

**The Impact Of Latinx Representation: A Case Study On Student Learning In A
Holocaust Museum**

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DEDICATION

Esta disertación está dedicada en memoria de mis padres,
Jesus Tovar Jr. y Celeste Leticia Tovar, gracias por mostrarme siempre amor y apoyo.

Te extrañamos muchísimo.

To my husband, Ricardo Garcia, for his encouragement and immeasurable patience.

And lastly, to my son, Isaac Garcia, you are amazing, and I will always love you.

No te olvides de tus raíces.

ABSTRACT

Background: Museums have been fundamental tools outside of formal learning environments in providing new learning and to support knowledge acquired in the traditional classroom. Museum spaces can add to the learning development of all students, yet the focus of this research is on Latinx students' learning in a museum designated to the narrative of a Eurocentric experience, the Holocaust. Though not all museums across the United States maintain cultural awareness and inclusivity, there have been new methodologies and best practices created to reflect a multicultural experience within the museum space. Multicultural programs and exhibits dedicated to the interests of communities of color can enhance awareness of the institution, as well as increase the attendance of visitors from these communities. **Purpose:** This study aims to examine the perception of social science educators regarding how Latinx students interact and engage in an informal learning environment, with a focus on the educational effectiveness and benefits of Latinx representation in a Holocaust museum as seen through exhibits, educational programs, collections, educator professional development, and museum employees. The interactions of students, educators, and administrators can provide a critical lens on how learning is affected by the influence of informal learning. This study will examine the experience of school educators within the Greater Houston area and surrounding school districts in Harris County. The following research question will guide this study: (1) What are the perceptions of secondary social science educators regarding Latinx representation in museum education programs, exhibits, and professional development programming? **Methods:** A phenomenological case study research approach

used open-ended individual interviews with participants in education from Title I public schools. A criterion sampling method identified 6 participants who are 7-12th grade secondary level teachers and directly involved in professional development, field trips, student workshops, or teacher workshops created by Holocaust Museum Houston.

Individual and group interviews, observation data, and member checking of interview data were open coded based on predetermined (a-priori) categories as informed by the literature and theoretical framework, then re-evaluated and focused to produce emergent themes. Themes were defined and named to create a clear definition for

analysis. **Results:** Participants of this study contributed insight into Latinx student learning in informal learning spaces through student field trips and educator professional development at Holocaust Museum Houston. The feedback from the participants

indicated that Latinx representation in exhibits, programming, and education content would enhance the student learning experience. The findings show that there needs to be an understanding of the needs of the Latinx learner through social and educational

strategies and resources. **Conclusions :** Museums are continually evolving to the changes in the demographics of the visitor, along with transforming the student learning

experience. Through cultural competence and willingness, educators can be the guides for Latinx learning in environments that have previously been known not to include

narratives that acknowledge Latinx history. Recommendations for this study are to produce and administer culturally relevant programming and education material that is accessible to educators that will enhance the Latinx student learning in museum spaces.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Representation is essential in all areas of traditional and non-traditional learning environments and can be defined and observed in various settings, such as in the hiring of school staff to reflect the community or creating a space that recognizes the needs of marginalized groups. It can mean the inclusion of factual content that has been neglected in the curriculum by state standards and textbooks. The significance of representation in education has been researched and has shown results of increased motivation for learning by students, especially in students of color, who see themselves in the curriculum or content. This improved learning has created a connection to student's cultural roots, amplifying critical thinking skills with an increase in confidence in self. Research shows that students are more likely to approach and engage in academic tasks that have personal meaning and significance to them (Kumar, Zusho, Bonde, 2018).

Representation in education can be a catalyst for opportunities that once felt denied or impossible for students of color. In a traditional classroom, educators can link to resources that reflect the history of their students and enhance the learning experience through connections to literature, art, music, unsung heroes, storytelling, traditions, even math, and science. It is possible to connect to students in the non-traditional learning environment outside of the classroom through representation.

Museum spaces have been fundamental tools outside of the classroom to provide new learning and support knowledge acquired in the school. Science and history museums create a space of hands-on learning and can create building blocks of background knowledge for all students. These spaces can significantly increase the

understanding of English Learners, who need additional learning experiences that provide an opportunity for the students to question and comprehend a subject or topic. Students from underprivileged communities benefit from the non-traditional learning settings by exploring beyond their neighborhoods. These museum spaces can add to the learning development of all students at various school grade levels. Nevertheless, the focus of this research will be on the Latinx students' learning in a history museum space that is designated to the narrative of a Eurocentric experience, the Holocaust.

The Holocaust is a topic that has been taught in public schools throughout the United States through various forms of content via literature, film, and art. At most, it is a part of the English Language Arts or Social Studies curriculum. In Texas, this significant part of history is included in the high school state standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skill (TEKS). However, several factors may influence educators not to teach this topic. Many educators are not informed or prepared to teach the Holocaust in their classrooms because of the absence of professional development and resources provided by the school districts. In English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual Spanish/English classes, educators may have a challenging time finding resources for their students that meet the students' language needs. It is common for educators to feel uncomfortable teaching the Holocaust based on personal bias, misunderstandings, and a shortage of resources beyond the textbook.

My research interest is based on the current cultural and educational shifts of the Holocaust Museum Houston. This institution has been focused on a Eurocentric narrative for over 20 years and has just recently initiated a transition into becoming an inclusive space for Latinx narratives. This study is to remain in the frame of education with

perspectives and connections to social justice education. This study will demonstrate the significance of Latinx representation in museum spaces, as well as gain an understanding of public secondary social science educators and their perceptions of the impact of museum's professional development programs, exhibits, resources on Latinx student learning, with regards to the connections between social justice and the museum's informal education programming. This research was developed through interviews and an online survey with educators who have participated in bringing their students to the Holocaust museum via field trips. Secondary social science educators who have participated in professional development or educational programming created by the museum were included in this study.

