

UCLA Researcher's New Book Exposes Racial Inequities in Bilingual Education

Dr. Laura C. Chávez-Moreno investigates how schooling can enhance and hinder critical-racial consciousness through the making of the Latinx racialized group.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In her upcoming book, Dr. Laura C. Chávez-Moreno, an award-winning researcher and assistant professor at UCLA, reveals some of the challenges bilingual education programs, which are intended to support Latinx students, face, including sometimes reinforcing harmful racial hierarchies. "How Schools Make Race: Teaching Latinx Racialization in America," scheduled for publication on October 1, 2024, from Harvard Education Press, challenges schools, educators, and policymakers to rethink how they approach race, ethnicity, and language in education.

The inspiration for the book came when Dr. Chávez-Moreno noticed that many bilingual-education students had questions about what is race and whether "Latino" was a race—questions that the students would have benefited from their program exploring. Some teachers did follow students' questions, however, teachers faced challenges in doing so. This led her to question how bilingual education programs intended to empower Latinx students can unintentionally fail to serve them and to support their teachers. Drawing on her experience as a public-school teacher in Philadelphia and a curriculum writer, she examines how bilingual education programs perpetuate inequities and simplify the concept of race to being about just "skin color" or "identity."

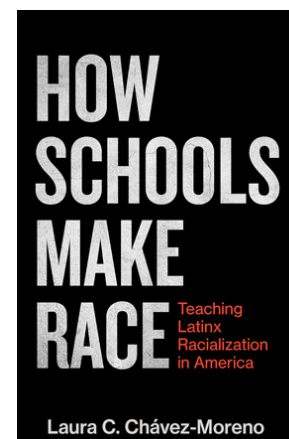
In "How Schools Make Race," Dr. Chávez-Moreno digs deeper into how race and Latinidad are constructed and reinforced in two schools in the U.S. Midwest. Using case studies from secondary-level classrooms, she explores how teachers and the program taught about race—often in unintentional ways. Her research also offers insights on how to make bilingual education genuinely responsive to the questions of Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American, Afro-Latinx, Black, and other students. Additionally, she explains key terms and concepts surrounding Latinx and race, specifically focusing on the growing Latinx community in the Midwest and the unique challenges they face in the education system.

Daniel Martinez HoSang, professor of American studies at Yale University, calls it "an illuminating account of the ways that bilingual education programs produce ideas about race and Latinidad. Chávez-Moreno pays deep respect to the origins and aspirations of these programs, while taking seriously the contradictory terrain they navigate. A model study of racial formation."

Gloria Ladson-Billings, professor emerita at the University of Wisconsin and past president of the National Academy of Education praises the work: "Chávez-Moreno moves past the Black-White binary that limits our understanding of how racialization occurs within every minoritized group. This project is a powerful example of how intersectionality can create complex and critical notions of identity."

The book also scrutinizes how poorly designed curriculums and a lack of resources and support for teachers disadvantage Latinx students. Even in a bilingual program, the external pressure to focus solely on English results in blaming Latinx students for underperformance, without addressing structural flaws such as underfunded schools. Instead of holding teachers and students accountable for systemic failures, "How Schools Make Race" calls for a re-examination of the educational systems in place and advocates for reforms that would help Latinx students succeed—including supporting teachers in advancing students' critical understandings about the concept of race.

"How Schools Make Race" is a bold call to action. Dr. Chávez-Moreno urges schools and communities to advocate for connecting bilingual education to ethnic studies. She calls for supporting educators to move beyond superficial commitments to diversity by teaching about the racialization processes shaping our society.



“CRT, LatCrit, and antiracist educators will find this book indispensable.”

— Zeus Leonardo, professor of education at UC Berkeley



About the Author

Laura C. Chávez-Moreno is an award-winning researcher, qualitative social scientist, and assistant professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, in the Departments of Chicana/o and Central American Studies and Education. She is the author of "How Schools Make Race: Teaching Latinx Racialization in America."

About the Book

Published by Harvard Education Press on October 1, 2024, "How Schools Make Race: Teaching Latinx Racialization in America" is an investigation into how schooling can enhance and hinder critical-racial consciousness through the making of the Latinx racialized group.