IMPLEMENTING AB 705: IMPLICATIONS FOR EQUITABLE OUTCOMES OF LATINX STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT
This study examined perceived implications for equitable outcomes of students based on organizational changes related to developmental education reform, California Assembly Bill 705. The research site was a Hispanic Serving Community College with a majority Latinx student population. This instrumental case study employed various methods, including semi-structured interviews, document collection and analysis, physical artifact collection, and observations. The inquiry prioritized learning from eleven participants (faculty, staff, and administration) who were charged with implementing AB 705. Findings included three primary themes related to the implications for equitable outcomes for Latinx students, *Prioritizing Equity Through Institutional Documents, Removing Institutional Barriers as a Form of Student Empowerment,* and *Threats to Equitable Outcomes*. Results of this study revealed positive implications attributed to prioritizing equity in institutional documents and removing institutional barriers. Conversely, the findings also exposed underlying problems of practice that persist in higher education, such as implicit biases,

and race-neutral and color-blind approaches to understanding equity. This research will be of interest to those invested in similar change processes.

Keywords: California Assembly Bill 705, developmental education reform, equity outcomes, organizational change

Introduction

Community colleges[1] are a common gateway to higher education for Latinx students (Contreras & Contreras, 2018). Over 2.1 million students are enrolled in the California Community College (CCC) system, which is the largest system of higher education in the United States (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020a). Over 76% of the 116 campuses are designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions[2], making it a predominately Hispanic Serving System (Contreras & Contreras, 2018).

Prior to the enactment of California Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705), Latinx students were largely placed into developmental education[3] courses (Rodríguez et al., 2018). California Assembly Bill 705 required every California Community College to "maximize the probability" that entering students enroll and complete transfer-level English or mathematics within a one-year timeframe and within a three-year timeframe for students enrolled in an English as a Second Language course by the Fall semester of 2019 (AB 705, 2017, para. 2). AB 705 was designed to partially address the historical inequities Students of Color have long faced in the policies and practices used in community colleges (AB 705, 2017). This legislative bill is especially important for Latinx students in the CCC system who intend to earn an associate degree or transfer, as they are often delayed by developmental courses.

Developmental education is identified as an obstacle to transfer and completion, particularly for Students of Color (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). For instance, in 2016, a Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) study found 87% of Latino and African American CCC students were placed into at least one developmental math or English class. Recent research has noted that remedial courses reduce completion rates for every demographic group studied (Hern et al., 2020). Another study, *The State of Higher Education for Latinx in California*, found that community colleges neglected to support more than 50% of Latinx students in their educational goals (of attaining a credential or transferring) (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018b). The same report cited that transfer is taking longer to achieve—two percent of Latinx students attain transfer in two years, and a dismal 31% of Latinx students attain transfer within six years (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018b). Overall, the success of Latinx students, to become future community leaders, is vital to the success of California—about 39% (about 15 million) of California's 40 million residents are Latinx (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018b).

Developmental reform efforts, like AB 705 and Guided Pathways[4], improve access and equity in the CCC system; thus, these reforms intend to increase degree attainment and transfer for Latinx students (Rodríguez et al, 2018). For the purpose of this study, "equity refers to a heightened

focus on groups experiencing disproportionate impact in order to remediate disparities in their experiences and outcomes" (Wood, 2019). While AB 705, Guided Pathways, and the Chancellor's Vision for Success[5] are all intertwined, moving parts of California's developmental reform efforts, this study focuses primarily on the implementation of AB 705. Research that explores initiatives like these is critical to understanding how Latinx students, and other underrepresented student populations, can achieve their intended educational goals (Rodríguez et al, 2018); moreover, at the time of the study, no other research had yet been conducted at the research site on the implementation of AB 705. This work offers a lens, from those educational leaders charged with enacting compliance to AB 705, to view the perceived implications for equitable outcomes for Latinx students based on the organizational changes related to implementation efforts.

This article begins with relevant literature about the origins of the California Community Colleges (CCC), a discussion of Hispanic Serving Community Colleges, a brief introduction to educational leadership, a review on transfer and completion for Latinx students, and an overview of recent reform efforts that are intended to improve equitable outcomes. This article continues by addressing the theoretical framework, introducing the purpose, and describing the research methodology for this study. Findings are presented, followed by a discussion and analysis. The article closes with recommendations and final remarks.

Literature Review

Per the California Master Plan for Higher Education (1960), the CCC system serves any student who would benefit from a college education and is responsible for providing a clear pathway to transfer into the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems. The purpose of community colleges is to provide the interrelated functions of academic transfer, vocational education, continuing education, community service, and developmental education (Cohen et al., 2014). The California Community Colleges confer associate degrees, associate degrees for transfer, and certificates.

Though the California Master Plan for Higher Education intended to establish a clear pathway and expectations for transfer from community colleges to the CSU and UC systems (California State Department of Education, 1960), numerous studies have documented the dismal transfer rates of community college students (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Callan, 2009; Geiser & Atkinson, 2010; Public Policy Institute of California, 2016). A recent report issued by the Assembly Select Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education in California (2020) estimated that nearly half of all students enrolled in the community college system are transfer directed or intend to transfer, and only four percent of students succeed in transferring within two years, while only 38% of students succeed in transferring within six years. Including a brief review of the Master Plan for Education is helpful in understanding the role of Community Colleges are to help facilitate the transfer function in the educational pipeline. Additionally, it is important for readers to know that it is not atypical for educational reform efforts to be legislated into policy, such as AB 705 was.

Hispanic Serving Community Colleges

The U.S. Department of Education (2018) defines a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) as an eligible higher education institution that has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent (FTE) students of which at least 25% are Hispanic. Latinx students make up a significant portion of undergraduate enrollments (Sáenz & Swan, 2018). Nationally, two-thirds of Latinx college students are enrolled in community colleges (Cox, 2009). Across the country, HSIs enroll 66% of all Latinx students (Garcia, 2019). Based on a longitudinal study of Hispanic-serving community colleges, over 51% of all students enrolled in Hispanic-serving community colleges were of Hispanic descent (Núñez et al., 2011). This means a vast majority of Latinx students are beginning their academic careers at HSIs, notably at Hispanic serving community colleges.

HSIs, unlike Tribal Colleges and Universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, originated as predominantly white institutions and became HSIs because they are situated in areas where there have been increases in Hispanic births and immigration (Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015) and increases in Latinx college-going rates (Contreras, 2019). To best understand how HSIs serve their Latinx students, these institutions should aim to identify systems, processes, and policies that create excessive delays or obstacles for students (Garcia, 2019). Evaluating the academic and non-academic outcomes for Latinx students, including student experiences, is vital to learning how the institution truly serves its students (Contreras, 2019). Through this particular study, the work aimed to understand the student experience vis-à-vis the voice of those charged with implementing policy.

