID-19 Pandemic. During the pilot study, there were 19 students, the average age of students was 16 years-old, and more girls than boys participated. Amount of

time in the United States varied widely, with some students having immigrated 2 weeks before the start of the program and some having been born in the United States. Since the pilot study, ALAS has changed. However, the original outline of the ALAS program is as follows:

ALAS students were recruited via flyers at school and encouraged to attend by school teachers, counselors, and the multicultural liaison. As a research project with periodic surveys given to students, participation was voluntary, required parent permission, and participant assent. Students, facilitators, and tutors met twice a week for two hours after school-- each meeting consisting of one hour of academic support and one hour of activities related to critical consciousness. Activities were created by facilitators and faculty supervisors, were suggested by students, and were inspired by existing college and career readiness resources.

The program lasted from late September to early June (aligned with the University of Oregon academic calendar), with the exception of school breaks. Students were allowed to enroll in or withdraw from ALAS at any time during the school year. At the beginning, middle, and end of the year, students completed a set of measures (e.g. school engagement). ALAS tutors were college students who were competent in Spanish. Some tutors were in a Latino fraternity and one was a Latina undergraduate student completing her research practicum. Some were graduate students focusing in Counseling Psychology. By being part of the ALAS team, undergraduate tutors served as role models of college success to ALAS students. ALAS facilitators consisted of six bilingual or Spanish-competent Counseling Psychology doctoral students, four bicultural, and all enrolled in a Spanish Language Psychological Services and Research (SLPSR) specialization as a component of completing their doctoral degrees. Being successful graduate students, these facilitators provided modeling, mentoring, and supervision to the students. The facilitators supervised tutors, the research assistant managed data collection, and carried out all activities

(e.g. icebreakers, career interest assessment, resume building, job interview practice, etc.). Camaraderie (i.e. an appropriate, trusting, and understanding relationship) between ALAS students, facilitators, and tutors were purposeful, due to findings that being connected to adults in school contributes significantly to immigrant students' school engagement and academic performance. Facilitators and tutors debriefed after each ALAS meeting to go over strengths, needed improvements, and goals for future meetings. Every week, facilitators underwent group supervision in Spanish, as well as group supervision in English "focused on intervention planning, logistics, problem-solving, and discussion of relevant literature" (Mcwhirter et al., 2019).

Other Evaluations on Similar Programs

An internal evaluation is a process where someone evaluates a program and reports back directly to the program's manager. These evaluations are done to confirm program accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness. Therefore, running an internal evaluation on ALAS is important to ensure that the program is meeting its own goals and to provide suggestions to improve the program in the future.

A similar program dedicated to Latino/a students is the PUENTE program in California. PUENTE was initiated in 1981 and is still running. PUENTE started at a community college in Northern California with the goal of serving Latino/a students. Since then, it has expanded to many high schools and community colleges in the state of California. PUENTE is composed of a 2-year college-preparatory English class, a mentoring program, and a PUENTE counselor (Haro, 2004). The counselor works with the students to ensure that they are making progress in their college-preparatory courses, and the parents/caregivers to ensure that they have any information they need to support their student's academic success. All mentors are college-educated and are usually Latino/a themselves. PUENTE recruits students in high schools and helps them attend college, as well as enables "most PUENTE students to complete a 2-year academic program at a community college and to transfer to a 4-year college or university" (Haro, 2004).

When assessed through interviews with PUENTE students and non-PUENTE students, evaluators found that "42% of PUENTE students, versus 24% of non-PUENTE Latinos, transfer to a 4-year college or university" (Moreno, 2002) (Haro, 2004). Several PUENTE students finish high school, continue to a four-year college, and complete a bachelor's degree, compared to non-PUENTE students.

