

Interviewers: Christy Mair & Krysta Schmick

Interviewee: Mr. Jason Baca

How are you involved in the Hispanic population?

When I arrived here four years ago they gave me an ESL class an ESL integrated class and a biology class and so I started teaching those students the science stuff that they teach to other students and so they put a group of those kids together and that's kinda my involvement with them.

What methods are used to transition Hispanic ESL students to transition into mainstream classes?

They have a program called exiting, and basically they try and get the kids to a certain point. To when they get here they are called newcomers they learn the English language, they also learn techniques that will help them be successful here at Century High School, or anywhere, but they start pretty basic and they try to move them up into mainstream classes within three or four years.

How does the ESL program determine when a student is ready to begin mainstream classes?

Right now there is a test called nawinca munos?? And they take this test and if they score high enough on it then they are allowed to move into mainstream classes, or if their parents want them to be moved into those classes they also do that. There are not very many kids but there are kids that will be exited, and that means they'll be moved into mainstream classes, and then they are not successful and then they go back into the ESL program.

What are the parents reactions to the academic outreach programs provided for their children?

The parents that I've talked to are pretty excited about what there kids are doing. A lot of these students come from places where the educational system is much different then what it is here, and so they are kinda surprised by the way we do things. Most of the parent I've talked to are really exited about the fact that there children seem to be learning English quite well, and are becoming successful.

So you don't really have a problem with parents who don't support there kids getting and education?

No it's more of a problem with the parents not being involved in the teacher process. So they aren't actually going to conferences. That's been are biggest problem so we do actually have leazons that go to homes and apartment building, and go and talk to groups of the parents of these kids.

What type of feedback do you receive from Hispanic students?

Mostly positive. Most of the kids that I've talked to about the program have been pretty successful in the things they are doing. And the ones that I've talked to have been pretty excited about doing things that they didn't think they'd be able to do when they got here.

What are some of the recurring issues for Hispanic Students?

The main issue is that they are a close nit bunch so when you separate them they are kinda not to happy about it. So sometimes they aren't successful because they want to get back in. Attendance issues, but any other issues that you would see in any of the other population. Even the kids that are born here have these issues. Unno attendance, not doing there work and not asking questions if they have them

Have the issues changed of the years?

Well I've been only doing this for five years so I don't know if there has been that big of a change. I do remember that when I went to school in this district when I was younger and the Hispanic population has grown quite a bit. It used to be that there was only one or two Hispanic student, but know you can tell that there are a lot more. Know we have a lot of Vietnamese and lots of other different kids.

What improvements do you believe could be made to better address the needs of these students?

I think that these students.. We need to get in control of or be able to talk to their parents, to get them more involvèd. We need teachers to be able to understand and use some of the tèchniques that can be used to deal with these kids. And to do stuff with these kids.

What is the greatest obstacle for the Hispanic students trying to further their education?

One of the main.. Is for Hispanic students if they aren't American citizens it's almost impossible for them to scholarships or financial aide. And so some of the kids do but it's very difficult. So money seems to be an issue so if they want to leave high school whereas a student that born here may be able to move onto college and get financial aide they can't.

What programs are in place to address the needs of these students?

We have the ESL programs that we have here. In colleges they don't really have those programs so when they leave here they are kinda on their own in that regard. There are clubs, like soccer teams for the students. It kind of pulls them out and gives them there own stuff, there own dances, like jag TV and all that other stuff.

What are the tactics and strategies and policies of the said programs?

Tactics, well I can kinda talk about the tactics that you use to teach these students. You have to make sure that you use hands on stuff, visual stuff. It doesn't really work to lecture these kids for 90min. on our schedule. You just have to make sure that they can see it. Because language is going to be the main issue you can break through that issue by either being by-lingual and by being able to talk to them. Or by showing them in a way that any language would be able to understand.

How do you think these programs are changing?

Well, hopefully they are getting better. But our populations are changing. We used to think that if we just focused on Spanish speaking kids that it would be okay. But now there are so many other kids who speak other languages its difficult. I know some Spanish but I don't know any Vietnamese or Cambodian. I think that hopefully we'll have people in the building that do speak these languages.

What are some of the reasons for changing these programs to better serve Hispanic students?

Well you want these students to feel successful and to be able to do the things that other students do. Sometimes they feel that they don't have the same opportunities as the non-Hispanic and non-ESL students. You just have to provide those opportunities for them.

Do you feel adequately prepared to serve the Hispanic students who have limited English proficiency?

I would say no. Do I have the ability to teach every student, probably not. All students are different and you really have to focus on that. When you have a class with forty students in it, it gets very difficult to have an individual plan for each student. And that's what these students need.

What in service opportunities have you had, and what kind of support have you received?

In service, we have had a few this year where ESL teachers would come in and give us so pointers. I have my ESL endorsement which means two additional years of schooling on this stuff where I went to class twice a week for three hours a day where I learned this stuff. And so I learned quite a bit. There is a lot of books you can read and figure it out. Just talking to other teachers gets you a long way.

Do you think you have gotten a lot of support from the district?

From the district? Not necessarily they have liaisons but it seems like we like ms igigi and this is her first year in office. We had Ms. Acunya before her then she was there for a couple of years. So its kind of a big transition so when you have that many people moving around it gets very confusing. Who know what to do what?

To what extent have you been able to work with the parents of your Hispanic students?

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A little bit I mean when we go on field trips ever so often we'll have a parent go with us that's from that population. But at conferences I see mostly the parents of my non-ESL students. And my ESL kids sometimes show up. But often they have their own conferences. Sometimes I don't see them. But this time we had every single one of the families called so we did have many more, which is kinda nice.

Most ESL classes are just English classes so why did you decide to teach science classes.

Well, ESL just mean English as a Second Language and it means whatever your doing your teaching the language as you go. So I teach biology when the students come in here they learn biology but at the same time they are learning the language. We try and focus a lot of vocabulary and that kind of stuff. And make sure that they know the words that they struggle with in biology are not only going to struggle with. These are words that kids from all walks of life are going to struggle with.

Do you have any thing else you would like to say?

I do feel that we need to as a building we need to figure out where we want to go with these students. We need to have a goal for the whole entire school. It's kinda interesting when a couple people have on goal and another people have a different goal. Right know the ESL students are getting off easy. They aren't pushed to the point where they need to be pushed, and I try to push them as hard as I can push them. And sometimes it fails sometimes it works, but when it works in kind of a neat thing. It makes them feel like they can do a lot more