Similarly, to empower historically underserved students such as Latinx students, scholars recommend that the institutional culture of colleges and universities, especially at Minority Serving Institutions, be transformed in four major ways (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). Institutions should call out and strike down deficit views of students; blur traditional roles of faculty, staff, and students to upend top-down hierarchies; expect everyone to take responsibility for the learning and progress of students; and empower students to customize their educational pathways (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). For Hispanic Serving Institutions to be relevant to Latinx student populations, they must commit to hiring administration, faculty, and staff who reflect the demographics of the student population (Boualoy Dayton et al., 2004). Diverse faculty and staff, who can empathize with the challenges of being a first-generation, minoritized student, play a major role in mitigating ethnic and racial disparities in degree completion (Boualoy Dayton et al., 2004). Though many Latinx students attend Hispanic serving community colleges, findings are conflicted about whether completion rates for Latinx students are higher at HSIs versus non-HSIs due to various factors (Núñez et al., 2015). Scholars assert that further research is needed to have a deeper insight into how Hispanic Serving Institutions serve their critical mass of Latinx students (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Garcia, 2019; Núñez et al., 2015).

Educational Leadership

As part of the literature review, it is helpful to provide a foundation for concepts around educational leadership. In particular, during times of change, the leadership of an organization

contributes to institutional culture (Kezar, 2014). In the California Community Colleges, the Chancellor released a statement to reaffirm the system's vision and to address the realities of the pandemic and social unrest of the past few years. Per the *Update to the Vision for Success: Reaffirming Equity in a Time of Recovery* (2021):

> As a system, the California Community Colleges are beginning to address institutional racism and injustice in a more explicit and intentional way. Colleges are trying to build truly diverse and inclusive colleges by encouraging frank conversations about race and institutional racism, auditing campus environments, examining curricula for cultural bias, overhauling hiring, reforming police training programs, advocating for undocumented students, and providing more direct assistance to students who have been systemically disadvantaged. These efforts especially aim to call out and correct policies and practices that are inherently racist, while also recognizing and addressing the damaging effects of ableism, sexism, and discrimination based on gender identity, sexuality, or other characteristics. (p. 12)

This statement illustrates where the priorities of the current leadership of the CCC system lie in recognizing the way the pandemic and social unrest have exacerbated the existing inequities in higher education. Similarly, Asera (2019) calls on leaders within the California Community Colleges to enact major transformational change at all levels and within the system itself. Asera (2019) posits:

> Transformation is more than adding a program or service. It entails questioning the underlying structures that have been in place and constructing new practices and norms. The scale of California's community college system and the complexity of these changes [Vision for Success, AB 705, and Guided Pathways] require leadership that is focused, flexible, and equipped with the skills and experience to carry forward this movement. (p. 5)

> Murphy's (2013) work acknowledges the "unheroic side of leadership," which is relevant to consider as part of transformational changes occurring in California (p. 30). Murphy (2013) accounts for six dimensions of this unheroic side of leadership: developing a shared vision (and defining a personal vision), asking questions (and having answers), coping with weakness (and displaying strength), listening and acknowledging (while talking and persuading), depending on others (while also exercising power), and letting go (in addition to taking charge). These dimensions of leadership are particularly relevant for instituting the level of change that is required for AB 705 implementation.

> Meanwhile, scholars articulate the connections between emotions and educational leadership (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015). Berkovich and Eyal (2015) conducted a narrative literature review of empirical evidence from 49 studies to establish emotional aspects related to educational leaders. The scholars found that three emotions (affective empathy, care, and hope) were recurring in the theoretical literature as defining drivers of educational leadership (Berkovich & Eyal, 2015). Additional findings from the literature review included that social injustices, community resistance, and other obstacles to social justice efforts are connected to leaders' negative emotions,

whereas successful outcomes of social justice efforts on students' progress and welfare were tied to positive emotions. Ultimately, one study found that social justice efforts were considered emotionally exhausting work due to the numerous obstacles, resistance, and long hours involved (Theoharis, 2008). The discussion of emotions, as related to educational leadership, is significant because participants (faculty, staff, and administration) described their various emotions related to the implementation of AB 705 at the research site.

Transfer and Completion for Latinx Students

Abrica and Rivas (2017) argue, "California community colleges are *the* pathway to ensure Students of Color transfer to obtain baccalaureate and graduate degrees" (p. 55). While Abrica and Rivas' (2017) research focused mainly on community college completion and transfer, scholars note the importance of HSIs and community colleges as a bridge to later degree attainment (Contreras, 2019). More than 2.1 million students are enrolled in the CCC system (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020a), which is at least twice as many students as the UC and CSU systems combined. Per the 2020 State of the System Report issued by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (2020b), Latinx/Hispanic students make up 45.25% of all student enrollment in the CCC system. In the same report, Hispanic students are identified as having the second lowest three-year completion rates after American Indian/Alaskan Native, among other ethnicities (Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Multi-Race, Unknown/Non-Response). Further inequities lie in regional achievement gaps, with the Inland Empire and Central Valley regions reporting the lowest completion rates across the state (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020b). This suggests that much work must still be done to better understand and close completion gaps for Latinx students as they make up a large percentage of the CCC student population.

One of the reasons identified for lower completion rates has been disproportionate placement into remedial English and math courses. Scholars note that when developmental courses are made available, colleges continue to disproportionately enroll Latinx students in them, despite recent AB 705 legislation (Hern et al., 2020). Conversely, students can complete transfer-level coursework at higher rates with support, guidance, and mentorship (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018b). Validation and care are enormously essential to persistence and completion rates for Students of Color (Wood & Harris, 2017).

Shifts Towards Access & Equity Through Policy and Legislation

Various states have enacted legislative and policy changes to address the shortfalls of developmental education which has disproportionately impacted Latinx students and other underserved student populations. California is also implementing various state-level initiatives to improve equitable outcomes and increase completion rates.

California Assembly Bill 705 (2017) took effect on January 1st, 2018. The bill text states:

This bill would require a community college district or college to maximize the probability that the student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in

English and mathematics within a one-year timeframe, and use, in the placement of students into English and mathematics courses in order to achieve this goal, one or more of the following: high school coursework, high school grades, and high school grade point average. (AB 705, 2017, para. 2)

This law is an intentional shift to close equity gaps, facilitate degree completion, and increase academic transfer at community colleges in California (Foundation for California Community Colleges, 2017). As Students of Color were more likely placed into remedial courses due to placement practices that rely on high-stakes placement tests (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2014), equity concerns were among the main reasons for the shift to embrace the use of multiple measures for placement (AB 705, 2017).