In a public, independent school district in the Southwest United States, the Ford Driving Dreams (FDD) program was implemented and assessed. The aim of the program "was to build resiliency among at-risk Latino youth" (Rivera et al., 2019). Within this program there were three main activities at play:

> First, Latino youth were encouraged to achieve personal and professional attainment through graduation and college enrollment by means of an inspirational and high-energy half-day session. During the half-day session, supportive activities included on-site college preparatory resources such as how to apply to college, financial aid, scholarships, and involving local college participation. Second, opportunities for education were presented to Latino youth in the form of Ford scholarships. For example, localized scholarships were provided as an incentive for high school students during FDD. Third, the Ford Hispanic-Heritage Month contest served to generate district-wide enthusiasm for further education attainment. (Rivera et al., 2019)

To analyze this program, researchers measured--through pre- and post-program surveys--changes in FDD students' engagement in academic programs, students finding a purpose in life relating to their schooling, level of understanding that education is important, perspectives regarding college as a possible option for them, feeling empowered to go beyond their current circumstances, and overall impact of the program. Their results were promising, showing that the FDD program "achieved gains in Latino/a empowerment, motivation, and drive to pursue high school graduation and develop their college readiness" (Rivera et al. 2019).

In conclusion, it has been seen through multiple evaluations on multiple programs similar to ALAS that programs meant for Latino/a students focused on college-preparedness and

community building were promising in having students attend and complete higher education. The PUENTE and FDD program evaluations were both feasibility studies, as are most evaluations in this field, calling for more randomized control trials to be done on similar programs to strengthen this research.

However, these programs mentioned were all evaluated pre-COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted Latino/a families in the United States. This was due to pre-pandemic disparities, such as the higher likelihood of living in denser households and neighborhoods and the overrepresentation of Latino/a individuals in essential worker roles. It was found that Latino/a individuals were three times more likely to get COVID-19 and twice as likely to die from it, compared to the general population. Moreover, 61% of Latino/a individuals experienced job or income loss in their household during the pandemic, as compared to 38% of non-Latino/a white individuals (Piedra et al., 2022). There has also been an insurgence of immigrants to the US since the COVID-19 pandemic (Camarota & Zeigler, 2021). This calls for post-COVID-19 internal analysis of programs meant to help Latino/a students attain opportunities for education and careers, such as ALAS.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The following questions guided my analysis on the ALAS program:

- What is the rate of improvement in self-efficacy, critical consciousness, school engagement, and grades in immigrant youth when participating in ALAS?
- What part of ALAS's program works in improving self-efficacy, critical consciousness, school engagement, and grades in immigrant youth?
- What can ALAS do to make their program more effective in improving self-efficacy, critical consciousness, school engagement, and grades in immigrant youth?

From the available literature, I hypothesized that participating in ALAS would improve immigrant students' self-efficacy, critical consciousness, school engagement, and grades through creating a space where extra academic assistance is provided along with activities related to critical consciousness, all of which are led by bilingual or Spanish-competent Counseling Psychology doctoral students.

Methods

Participants.

Five ALAS students were asked to complete the Pre-Program survey. Two ALAS coordinators and one Springfield High School staff member on the ALAS team were interviewed.

The students who filled out the pre-program survey were either sophomores or seniors or left the question blank. Two of the students were women, one was a man, and the other two left the question on gender blank. Three of the students' primary language was Spanish, and the other two left the question on their primary language blank. On average, students had lived in the United States for 1.3 years up to taking the survey (x = 1.3; sd = 1.5; $range$ = 2.95). As for parent/caregiver education level, not all students reported their answer. Out of those who did, average students' parent/caregiver had received a high school diploma/equivalent diploma as their highest level of education.

Both ALAS coordinators are in their first year of being on the ALAS team. The coordinators and the staff members are all Spanish-competent. The coordinators are both graduate students at the University of Oregon.

Procedures.

To evaluate the ALAS intervention, we gave all students an assent form to choose if they wanted to participate in the evaluation or not. Program coordinators gave the participating students a physical pre-program survey to fill out. These surveys were available in both English and Spanish. Due to wanting further information on what was being seen in ALAS, interviews with some members of the ALAS team were implemented. All ALAS team members were asked

if they could attend an interview via email. Those who could attend an interview confirmed a date and time via email. Interviews with coordinators were no longer than thirty minutes long and over Zoom. Instead of having a formal interview with the high school staff member, they were sent the interview questions to which they responded via email.

Measures.

