

Fostering Belonging: Research Based Strategies and Student Perspectives

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<https://tinyurl.com/26tb9ywt>





Presentation Objectives

- Sense of Belonging Study
- Findings
- How we implement the finding in the classroom



Dissertation on Sense of Belonging

- ▶ Latino Men's Sense of Belonging Experiences in a Community College Developmental Mathematics Classroom
- ▶ Purpose: Examine sense of belonging of first- generation Latino men enrolled in a developmental mathematics course. Specifically Latino men's experiences in the mathematics classroom and the types of interactions they had with faculty and peers that lead to their sense of belonging.
- ▶ Strayhorn(2019) defined sense of belonging as students' "perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community" (p. 4)



Self-actualization

morality,
creativity,
spontaneity,
problem solving,
lack of prejudice,
acceptance of facts

Esteem

self-esteem,
confidence, achievement,
respect of others, respect by others

Love/Belonging

friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety

security of body, of employment, of resources,
of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological

breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion



Method

Design

- Qualitative
- Phenomenological (Moustakas, 1994)
- Phenomenological research-affective human experiences (Merriam, 2009)

Setting

- Postsecondary Community College-HSI
- MAT 114: College Prep Mathematics Course

Sample

- Criterion-based, Purposeful sample
- First-generation
- Latino Males
- 18 years of age or older
- Enrolled part/full time and plan to complete an associate degree or transfer.

Data Collection

Interviews

- Modified version of Seidman's three step process
- Participant's experience in classroom environment
- Interactions with professors and peers
- Reflection on how interactions affected sense of belonging

Semi-structured

- 30–60-minute individual interview
- 10 participants
- Face-to-face



Themes

RQ#1 Classroom

- Classroom Environment
- Engagement

RQ#2 Faculty Interactions

- Instructor Practices
- Instructor Qualities

RQ#3 Peer Interactions

- Friendships & Social Interactions
- Helping Others

Classroom Environment

Accepted & Welcomed

- Students felt welcomed, acknowledged, included, accepted and seen in their class

Racial Identity Acceptance and Equality

- Liked having diverse population of student because it provided different experiences and perspectives

Safe Environment

- Felt racially accepted and it was acceptable to make mistakes and ask questions





How to Create a Welcoming Classroom Environment

1st Day Activities

- Math comfort level
- Base groups
- Name plates/motivation
- Syllabus Jigsaw
- Bingo Activity

Racial Identity

- Syllabus Diversity Statement
- Question of the Day
- What's Your Jam?

Safe Environment

- Dispel myths
- How to Learn Math (mistakes)
- Connect with one another

First Day Activities

▶ **Math Comfort Level**

- ▶ Everyone stands in a semi-circle around the room
- ▶ If you love math and feel great about being in this class stand on the left side of circle
- ▶ If you are pretty good at math but need a refresher stand in the middle of the circle
- ▶ If you are very anxious about being in this math class and feel that you struggle more than others, stand on the right-hand side of the room.

▶ **Base Groups**

- ▶ Count off by the number of tables in your classroom. Assign numbers to each table and send the 8's to their table, send the 7's to their table, etc. Ask students if they require any accommodations and move them accordingly.

▶ **Name Plates**

- ▶ Print your first and last name on the front and back of your card
- ▶ Corners: Your Birthdate w/o year, Where you were born, Dream Job, 3 Hobbies
- ▶ Around the Card: 3 positive adjectives your friends would use to describe you.
- ▶ Introduce yourself to your group

First Day Activities

➤ Syllabus Jigsaw

- Each table of four introduces themselves and each person at the table picks a number from 1-4. The ones will form 1-2 groups, the two's another group, etc. Each of these new groups receives one copy of the syllabus and answers a set of questions. Each group writes something "very important" they learned or a question about their questions on the board. Everyone goes back to their original groups and explains what they learned. Instructor can then stress any particular topics as well as answer the questions on the board and point out the "very important" items.

➤ Student Bingo

- Student pair up and receive one Bingo card. They sign the square that describes them from members of their tables. Students stand up and walk around meeting other students to sign their bingo card. The team to fill their bingo card, within the time provided (~5 min), completely gets a prize.



YOU
BELONG
HERE

Syllabus Diversity Statement

Welcome to College Algebra Prep!

I am looking forward to working with all of you this semester! I value differences and appreciate working with students of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, sizes, shapes, and backgrounds. I enjoy connecting with students, and I plan to learn as much from you as I hope you will learn from being in this class. To the best of my ability, I intend to provide an environment where you and your learning are the number one priority. In this course, you will dive deeply into algebra and learn about linear and quadratic functions and equations. You will perform operations on polynomial, radical expressions, and complex numbers. You will also explore rational exponents, applications, and graphs of linear and quadratic functions.