The goal of AB 705 is to not cause added delay by placing students into remedial courses. Scholars have noted that Latinx students have a greater tendency to enroll part-time, which lengthens the time for degree completion (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Numerous scholars have argued that standardized assessments alone are not effective for student placement (Henson & Hern, 2014; Hodara et al., 2012; Rodríguez, 2014; Scott-Clayton et al., 2014). To improve student completion of transfer-level math and English requirements, researchers recommend that students: 1) register for compressed courses; 2) engage in integrated developmental courses; 3) participate in corequisite courses; and 4) enroll directly in college-level classes, among other options (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2014; Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness, 2018). These suggestions require campuses to have one or more of these options available for students. More recent findings encourage students to enroll directly into transfer-level math and English courses, with co-requisite supports if needed, as research is proving that completion gaps are closing for Latinx and Black students who have access to these options (Hern et al., 2020). With the enactment of AB 705 in combination with the statewide adoption of the Guided Pathways Framework and the Chancellor's Vision for Success, the California Community College System strives to close equity gaps and increase degree completion rates.

CCC system leaders stressed the potential effects of AB 705 and urged top-level campus administrators and academic senate presidents to see how "these changes represent an opportunity to close achievement gaps and explore new strategies to move students more swiftly toward their goals as part of a guided pathways framework" (Hope & Bruno, 2017). The Guided Pathways framework is described in the Vision for Success as a means of facilitating system-wide goals and commitments (Foundation for California Community Colleges, 2017). It is identified as an "organizing framework to align and guide all initiatives aimed at improving student success," such as student support and success, basic skills, and equity programming (Foundation for California Community Colleges, 2017, p. 21). As a reminder, the Chancellor's Vision for Success (2021) outlines the CCC system goals and commitments for five years (to 2022) and was recently updated to reaffirm the goals in context with the realities of the social and health traumas of recent years. The goals include reducing equity gaps as well as regional achievement gaps, increasing transfer and completion rates, increasing the percent of CTE students who attain jobs in their field, and decreasing the average number of units accumulated by CCC students.

Guided Pathways was adopted system-wide, yet it is not required by law. Like AB 705, the Guided Pathways framework is at various stages of being fully implemented on different campuses. The framework, recognized nationally, aims to increase access and success using a "fundamental redesign" of community college's organization and culture from "access alone to a focus on access with success" (Bailey et al., 2015, p. 3). The four pillars of Guided Pathways entail: (1) clarify a clear, curricular path; (2) help students determine and enter their path; (3) help students stay on their selected path; (4) ensure learning is intentional (Bailey et al., 2015). The implementation of AB 705 fits into the framework of Guided Pathways as it is intended to help students enter their educational pathway.

These key changes in the CCC system (AB 705, Guided Pathways, and the Chancellor's Vision for Success) are opportunities to reconsider how community colleges have historically pushed out and left out Students of Color (Acevedo-Gil, 2018; Clark, 1960, 1980; California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2021). The restructuring of developmental education pathways and the shift to prioritizing access and success is pivotal to creating more equitable outcomes for Students of Color, especially for the high population of Latinx students enrolled in the CCC system.

Framework

This research study employed a theoretical framework based on organizational change theory (Kezar, 2014) and drew from Gonzales, Kanhai, and Hall's (2018) work that re-imagines organizational theories from a critical paradigm. Many scholars in the field privilege Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework for equity, HSI, and MSI research (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015; Jones, 2013; Salas, 2014; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). However, Kezar (2014) and Gonzales and colleagues (2018) offered a more suitable lens for considering how the change process occurs in educational institutions and how the critical paradigm can be used to re-imagine how colleges change to implement legislative reforms.

Kezar (2014) recognizes change as "those intentional acts where a particular leader drives or implements a new direction" (p. xii). The change process includes consideration of the type of change, the context for change, and the role of agency/leadership. Type, context, and agency inform the approach (or theories to apply) to the change initiative. Kezar (2014) uses the term *change agent* to imply anyone can create change. Change is a multi-level process since leadership (and change) happens at every level. Change theory includes first order and second order change. The type of change influences the approach, or strategies, used to institute the change. To elaborate, first order change requires minor adjustments or modifications to implement change; whereas, second order change necessitates an evaluation of underlying values, structures, processes, assumptions, and culture to institute change (Kezar, 2014). Kezar (2014) asserts that organizational theories and various schools of thought are different layers of a complex process. Instead of seeing them as competing viewpoints of the same phenomenon, change agents should employ and consider a variety of organizational theories to evaluate a situation.

Likewise, Gonzales and colleagues (2018) use a critical paradigm to offer a different perspective to foreground justice. By re-imagining organizational perspectives of four schools of thought—including scientific management, organizational behavior, environmental perspectives, and organizational culture—Gonzales and colleagues (2018) envision higher education institutions as spaces where diverse people and communities converge to foster a socially just world. Gonzales and colleagues (2018) prioritize four main issues which include: 1) Labor in/justice, like the exploitation of emotional labor; 2) Intersectional justice, associated with people in academia who may be marginalized or minoritized in multiple ways; 3) Reparative justice, which considers educational institutions as tools of colonization and prioritizes repatriations; and 4) Epistemic in/justice, the concept that society is dominated by paternalistic, white male rules which limit who is valued as a knower and producer of knowledge.

The notion of emotional labor is particularly significant in this study. Emotion and emotional labor are "a form of labor compelled by organizational norms and rules" (Gonzales & Rincones, 2013, p. 2). Miller (2001) argues that even suppressing is an emotional act; other scholars note that emotional labor has the ability to generate dissonance and dissatisfaction, which affects a person even when away from work (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Hochschild, 1983).

Critical organizational theory invites change agents and researchers to conduct transformational educational research, which only comes from reimagining "higher education as *more than* a place where people come to be credentialed and graduated, *more than* a place where faculty and staff simply process programs and grants just as they process students" (Gonzales et al., 2018, p. 507). To better prioritize social justice and equity, researchers must embrace radically different lenses other than the traditional views that have dominated the literature and previously influenced the work of higher education institutions (Gonzales et al., 2018). The change agents in this particular study are the participants themselves, the staff, faculty, and administrators, as they hold the power to enact change, for the better or for the worse.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the implications for equitable outcomes for students at a Hispanic Serving Community College in response to California Assembly Bill 705. This article develops findings and conclusions related to one research question derived from a larger dissertation research study (Baca, 2019). The following research question evolved and was refined throughout the research process (Stake, 1995):

- What are the perceived implications for equitable outcomes of students based on organizational changes in response to AB 705?