Survey questions are directly linked to the aims of ALAS as an intervention. ALAS's main long-term goals are to "prevent dropout and support development of college and career readiness of immigrant Latina/o high school students through providing academic support and fostering critical consciousness" (McWhirter, 2019). Their short term goals include increasing school-related self-efficacy, school engagement and connectedness, fostering critical consciousness, and improving grades. Questions regarding skipping school or class are meant to understand the students' interest in school. Questions regarding demographics are meant to understand if the ALAS program works for everyone or only for people of specific identities. Questions regarding grade point average (GPA) and purposeful absences are meant to analyze the students' school engagement and grades. Questions regarding parent/caregiver education level are used to determine if there is a difference in the effectiveness of ALAS depending on parent/caregiver educational experience. The question regarding if there was anything the student thought would be beneficial to add was to analyze the effectiveness of the survey itself for future reference.

Survey questions included:

Q1. How confident are you in your ability to succeed in school? Rate your level of confidence below.

Not at all confident

A little confident

Some confidence

Pretty confident

Very confident

Q2. How confident are you that you can contribute in some way to making things more just and fair for your community? Rate your current level of confidence below.

Not at all confident

A little confident

Some confidence

Pretty confident

Very confident

Q3. Rate your current level of interest in school and the school community below.

Not interested in school and school community at all

Little interest in school and school community

Some interest in school and the school community

Good amount of interest in school and the school community

Very interested in school and the school community

Q4. What do you hope that you will get from participating in ALAS? Write your answer below.

Q5. What is your current GPA? Write your answer below.

Q6. How many times in the past 2 weeks have you purposely skipped class due to lack of interest? Write your answer below.

Q7. If you have purposefully skipped class in the past 2 weeks for any other reason, please tell us how many times and for what reason/s, if you feel comfortable.

Q8. What grade are you in?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Prefer not to answer

Q9. What is your gender?

Woman

Man

Outside the gender binary

Prefer not to answer

Q10. What is your primary language?

Q11. How long have you lived in the United States?

Q12. What is the highest level of education your caregiver/s received?

Elementary school (kindergarten through 5th grade)

Middle school (6th through 8th grade)

High school (9th-12th grade) or high school equivalent diploma Undergraduate degree

Graduate degree

PHD or doctorate degree

Q13. Are there any other questions that would have been beneficial to ask in this survey?

Interview questions included:

Barriers

1.) What are some academic barriers for the students in ALAS?

2.) In what ways does ALAS support students in addressing those barriers?

3.) What are the barriers for students to attend ALAS?

4.) What has been challenging about doing ALAS this year for you as a facilitator?

Facilitators

5.) What do you think is working in ALAS?

6.) What are the academic impacts of ALAS you have observed?

7.) How do you see ALAS facilitating a sense of critical consciousness?

8.) What other impacts have you seen?

Analysis Plan

Originally, we planned for the ALAS intervention agents (ALAS Coordinators) to give the pre-program survey to all students before the ALAS program began in order to have a control group and understand where the students started out. This changed to about a quarter-way through the program start date (in February 2024), where me and my Thesis Advisor went to the ALAS program to witness it for ourselves as well as to give informed assent forms to the students (available in either Spanish or English). This was due to scheduling difficulties and time restraints. During our time there, 5 out of 10 students chose to sign assent forms. A few weeks after (in March 2024), we were informed that only 3 pre-program surveys were completed out of 17 students. Instead, we opted for a single survey (the pre-program survey) to be administered to the students who completed the assent forms. This would give us an idea of where the students were at the time of the survey.

The interviews for program coordinators were to gather more information that we may not have been able to get due to limited amounts of completed surveys. The questions are meant to qualitatively understand how the ALAS program went this year from their perspectives.

I conducted descriptive analysis of the surveys (means, standard deviations, range). Then, I conducted thematic analysis of the interviews. A thematic analysis is a process in which one identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns seen in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process consists of six phases: (1) Familiarizing oneself with the data (transcribing, reading, and re-reading data and noting initial ideas); (2) Generating initial codes (organizing interesting topics seen in the data in a systematic way, and collecting and combining data relevant to each topic); (3) Searching for themes (organizing topics into themes and gathering all data relevant to each); (4) Reviewing themes (making sure the themes work in relation to the topics and all of the data,

and creating a “thematic ‘map’ of the analysis”); (5) Defining and naming themes; (6) Producing a report (choosing relevant examples, analyzing examples, relating back to the research question and larger literature, and creating a report of the analysis) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

Quantitative Descriptives

Five students completed the program survey. On average, students rated their confidence to succeed in school as pretty confident (*mean* = 4; *sd* = 0.8; low of 3, high of 5). Students, on average, also rated their confidence in their ability to contribute in some way to making things more just in their community as some confidence to pretty confident (*mean* = 3.2; *sd* = 0.8; low of 2, high of 4). On average, students rated their interest in school and the school community as good amount of interest (*mean* = 4; *sd* = 0.8; low of 3, high of 5).