(Cara Lee)



Question of the Day & What's Your Jam?

➤ Question of the Day

- Each day a question is posted on the board. Students talk within their group about their response and write it down on their group paper. Sometimes I'll ask the class if anyone wants to share their responses with everyone.

➤ What's your jam?

- Students are asked their favorite song or artist. I keep a list and play a different song each class period while students are discussing the question of the day or working on the warm-up problems. I post on the board the name of the song, artist, and who chose the song.



Engagement

Active Engagement

- Participating in class, putting forth effort, collaborating in problem solving.
- Felt more confident in math abilities and more at ease working with classmates

Building Community

- Network of support
- Accountable to one another
- Improved their learning



How to Build Community and Engage Students

Engagement

- Limited Lecture
- Group Activity
- Board Work

Activity

- Domain & Range Activity

Instructor Practices

- Mathematics content delivery
- Facilitated group activities
- Knew their students
- Provided resources
- Walked around class





How to Implement Instructor Practices

Know Students

- Welcome Letter/Absent Email
- Know Names
- Wellness Check

Provide Resources

- Content Videos
- Interview Tutor Assignment
- Post Campus Events on LMS

Walk Around




- Opportunity to Connect
- Student Quote



Wellness Check & Exit Message




Wellness Check

-  What is your wellness score today? (Hell) 1-5 (Thriving)
-  Track scores of student below 3 and follow up with them. Personal communication to provide college resources
-  21 Student well-being questions (Question of the day)



Exit Message

-  Ask a student for a number between 4-224. ID the page on the book *Inward* by Yung Pueblo. Read the passage and ask students to reflect on the passage for today. (Duncan-Andrade,2022)



Student Quote about Instructors Walking Around Class

I feel like when teachers just sit up there in the desk and just kind of stand in one area, it's kind of embarrassing to walk up to them. I just feel like it's kind of intimidating to walk up and then you know, kind of just saying what you're doing wrong in front of everyone. So, it kind of helps when she walks over to you because you feel a little bit more comfortable asking questions and more like a personal touch talking to her.

Instructor Qualities

Availability & Flexibility

- Available to answer questions and flexible with assignment deadlines and student needs

Respectful Behavior

- Exhibited respectful behaviors when they interacted with students

Caring qualities

- Kind, encouraging, friendly, approachable, inspiring, and relatable.



How to Implement Instructor Qualities

Availability & Flexibility

- Invite to Student Hours
- Assignment flexibility
- Late Passes
- Understanding
- Life events

Respectful Behavior

- Greet students
- Answer questions kindly

Caring Qualities

- Be encouraging, vulnerable, positive, approachable
- Let them see you as a whole person

Friendships & Social Interactions



- Communicate socially and academically
- Conversations persisted outside of class-friendships established
- Class was enjoyable-liked going to class
- Group activities-enabled collaboration and helped them learn from one another

Helping Others

- ▶ Classroom environment-positive learning space enabled students to feel comfortable to ask questions
- ▶ Not isolated in struggles with mathematics-good for them to see other students struggle to understand



Participant Statements

Friendships & Social Interactions

“I had a connection with somebody in my group. He saw me come out of my truck and he was like, I really like your truck, and I was like, thank you. I remember the next day or the day I had the class again, we walked the same way, and we were just talking about class and getting to know each other. So, meeting in class helped build a connection outside of class.” John

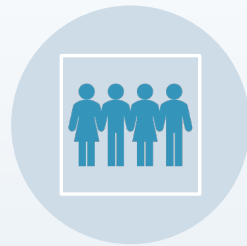
“Whenever a classmate asks me how I’m feeling, what course I’m taking, I don’t know why, but that question kind of gives me like an idea like they do care about what I’m studying or it’s like a very basic conversation starter. So, they’re just trying to get to know me and them asking, “Hey, do you need help,” “Are you feeling okay in this course?” Conversations that start like that make me know that my classmates do in fact care about me.” Alex

Helping Others

“Being able to collaborate with my tablemates has really helped build that sense of community.” Mathew

“There are a lot of Latino students in my class and that helps me feel like I belong. It makes me feel like I am not the only one who placed in this class and is struggling. We are all striving to finish this class together.” Bob

How to Create Peer-to-Peer Interactions



Cooperative
Learning Work



Base Groups



Get to know each
other posts-[Padlet](#)



Campus Events

Questions/Comments



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- ▶ [Google](#) Folder for Presentation Materials

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