Research Methodology

This instrumental case study used a variety of data collection sources to "best" understand the case and capture the complexity of the issue (Stake, 1995, p. 56). The research, conducted at a Hispanic Serving Community College, employed various data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, document collection and analysis, physical artifact collection, and observations

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Collecting multiple types of data from various sources allows for triangulation (or validity) and increased trustworthiness in qualitative research (Glesne, 2011). Primarily, the study focused on learning from eleven participants (faculty, staff, and administration) who were charged with implementing AB 705 at the research site, Nepantla College[6] (pseudonym). Interviews provide clarity into initiative implementation, especially at MSIs and for Students of Color (Jones & Assalone, 2016).

Nepantla College student populations were diverse; however, it is significant to note that the majority (over 70%) of the student population identified as Hispanic or Latinx. Not only is Nepantla College a Hispanic Serving Institution, but it serves a high percentage of Latinx students. The faculty and administration; however, do not reflect this demographic. Conversely, a majority (over 70%) of the faculty and administration of Nepantla identified as white.

Utmost care was taken during the research process to uphold ethical considerations such as procedural ethics (with IRB mandates), situational ethics (by repeatedly reflecting on ethical decisions), relational ethics (by being mindful of my actions), and exit ethics (by considering how to share the results and leave the scene) (Tracy, 2010).

Participants

Potential participants were purposefully selected based on their contribution to the implementation of AB 705 at Nepantla College (Creswell, 2013). Participants were recruited based on their key role in implementing changes. Consideration was given to those participants who had a direct influence on decision-making and implementation practices, which is especially significant for Students of Color (Wood & Harris, 2017). In total, 19 potential participants were invited via email; 11 participants were formally interviewed. Participant positions ranged from faculty to administration to supplemental support staff, with four administrators, six full-time faculty members, and one supplemental support staff member. To maintain confidentiality, participants were given pseudonyms.

Part-time faculty, who are often responsible for teaching developmental education courses (Hern & Snell, 2013), were included in requests to participate; however, no contingent faculty members responded. This lack of participation may be related to labor injustice as described by Gonzales and colleagues (2018) and demonstrated a lack of equitable inclusion, which may have also extended to other AB 705 activities. In 2018, Nepantla College's adjunct faculty accounted for over 70% of all faculty, and nearly 70% of the adjunct faculty identified as white (Nepantla College, n.d.). This percentage was slightly higher than the CCC system patterns (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018a). Part-time faculty were included in recruitment attempts because they are often left out of various opportunities (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014) and are underrepresented in research (Townsend & Twombly, 2007).

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were interviewed at a time and location determined by the participant, both in person and via Zoom (a web conferencing service). The semi-structured interviews ranged

from 35-60 minutes, conducted during a single session. The potential for a follow-up interview was included in the informed consent in case additional clarification was needed. Participants were advised there were no incentives for participation in the study to ensure no perception of coercion. However, after data collection was complete participants received a professional development book[7] worth no more than $20, purchased out of the author's personal funds. Audio recordings were transcribed using Rev.com, an online transcription service. The transcripts were reviewed for accuracy by the participants and researcher.

Methods also included document collection, observations, and physical artifact collection. Document collection included the campus equity plan, organizational websites, committee agendas and minutes, and professional development proposals. All documents provided insight into organizational changes related to the implementation of AB 705. Each data type aided in triangulating the policy implementation phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Observation occurred at an Equity Committee meeting, including general campus observations, to help answer the research question. Detailed field notes and a reflective journal were kept to navigate subjective researcher observations and identify key correlations between interviews, artifacts, and observations (Gonzales & Rincones, 2013). Physical artifacts are objects that are found within the research setting; they are useful in supplementing interview and observation data (Merriam, 1998). Brochures, flyers, and pictures of the research site gave insight into the change processes and campus culture. Artifacts, like student newspapers, the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Class Schedules, and the 2018-19 Course Catalog supported participant accounts and verified findings.

Data were analyzed applying a deductive approach with predetermined codes formed from the research question and theoretical framework (Saldaña, 2016; Stake, 1995). Additional emergent codes (Saldaña, 2016) were added during the data analysis process to expose new meanings about the case (Stake, 1995).

Data were stored, organized, coded, and analyzed using NVivo, a software designed to analyze qualitative data. The data were coded to develop themes using eclectic coding, which utilizes a purposeful combination of coding methods, including process coding and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). Then, pattern coding was applied to construct categories and identify major themes from the data (Saldaña, 2016).

Limitations

The main limitation was the length of time in the field (Tracy, 2010). A longitudinal study could provide more insight into the policy changes and implementation processes; however, this study was conducted during a single semester, Spring 2019. Assembly Bill 705 required compliance by Fall 2019, and a longitudinal study would have allowed for a more complete picture of the change process (Kezar, 2014). Also, due to time constraints, this study prioritized only one research site. In a system-level reform like AB 705, conducting a comparative case study (Stake, 1995) would certainly yield further critical insights into how colleges are implementing policies and practices their response to AB 705[8].

The sample size was another limitation. Creswell (2014) notes participants can be added until saturation is achieved. This study intended to include adjunct faculty as participants, but none responded. Had additional resources been available, more participants from various departments and positions would have been included. Even with these limitations, rigorous data collection methods produced meaningful findings and themes (Tracy, 2010).

Positionality

All writing is influenced by the researcher's experiences, values, and biases (Creswell, 2013); it is key to explain my positionality for readers. Thus, I am explicit in aspects of my identity that have shaped my role as a researcher including my experience in the education system and the development of my Critical worldview.

I am an educated, multi-ethnic Latina. I have worked for over 15 years in K-12 schools, community colleges, and in the California State University system serving students who have been historically underserved and marginalized. As a first-generation student, I obtained my bachelor's and master's degrees from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. I consistently worked two part-time jobs to pay for expenses while attending school full-time. I benefited from Pell Grants to fund most of my undergraduate schooling and took out loans to pay for my graduate coursework. I chose to obtain my doctorate in Educational Leadership from California State University, San Bernardino because it prioritized social justice, equity, and educational transformation. While it was an affordable way for me to further my professional learning and build a network in higher education, as a Latina, I was drawn to the Latinx representation in the doctoral program's leadership and faculty (at the time—Dr. Nancy Acevedo, Dr. Edna Martinez, and Dr. Louie Rodriguez).