One student stated they wanted to be in ALAS to "finish all [their] pending tasks" and to "know more about the university"; one student stated to "learn more and [to] help [them] with the things [they] don't understand"; one student stated to "improve [their] grades and learn more English"; and two students left the question blank. Not all students reported their GPA. From the students who did, the mean GPA came out to be 2.85 (*mean* = 0.37, low of 2.63, high of 3.00). On average, students had skipped class less than once in two weeks prior to taking the survey (*mean* = 0.25). Only two students reported their reason for skipping class; both stated it was due to not feeling well. There were no responses for the last question, pertaining to the survey itself.

Qualitative Themes

Interviews with three members of the ALAS team were completed--two via Zoom with ALAS coordinators, and one via email with a Springfield High School staff member who communicates directly with multicultural families of students. There were four main themes found in the interviews: language, transportation, community building, and commitments that take a higher priority to the students.

Language:

In response to the questions on barriers that students face in regards to school and attending ALAS, all interviewees stated that language is the main difficulty these students face in school. Many of the ALAS students speak English as their second or even third language, Spanish (or another dialect) being their first. Springfield High School, being a primarily English speaking school, does not have the resources to translate lessons and assignments into Spanish for these students. The staff member interviewed stated that "students do not speak English yet, and for some of them, English is their third language to learn". One coordinator mentioned this as well, stating that for many of the ALAS students, Spanish is not their first language, but a different dialect, and provided an example of a student that speaks four different dialects in addition to Spanish and is now learning English. Both interviewed coordinators mentioned a lack of bilingual support in classes and provided an example of a student required to answer some questions based on a video for their homework. While the questions were in Spanish, the video was in English, there were no subtitles available in Spanish, and the speed of the video was too fast for the student to translate. One coordinator mentioned that most of the advice these students are given is to use Google Translate, however this is not always completely accurate.

All interviewees stated that ALAS helps address these barriers by helping students understand lessons and homework in Spanish, and by further helping them practice their English. They used the video assignment as an example: in order to help this student with that assignment, one coordinator broke down each question and watched the video with the student so the coordinator could translate it for them. Both coordinators said that it has been helpful to have teachers come into ALAS meetings, so the team can translate for the students in real time.

For example, there is a math teacher that consistently attends ALAS weekly in order to help students with their math assignments while the coordinators are there to translate in the moment.

Transportation:

All interviewees stated that transportation was the biggest barrier for students to attend ALAS. One coordinator stated that since ALAS is an after school program, some students may not have the ability to get picked up later in the afternoon. They mentioned that in Fall and Winter it was a bigger barrier because of the cold weather and the sun rising earlier, which prohibited students from even walking home. Another coordinator stated that some students cannot stay too late after school due to their bus route. They provided an example of a student who had to leave twenty minutes before the meeting ended, despite needing to finish his homework. If he did not leave early, he would have to wait another hour for the next bus to come.

Community Building:

Community building was mentioned by all interviewees. The staff member interviewed stated that ALAS helps these students "emotionally [by] giving them the time to listen to them, and providing a safe space for them to express themselves in their [first] language; and "culturally, [by] providing them with the opportunity to get to know professionals who look like them… speaking their [first] language, [and sharing] the same culture."

Moreover, the coordinators interviewed spoke a lot about "In Lak'ech," a poem recited at the beginning of each ALAS meeting (Figure 1). The team models the spirit of this poem for the students as well as having students lead the rest of the group in reciting it. One coordinator said

that “In Lak’ech” has been going well since the students enjoy it and have been able to step into the position of leading the group in reciting the poem.

For the ALAS team, the main thing going well is the co-facilitator structure. One coordinator explained that, at the beginning of the year, there was not much structure in regards to who would be leading each meeting, which made it more challenging. After they changed this structure, to where coordinators alternate in leading meetings, it has been a lot more productive. This coordinator also spoke about having the Springfield High School staff member (also interviewed) on the team as being beneficial. This is because the member has a lot of expertise on the public school systems in Oregon and particularly the systemic challenges that impact Springfield High School.

Community building in the larger high school setting was mentioned by both coordinators. One coordinator stated that the goal for the students is to take pride in their cultural background, and advocate for their own needs and for visibility within the school. At the time of the interview, the coordinator said that they were currently planning a project for the end of the school year, where ALAS students can talk about “who they are, what they represent, [and] where they come from.” This is to foster community within the school at large, since there seems to be a systemic issue, where teachers do not know the ALAS students well, do not understand where they immigrated from, or what they had to experience to get to the United States. This project includes showcasing who students are, what their goals are, their strengths, etc. In addition to this, the coordinators sent a survey to the ALAS students asking for their opinions on what they appreciate/not appreciate in regards to their teachers and what teachers do that hinder their learning. At the time of the interview, the coordinators were still navigating how to present

this information to the school-- whether via student panel, or via the ALAS team as to keep individual ALAS students anonymous.

Commitments of higher priority:

Both interviewed coordinators mentioned that some students are unable to attend all ALAS meetings because of other commitments. Commitments mentioned included: night school, which may take place during the ALAS meeting time; caretaker roles (i.e. needing to take care of younger siblings), which may prohibit them from attending an afterschool meeting; and jobs that overlap with the ALAS meeting time. She stated that, for these students, due to their financial situation, there may be more benefit to earning money than attending ALAS.

Figure 1:

"Tu eres mi otro yo.
Si te hago dano a ti,
Me hago dano a mi mismo.
Si te amo y respeto,
Me amo y respeto yo." (Schoppe, 2022)

English translation:

"You are my other me.
If I do harm to you,
I do harm to myself.
If I love and respect you,
I love and respect myself." (Schoppe, 2022)

Discussion

Overall, Advocating for Latino/a Achievement in Schools (ALAS) has the potential for impacting Latino/a immigrant students learning English in a positive way. ALAS addresses the hopes of students (seen in surveys) by helping them learn English and by assisting them in further understanding lessons and assignments. This can be seen through the community building present in the program and the bilingual support provided to students. What may prevent student success in ALAS would be the barriers seen from team interviews: transportation and commitments of higher priority.

Relationships between the ALAS team and the ALAS students have always been a purposeful component of the program and is still very prominent, even after program hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned in McWhirter et al. (2019), being close to school staff as a student is seen to benefit student academic motivation and success. ALAS creates these close relationships through community building activities and through the integration and facilitator modeling of "In Lak'ech." In addition, the co-facilitator model within the ALAS team has been seen to be beneficial to both the team and has implications to be beneficial to the students. In therapeutic environments, co-facilitating is known to be beneficial for professionals as it provides learning experience and supervision for trainees, lessens anxiety in new team members, further protects clients, provides opportunities for feedback, and creates opportunity for another team member to take over if one is feeling overwhelmed (Fall & Menendez, 2002). The ALAS coordinators expressed similar observations, saying that it relieves them of pressure to have other facilitators to alternate sessions with. While continuing session plans aligned with the original purpose of ALAS, adding in activities focused on the students' needs and interests is important. It has been shown that integrating activities related to student interests increases

student engagement (Crowninshield, 2020). Furthermore, this ensures that these specific students get the support they need while they are still in the ALAS program. ALAS coordinators mentioned that listening to this group of students' interest in finding summer jobs compelled them to integrate session activities dedicated to the process of obtaining a job. McWhirter et al. (2019) explain that career-related activities, such as job exploration, help "reduce proximal barriers, increase supports, and faster [students'] academic and career-related self-efficacy and outcome expectations" (p. 613). Not only would this help students in earning money on their own time, this would also increase the likelihood of attaining a higher education and in their career development.