Although I persisted through California's public higher education system, I know I am one of few who have navigated this pipeline. Approximately 0.3 percent of Latinas earn a doctorate degree (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). I am invested in learning about how educational reform efforts, like AB 705, are impacting Latinx students, particularly at the community college level, because it is a gateway for so many to further education.

Higher education, and an advanced degree, have provided me with numerous advantages: to love my field of work, to advocate for social justice and equity, and to create positive change in our systems of education. However, they have also provided me with the realization of how much work is left to be done and how stark the reality is for those who do persist to terminal degrees.

Findings

Three themes emerged from the data findings for the research question: What are the perceived implications for equitable outcomes for students based on organizational changes? The first theme, *Prioritizing Equity Through Institutional Documents,* showed how Nepantla College's mission statement evolved over time to be more inclusive and how institutional documents influenced equity-focused changes, such as the campus equity plan (also known as the Integrated Plan), in alignment with AB 705. *Removing Institutional Barriers as a Form of Student Empowerment*

illustrated how removing barriers, like discontinuing the use of the ACCUPLACER[9] placement test and offering transfer-level math pathways like social statistics courses created a positive trajectory for equitable outcomes for students. The third theme, *Threats to Equitable Outcomes*, underscored perceived threats to equity. These threats consisted of fixed mindsets, inequitable practices, and deficit perspectives. Furthermore, findings revealed that acts of sabotage, implicit biases, and race-neutral and color-blind approaches to understanding equity (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) placed equitable student outcomes at risk. Findings illuminated the role legislative changes take in promoting equitable reforms while also exposing inequitable practices and deficit mindsets that still endure in higher education.

Findings associated with *Prioritizing Equity Through Institutional Documents* detailed how Nepantla College recently changed its mission statement to be more inclusive of its diverse student population (Jayden, personal communication, March 2019), which is in alignment with scholar recommendations to become Hispanic-serving, and not just Hispanic enrolling institutions (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2015; Garcia, 2019). However, findings also showed that while the mission statement was revised, it did not explicitly state that the campus was a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Other findings related to *Prioritizing Equity Through Institutional Documents* revealed that the 2017-19 Integrated Plan (Basic Skills Initiative, Student Equity, and Student Success and Support Program) was a foundation for the college's response to AB 705. This institutional document is required by all California Community Colleges as an accountability tool for promoting student success and equity. In 2017, CCC instituted the Integrated Plan reporting, which merged the planning process of three different initiatives: the Basic Skills Initiative (which supported developmental education), Student Equity Program (which ensured equal educational opportunities by developing goals and activities to address disparities), and Student Success and Support Program (which focused on access and completion). This information clarifies how Nepantla College used the Integrated Plan to drive equity efforts at the research site and how campus initiatives outlined in the plan aligned with the intent of AB 705 to support equitable outcomes for students.

Additionally, the Integrated Plan is tied to federal funding that supports activities and goals outlined in the plan. While the Integrated Plan is a required document, the findings indicated that the campus administration had already begun to intentionally prioritize equitable outcomes for students, which were in alignment with the intent of AB 705 legislation, prior to and during the time of the study.

While Nepantla College's Integrated Plan was not referenced by name by any of the participants as a foundation for AB 705 compliance work, many of the activities outlined in the document were discussed at length in interviews and observations. Latinx students were identified in the college's Integrated Plan as the largest target group because over 70% of the student population identified as Hispanic/Latino (Nepantla College, n.d.). Activities—such as the bridge program, Early Alert[10] and intrusive counseling, and professional development with On Course[11] and Reading Apprenticeship[12]—served as elements of the college's response to AB 705 and

existed before the legislation was enacted. Other activities not in the 2017-19 Integrated Plan— like establishing a self-guided placement survey and eliminating requirements for pre-requisites and the placement test—were more recent responses to AB 705. Overall, the foundations of the college's response to AB 705 were informed by actions directly and indirectly outlined in the Integrated Plan. These findings demonstrate the need to incorporate equity explicitly into institutional planning and practices as part of the commitment to equity and Hispanic-servingness (Felix & Fernandez Castro, 2018; Garcia, 2019).

Findings from the second theme, *Removing Institutional Barriers as a Form of Student Empowerment,* demonstrate what Nepantla College did to remove barriers, like offering a two-semester sequence for students to complete transfer-level English within one year and creating a self-guided placement survey to use instead of a placement exam. There were many positive implications for student equity related to the college's AB 705 implementation, which greatly influenced the majority of the Latinx student population at Nepantla College. Alex, an administrator involved with placement and counseling, explained the students were empowered by being able to register directly in transfer-level coursework. Nelky, a top-level administrator, shared that AB 705 allowed for increased opportunity related to student completion. For instance, Nelky noted that more students were able to take contextualized math and quantitative reasoning courses that were more aligned with their majors, like a social statistics course for humanities and liberal arts majors. The college even planned to hire additional social statistics faculty (full-time and part-time) to support the increased demand for those courses. Other departments, like the business department, considered establishing a new math/quantitative reasoning curriculum in response to AB 705. Similarly, the Public Policy Institute of California (2017) recommended colleges offer more statistics and contextualized math/quantitative thinking pathways as options for conventional developmental math sequences.

Findings related to the third theme, *Threats to Equitable Outcomes,* demonstrated fixed mindsets, deficit views of student capabilities, and inequitable practices which present negative implications for equitable outcomes for students. Findings also indicated defiance toward supporting student success (in certain departments of the college), the existence of implicit biases, and race-neutral and color-blind approaches to understanding equity. The demographics of the student population, mainly Latinx, contrasted with the demographics of the faculty and administration, the majority of whom are white. These findings connect back to the roles of faculty, staff, and administrators and how they can facilitate or hinder student success (Carrasquillo, 2013). Scholars propose that validation and positive student engagement with faculty, counselors, staff, and administration are vital especially for Students of Color (Osei-Kofi & Rendon, 2005; Wood & Harris, 2017).

This concept resonated in a story that Rae, an administrator, disclosed:

We were sitting at the academic senate and…[the] math department chair was giving an update on [the self-guided placement survey] for students…one of the faculty members asked, "And what are you doing for as far as helping the students be successful in math?" And another one of [the math] faculty…spoke up in front

of the whole academic senate and said, "There's nothing in AB 705 that says that we have to work on students being successful." That caused quite a stir in the academic senate meeting, but that's exactly how [the] math faculty feel. They are not responsible for student success. That's what they believe. (personal communication, February 2019)

Rae's testimony portrayed a vivid picture of the math department culture. This example demonstrated systemic injustice for diverse student populations, which in this instance, stressed the limited views of responsibility math faculty had for student success at Nepantla. While not all the faculty held deficit views, several participants confirmed the math department, and some math faculty were major barriers to student success. Per a top-level administrator at the research site, the deficit perceptions from faculty and administration had extremely negative effects on completion and persistence rates in transfer-level math courses and particularly in the several levels of developmental math courses the department offered (Nelky, personal communication, March 2019). In addition, this example is also indicative of the emotional labor incurred by faculty, staff, and administrators as part of the AB 705 implementation throughout the college. In other words, there were implications for faculty who were invested in fostering student success by having to navigate a hostile environment fostered by deficit perspectives. On the other hand, the same can be said for the faculty, staff, and administration who experienced high levels of emotional labor as part of the change process, including those who resisted AB 705 changes.

In another incident, identified by Tanner who was an administrator, inequitable practices surfaced in a plan by the math department:

Basically, what the plan is at this point is, because people are placing themselves directly into college level math, so the math [faculty] who are teaching have made a public commitment to make sure and fail as many of those students as they possibly can just to prove that AB 705 is a terrible idea. (personal communication, February 2019)

Both Tanner and Jayden, a faculty member in the school of math and science, corroborated the existence of this plan at the research site. While many on the campus were in favor of the legislation, time and again, the interview data exposed problems of practice within the math department's pedagogies and deficit mindsets. Moreover, Jayden described threats to equitable outcomes related to implicit biases: "I've never heard anyone in my department use the word 'equity' or 'equitable.' I have heard them say, 'Well, of course our numbers are low, look at our demographic'" (personal communication, February 2019). Latinx students represent the largest demographic at Nepantla College. This comment demonstrated the implicit (or explicit) bias that existed among some faculty and showed how the department "never" used language to address equity.

Race-neutral and color-blind approaches to understanding equity threaten equitable outcomes for Students of Color. Color-blindness, or not "seeing" a person by their skin color, affords white people a way to convey resentment towards People of Color (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Bonilla-Silva (2014) posits that color blindness is employed to "criticize [minorities'] morality,

values, and work ethic" (p. 4). Equally, meritocratic ideologies, or views that people should be privileged and selected based on their abilities, also appeared in participant responses. The problem with meritocracy is that it does not take systemic inequities into consideration. Rae, an administrator, claimed:

> The push is, the reason why we need to get rid of the lower-level math classes and English classes, is, because we're putting up roadblocks for Students of Color, and that, that's a problem and we need to change that. So, what we're in one way, and I'm just going to be honest here, what we're suggesting is Students of Color can't do the work of students who are white. What's the issue there? We need to be really careful there. (personal communication, February 2019)

Rae at first acknowledged the need for reform and stated that below transfer-level courses are barriers for Students of Color, but also identified the requirements of AB 705 as a "push." The reference to "push" seemed to be referring to the fact that AB 705 was an external mandate legislated by the state and is, therefore "pushed" upon the college. Then, Rae shifted into notions of meritocracy with "what we're suggesting is students of color can't do the work of students that are white" (personal communication, February 2019). This comment conveyed that AB 705 is less of a means to promote access and equity and more of a way to upend meritocracy, suggesting that Students of Color need to earn transfer-level coursework. This is contrary to the intent of AB 705, which articulates that students' high school grades should be used as the primary means of placement in English and math, as these grades have been proven to be far more reliable at indicating student performance in college (Bahr et al., 2019).

Initiatives such as AB 705 and Guided Pathways, though aimed at increasing access and equitable outcomes, are not always executed with an equity mindset by the individuals working directly with students. AB 705 could not mandate practitioners to change their values and beliefs. During the interview, Rae contemplated the worth of a community college degree:

> All students need to rise to the level of college level content. What are we giving a degree for at any college or university if we're not expecting students to learn a certain level of content of material? So, for the HSI students, I don't see HSI students any different than any of my other students. I don't see Black students any different than white students as far as this goes. (personal communication, February 2019)

In this quote, Rae displayed a belief in high expectations as a standard for education, concerned primarily with the rigor of the content students should grasp to earn a degree. This belief is not misplaced; yet, maintaining color-blind views, it makes it challenging for Rae to acknowledge the systemic barriers that exist for Students of Color. Rae does not even refer to the students as Latinx, Hispanic, or Latina/o; Rae only refers to them as HSI students. Rae does use the terms Black and white though. Throughout the interview, Rae did not mention any factors that could have influenced existing systemic inequities. To restate, the administration holds an influential role in change initiatives. Rae's views of student success and equity influence policies

and practices; they have direct repercussions for student outcomes (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Wood & Harris, 2017).

While deficit and color-blind ideologies can impact equitable outcomes for students, so can the high levels of emotional labor that change agents experience during the change process. Change and external mandates brought on by AB 705 incited emotional labor in the faculty, staff, and administration interviewed. Emotional labor has the potential to yield dissonance and dissatisfaction within an individual, which can influence a person in other aspects of life, even outside of work (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Hochschild, 1983). Frustration, lack of communication, and breakdowns in the shared governance process contributed to dissension among faculty, staff, and administration. Overall, these findings illustrated the emotional labor involved in confronting deep-seated assumptions and values during this second order change process (Kezar, 2014).

Emotional labor manifested in many participant responses and was illustrated in different ways related to AB 705 reforms. Tanner, an administrator, identified, "Mostly the curriculum, where it needs to be done, is in the math area and again, there's a great deal of resistance there" (personal communication, February 2019). Tanner corroborated the idea of resistance in certain areas of the campus, which was reported by numerous participants. As the campus was in its first semester of compliance with AB 705, some participants reported feeling frustrated at the lack of ownership to implement changes. Jaime, a faculty member, articulated the dilemma:

> It's hard to kind of do what the administration is asking, when the dean is saying, "Okay, you should be working on this," which makes kind of some sense to me. Okay, the law is the law. And then on the other hand… faculty who again, a lot of them have been here for years, think the students are stupid, don't want to basically do any work, or don't want to have to change anything. So, that makes it hard, trying to get people to change who don't want to change. (personal communication, February 2019)

Jaime stressed the challenges of implementing AB 705 where the administration, or the institutional change agents in power, is urging implementation, but some faculty reject change. This resistance to change suggests the emotional labor experienced during reform efforts. Likewise, Jaime's assertions problematized how some faculty still hold deficit views of students, resist changing their mindsets of student capabilities, and still, others lack the motivation to change.

Discussion

To reiterate, findings were organized into the following themes: *Prioritizing Equity Through Institutional Documents, Removing Institutional Barriers as a Form of Student Empowerment,* and *Threats to Equitable Outcomes.* The findings suggest considerable benefits for Latinx students and other underserved students at the research site. Additionally, the findings indicate challenges for Latinx students in the form of gatekeepers, those people who hold power in decision-making and progress for students such as faculty, staff, and administration. Gatekeepers have the power to withhold access and resources, which, in turn, can limit student success.