Majority of ALAS students speak Spanish as their first language, so having facilitators who speak Spanish is beneficial and critical in communicating complicated concepts such as critical consciousness or other subjects high school students learn for the first time. Furthermore, by avoiding language barriers, this creates a stronger relationship between ALAS facilitators and students. Rodriguez et al. (2020) found that 68% of teachers, administrators, and counselors they surveyed listed a lack of English language proficiency as an academic challenge for English language learners contributing to their drop-out rates. 31% listed difficulty in catching up content and language at the same time as another challenge, and 15% listed difficulty keeping up with the technical vocabulary and complex academic concepts as another. They explain that in order to support English language learners, schools must "capitalize on the use of the primary language and flexible programming" to support these students in learning content while learning English (Rodriguez et al., 2020, p. 14). ALAS facilitators have been able to serve as translators when teachers attend ALAS meetings to assist students with homework. This has been seen with the math teacher who consistently attends meetings in order to help students with their assignments.

ALAS students are also provided assistance with translating school assignments, regardless of the teacher being in attendance at ALAS sessions. The students are told to use Google Translate to understand assignments that are in English. However, since Google Translate is not always accurate, having bilingual support from ALAS coordinators is beneficial in getting an accurate understanding of the assignment at hand. In addition, this bilingual support helps students learn English as well, a goal that a number of students identified in their survey responses. Improving their English language skills can help them in understanding future lessons and assignments without the assistance of a translator.

Suggestions for the ALAS program:

After reviewing the results of student surveys as well as the interview materials, I suggest that ALAS continue to bring teachers into ALAS meetings, and increase the amount of formal critical consciousness lessons.

As seen from the ALAS coordinator interviews, having teachers specialized in complex topics such as math in attendance at ALAS has been beneficial to students. Not only will students receive more in-depth instruction from these teachers, they will also receive it in their first language as it is being translated by the ALAS instructors.

Modeling of critical consciousness should be continued by the ALAS team. It would be beneficial to have formal critical consciousness lessons in addition. Formal lessons would equip students to formally understand the systemic barriers and structures of oppression present in the community as well as how to explain them to others. Modeling critical consciousness would show students how to go about overcoming systemic barriers, and changing structures of oppression.

Addressing barriers:

Barriers for students to attend ALAS are transportation and having commitments of higher priority. Addressing these barriers would require larger systemic change. However, at the community level, the ALAS meetings could be during lunch instead of after school, as to prevent students from needing to stay later in the day. This would also be helpful because these students most likely will not have any other commitments outside of school (jobs, caregiving responsibilities, etc.) during the school day.

Limitations:

Limitations for this analysis include a lack of pre- and post-program results, small sample size, and a lack of a control group. In the future, it would be beneficial to explore students' academic achievement and understanding of critical consciousness before the start of the program and after the program to study the efficacy of the ALAS program. While still providing assent forms, surveying all ALAS students would be beneficial to gain a larger sample size. In a larger study, a control group where non-ALAS Latino/a immigrant English Language Learner students are surveyed in addition to surveying the ALAS students would result in more in depth results regarding the efficacy of the ALAS program.

Timeline

Winter term:

- January:
    - 01/29: Meet with Dr. Robert Mauro about being CHC Representative
    - 01/29: Dr. Robert Mauro officially CHC Representative
    - 01/31: Meeting with Dr. Doty
- February:
    - 02/08: Gather completed Survey Assent Forms
    - 02/12: Meeting with Dr. Doty and Xiaoqi Ma about statistical advising
    - 02/29: Gather completed Pre-Program Surveys
    - 02/26: Schedule Thesis Defense
    - 02/26: Meeting with Xiaoqi Ma for statistical advising
- March:
    - 03/17: Update Thesis
    - 03/17: Analyze Program Survey results

Spring Term:

- April:
    - 04/05: Meeting with Dr. Doty and gather completed Program Surveys
    - 04/09: Gather more completed Program Surveys
    - 04/10: Meeting with Dr. Mauro
    - 04/19: Thesis Defense must be scheduled
    - 04/23: Interview with ALAS coordinator

- May:
    - 05/07: Interview with ALAS coordinator
    - 05/07-19: Analyze interview results
    - 05/16: Meeting with Dr. Doty
    - 05/19: First draft due
    - 05/19-29: Prepare for defense
    - 05/29: Thesis Defense in HEDCO240 at 12pm-1:20pm
    - 05/31: Thesis Defense deadline
- June:
    - 06/06: Final Thesis deadline

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