In relation to the first theme, formal institutional documents offer a framework for long-term change efforts (Kezar, 2014); these official mechanisms affect what decision-makers focus on in terms of goals and values (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2015). Nepantla College increased its potential for equitable outcomes for students by revising its mission statement to be more inclusive. Mission statements can guide change and influence the way leaders prioritize (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2015). Though the campus did not include its HSI status in its revised mission, which would be a next step for prioritizing equity, it did attempt to address the diversity of the students it served (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2015).

The foundations of the college's response to AB 705 were built upon actions outlined in the campus' Integrated Plan. For instance, the research site identified several initiatives that aligned with the goals of AB 705 to increase equitable outcomes for students. The most powerful initiative was the campus' bridge program. Having an established bridge or promise program that provides wraparound services can greatly influence positive equitable outcomes.

The bridge program at Nepantla was a catalyst for equitable outcomes as over 80% of the participating student population identified as Hispanic or Latino (Nepantla College, n.d.). It started as a pilot project supporting 21 students and grew to serve over 1200 students with free tuition, mentoring, three weeks of intensive review of math and/or English skills, college success strategies, supplemental instruction, and access to computers/course materials. Per an administrator, Charlie, who was involved with the bridge program, students had higher retention and persistence rates in the program compared to other students who did not participate in the program (personal communication, March 2019). Faculty and staff who were involved in the bridge program seemed intrinsically motivated to do the work and committed to supporting Students of Color. Researchers emphasize the importance of retaining staff and faculty who are equity-minded, especially at Minority Serving Institutions (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). Nelky, a top-level administrator, confirmed that other measures identified in the Integrated Plan such as the use of Early Alert, intrusive counseling, and professional development for faculty with On Course and Reading Apprenticeship contributed to the positive outcomes for Latinx students on campus (personal communication, March 2019). Campus equity plans should be examined to see how campuses can leverage existing equity initiatives to further improve their implementation of AB 705 or even prioritize equity in other education reforms.

Additionally, as part of its response to AB 705, Nepantla College began offering alternative transfer-level math pathways like social statistics courses, which opened new pathways for students. This action, in combination with discontinuing the use of a single assessment for placement into transfer-level math and English courses, presents a positive outlook for equitable outcomes for Latinx students. The positive effects attributed to Nepantla's flexibility in modifying admissions and counseling pathways to increase student enrollment directly into transfer-level coursework contrasted with deficit perspectives, color-blind ideologies, and high levels of emotional labor, which held potentially negative consequences for student success and retention rates.

The threats to equitable outcomes, such as implicit biases, deficit perspectives, and especially the lack of ownership exhibited by faculty in the math department, could be detrimental to student success. Validation and positive student engagement are integral for student success, whereas the clear defiance exhibited by math faculty to support student success, and limited accountability by the department leadership, posed a major challenge for other change agents on campus who prioritized equitable access. Traditional math pathways (arithmetic to pre-algebra to beginning algebra to intermediate algebra) have long been a gatekeeping mechanism for degree completion (Public Policy Institute of California, 2017). While Nepantla College complied with AB 705 at the time of the study, the math faculty made a public declaration to fail students to prove the law did not work, which would primarily impact the majority Latinx student population on campus. Contrary to the findings of perceptions in the math department, the English department faculty and leadership did not have as much resistance to AB 705 as it was already in compliance with the law at the time of this study. The English department at Nepantla began offering a two-course sequence for transfer-level English as part of a pilot program with the Multiple Measures Assessment Project[13] (Jesse, personal communication, March 2019). The variation in responses illustrates the need to further investigate not only whether a college complies with the law, but more importantly, how the law is implemented on campus considering qualitative data such as is presented in this article.

Ideas of meritocracy and color-blind ideologies do little to confront the issues of race and equity on any campus, let alone at a Hispanic Serving Institution, such as Nepantla. While the campus student population was predominantly Latinx, the majority of the faculty and administration were white (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2018a). Negative assumptions and limited ability to see student potential contradict the intent of the bill to close equity gaps. Research demonstrates that administration, faculty, and staff should reflect the student population and that faculty diversity plays a key role in countering ethnic and racial disparities in student degree completion (Boualoy Dayton et al., 2004).

Second order change,[14] like AB 705, requires change agents and the institution to evaluate values, culture, beliefs, and assumptions (Kezar, 2014). This led to a significant amount of emotional labor as indicated in the findings. Feelings of stress, frustration, confusion, and dissent were prevalent in participant responses. Emotional labor participants experienced could have been reduced with several actions by (a) providing further guidance on policies, expectations, and procedures, (b) increasing communication on shared governance practices, and (c) allowing additional time for sensemaking. Collaboration is important to ensure equity lies at the center of reform efforts.

Results of this study revealed positive implications attributed to prioritizing equity in institutional documents and removing institutional barriers. Conversely, the findings also exposed underlying problems of practice that persist in higher education.

Recommendations

Mindsets influence the success of change initiatives (Kezar, 2014); therefore, change agents must take ownership for student success. Equally, institutional planning must prioritize student equity. To go deeper with Hispanic-Servingness as an institution, Hispanic-Serving Community Colleges need to intentionally close equity gaps, with disaggregated data, for their Latinx student populations. Community colleges are the most diverse system of higher education in the nation (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018). Change agents must establish alliances to cultivate inclusion, equity, and social justice to sustain transformational reform efforts. For instance, a promising example of this is the recent formation of the California Community College Equity Leadership Alliance, which creates partnerships among more than 60 community colleges to combat racism on campus (Weissman, 2020). Another promising example of leadership development is The Coalition's Aspiring Radical Leadership Institute (ARLI), which is a two-year professional development opportunity in California, designed with the goal of increasing faculty and staff diversity in the CCC system. The Coalition is made up of three higher educational organizations that decided to stand in solidarity in addressing conditions of inequity within the California Community College system. These organizations include the African American Male Education Network and Development (A2MEND), Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE), and California Community College Organizacion de Latinx Empowerment Guidance & Advocacy for Success (COLEGAS). Per The Coalition's website (2022), "Institute participants are selected for demonstrating a passion for disrupting status quo structures that view structural racism as the central threat to the well-being of BIPOC faculty, staff, and students in the community college system."

In the same way, a culture of professional learning must be promoted in individual colleges as well as throughout the CCC system. Professional learning should focus on mandatory equity and diversity training and retraining, as well as building culturally relevant practices with regular and collaborative support networks. Some examples of professional learning that prioritizes equity are offered in different California Community Colleges are from CORA (Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement), Communities of Practice within the CCC System, and Humanizing Online Learning. Two major limitations of current professional development offerings in the CCCs are that they are typically only offered on a voluntary basis and campus stakeholders are not typically compensated for attending.

Other recommendations address hiring practices and campus responsibility to establish intentional institutional planning around equity. Hiring practices must prioritize the hiring of ethnically-diverse individuals with a record of proven commitment to social justice, equity, and inclusion efforts. Specific to faculty advancement, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work should be prioritized as a component of tenure and promotion consideration[15]. At the same time, campus equity plans (Integrated Plans) should be referenced by campus practitioners to have a better understanding of what student populations are being targeted for support and how programs and resources are being used to close equity gaps. Staff, faculty, and administrators must actively and regularly engage in implementing researched best practices to close equity gaps within their respective disciplines and support services.

Change initiatives need to be flexible enough to allow time for reflection and sensemaking to cultivate deep change (Kezar, 2014). Sensemaking is a way to change mindsets, which influence priorities, values, actions, commitments, and norms (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). If change agents do not feel included in reform efforts, then enduring transformational change is at risk. Essentially, all levels of change agents should reframe unequal outcomes so the focus is on analyzing how practices might be failing Latinx students. These practices can then be identified as problems of practice rather than problems of student deficiency (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2015).

Education reforms like AB 705 are designed with the promise of increasing access and equity in an educational system that has historically had limited success in transfer and completion rates. Research that explores initiatives like these is integral for understanding how Latinx students and other underrepresented student populations can thrive in the community college system. A policy report on early implementers of AB 705 made recommendations for moving forward with compliance, including narrowing equity gaps as a critical component in the planning process (Rodríguez et al., 2018). The same report made recommendations for rigorous research to better comprehend the short and long-term impacts of AB 705 reform efforts, notably on underrepresented students (Rodríguez et al., 2018). Moreover, it is critical to conduct research on these reforms to better understand the ways that Latinx students experience and benefit from these efforts.

The AB 705 legislative mandate occurred prior to the coronavirus global pandemic. If research was important in understanding AB 705 implementation efforts and its implications for equity in Spring 2019, then there is an even greater need for research regarding how implementations have been adapted to support students in a mass emergency shift to online learning in response to the pandemic. The CCC Chancellor, Eloy Ortiz Oakley, endorsed the CCC system to continue offering online instruction through Fall 2020 (Zinshteyn, 2020), which continued into Spring 2021 as well. Students historically enrolled in developmental education courses, including academically underprepared students, low-income students, and Males of Color particularly have greater attrition rates in online education (Jaggars & Bailey, 2010; Xu & Jaggars, 2014). This invites additional research and action on how educational reform efforts are being affected by the pandemic; more work is needed to understand how wraparound services, like technology, food security, mental health services, and access to campus resources, are being impacted to ensure equity for students.

Conclusion

This research represents a chance to prioritize social justice and equity efforts for the Latinx community. In closing, I learned that resistance endures as much as hope. Information and time for reflection are needed for change efforts. Implementation efforts must be guided by urgency; however, they must still allow for sensemaking. Efforts must prioritize the intricacies of relationships and recognize that change agents are people with emotions, hopes, and fears alike. We need more equity-minded change agents enacting and implementing educational system reforms; change agents who consider the type, context, agency, and approach to change (Kezar,

2014). Similarly, emotional labor is a dominant factor in the change process and must be considered to validate the people engaged in change efforts (Gonzalez et al., 2018). Most importantly, a shift in mindset and practice is imperative to complement the shift in policy to create greater equitable outcomes for Latinx students. Gloria Anzaldúa's words depict where we are as a nation; we are ready for change. Our future depends on it. Together, "*sí se puede, que así sea,* so be it, *estamos listas, vamonos*. Now let us shift" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 576).

Notes

[1] The term *community college* is used instead of two-year institution or two-year college as the CCC's Chancellor's Office Scorecard reports completion rates by six-year cohorts (Contreras & Contreras, 2018).

[2] According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018), a Hispanic Serving Institution has enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent (FTE) students of which at least 25 percent are Hispanic.

[3] Developmental education is a term ascribed to students who enter college "underprepared" (Cohen et al., 2014).

[4] A CCC system adopted framework that redesigns a college's organization and culture to focus on access and success (Bailey et al., 2015).

[5] The Chancellor's Vision for Success outlines the CCC system goals and commitments for five years (to 2022). The goals include reducing equity gaps as well as regional achievement gaps, increasing transfer and completion rates, increasing the percent of CTE students who attain jobs in their field, and decreasing the average number of units accumulated by CCC students. Learn more at vision.foundationccc.org.

[6] The research site is Nepantla College (pseudonym). Nepantla is a Nahuatl word that represents the in-between (Anzaldúa, 2002). I use the term to highlight the college as a site of "liminal space where transformation can occur…nepantla indicates space/times of great confusion, anxiety, and loss of control…But nepantla is also a time of self-reflection, choice, and potential growth" (Keating, 2006, p. 8-9).

[7] Book incentives included *Teaching Men of Color in Community College: A Guidebook* by Frank Harris III, Luke Wood, and Khalid Akil White or *Supporting Men of Color in the Community College* by Luke Wood and Frank Harris III.

[8] See Hern and colleagues (2020) report, *Still Getting There: How California's AB 705 Is (and Is Not) Transforming Remediation and What Needs to Come Next* for further detail on system-wide implementation.

[9] ACCUPLACER is a computerized assessment developed by the College Board and commonly used by community colleges as the sole criteria for placement into math, English, and English as a Second Language courses.

[10] Early Alert is an Academic Advising and Planning Software by Starfish.

[11] On Course is a workshop consisting of learner-centered professional development designed to offer participants innovative strategies for empowering students to be active, responsible and successful learners (Nepantla College, n.d.).

[12] According to the WestEd website (2019), Reading Apprenticeship is a research-based teaching framework that helps college faculty increase contextualized, critical literacy skills and confidence for students.

[13] The Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP), an effort to standardize assessment practices across the CCC system, was part of the Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) in the California Community Colleges.

[14] Second order change necessitates evaluation of underlying values, structures, processes, assumptions, and culture to institute change. For instance, those who implemented AB 705 at the research site were forced to examine their values related to who should have access to transfer-level English and Math courses.

[15] As the community colleges serve an increasingly diverse student population, it is fitting that faculty be held accountable in promotion and tenure to prioritize DEI work. See "The DEI Pathway to Promotion" by Colleen Flaherty for an example.

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