Personal Narrative

My parents always reminded me of the importance of education. Our family was not rich in wealth, but it was rich in encouragement and support. I recall trips to museums and state parks to learn about Texas history, ranging from the Alamo to visits to the battlefield of San Jacinto. These memorable trips added to my enthusiasm to determine more about specific historical events that had occurred around the world, such as the Holocaust. As an only child from an immigrant mother and a father from a Texas border town, I was exposed to a Mexican American and Mexican bicultural experience.

It was through my parent's firsthand experiences that I grew to understand their determination to see my success in academics. Both were custodians, my father in a school district, and mother part-time in the downtown office buildings. As a young girl, I witnessed their exhaustion and sore hands after our hours of hard labor. Their words, "Always focus on your education, Michelle..." have been ingrained in my mind to this

day. Their will and strength, even in their last moments on this earth, have provided me with the power and determination to be the educator I am today. In the years I was in the school classroom, I was determined to see my students succeed beyond standardized test scores because I knew my students were more than a test score and that each one was experiencing a unique journey in life.

Education

As a former fifth grade bilingual teacher in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and Aldine ISD, I was able to understand the needs of my students and their families. It has always been vital for me to learn from my students as much as possible, to be able to build a safe and creative learning environment for them. It was crucial for me as an educator to have open communication with my students' parents/guardians in times when standardized testing was a priority in schools.

My role as a bilingual reading teacher allowed me to build my students' background knowledge using history and literature in efforts to enhance their comprehension skills. My lessons revolved around social justice movements that are not explained in textbooks, such as the desegregation of Mexican American schools in the United States. English Learners (ELs) cannot reach their full potential of comprehension in subjects like Reading or Social Education without the proper resources and support. I have always been drawn to Social Studies in upper elementary grades, but I now feel that my passion for the subject can be taken to the next level through research and practice. Even though I may not be in the traditional classroom, I can use what I have learned in my role at the museum to further my understanding of education policy, programming, and building a curriculum for educators.

Museum Experience

In 2015, I was a museum studies fellow at the Smithsonian Latino Center in Washington, DC. There I researched the topic of audience engagement under the department of the Smithsonian Institution for Traveling Exhibitions Service (SITES). Throughout this experience, I became friends with the fellows, which opened my mind to learn about other Latinx cultures. I was exposed to Peruvian culture, Puerto Rican and Salvadoran traditions, Columbian classical music, and developed a new understanding of the differences in Mexican American culture across the United States.

While at SITES, I spent my time working on the Latino Museum Studies Practicum researching Latinx audiences in museums focusing on the traveling exhibition, *Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program 1942-1964*. I was drawn to this project because bilingual and Latinx-themed exhibits help create a feeling of inclusion and representation that SITES lead by example to institutions around the country. I was able to bring this exhibition to Holocaust Museum Houston in December of 2016, establishing the first bilingual Spanish/English exhibition ever in the 20 years that the museum had been in Houston. By hosting this exhibition, the museum created public programming that focused on Latinx Labor History in the United States. Scholars such as Associate Curator Stephen Velasquez from the National Museum of American History (NMAH), historians Dr. David Romo, Dr. Lori Flores, and Dr. Mireya Loza, all provided a perspective on social justice and human rights issues for our Houston audience. The exhibition was able to reach 19,900 students during school tours, and the seven public programs brought in as many as 400 attendees in the five months that we had the exhibit on display. This positive feedback from the community gave way to more exhibitions and

programming that included narratives that reflected communities of color and provided a space for inclusiveness that is beneficial to all.

In 2017, I worked again with SITES during a mentorship program in collaboration with the Emma Barrientos Cultural Center in Austin, Texas, to develop programming for teen audience engagement. We were able to connect back to understanding the needs of students to create a productive learning environment in an informal space. This mentorship program enabled the opportunity to bring to light current issues that are affecting our Latinx communities, primarily how the current political climate is affecting the younger Latinx generation. In December 2019, the museum's Latino Initiatives hosted a second bilingual exhibition from SITES featuring the life of a living Mexican American civil rights icon. *Dolores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields* featured Dolores Huerta's social justice work and her contributions as a cofounder to the United Farm Workers union (UFW). A rare narrative to students in public schools and a history that is only found in the Texas state standards in 11th grade. She is featured in the museum's Human Rights gallery alongside Cesar Chavez, where visitors can learn about the intercultural work that was done in collaboration with Jewish, African American, and Filipino labor organizations. The museum was honored to host Dolores Huerta for a public event at HMH, in which multi-generations listened to her experience and were witnesses to a living icon's passion for social justice.

In the Spring of 2020, I was the recipient of the American Alliance of Museums EdCom Excellence in Practice award recipient. This award recognizes an individual who demonstrates exemplary service to the public through the practice of education in a museum. The award was based on my contributions to the museum's Latinx program

development, community outreach, and professional activities that have been developed over the last five years at Holocaust Museum Houston.

Statement of Problem

I decided to pursue this research based on my interest in learning more about the education of students of color, as well as my role at Holocaust Museum Houston. This topic is important to me because I can remember the absence of Latinx history in textbooks and museum spaces. Though there have been significant changes that have been made throughout the country to become inclusive, Latinx representation remains to be uncommon in art and history museums.

Latinx representation matters because it creates a welcoming environment and a sense of belonging to space predominantly occupied by history and people who do not reflect the students or visitors. It is especially crucial during this political climate to provide more inclusive spaces for students of color to explore and learn. In this study, I will examine the literature related to the research question, not only the present role of representation, or lack thereof, in museum spaces and its influence on students of color, but the history of museum education. This will be important in understanding the impact of learning in non-traditional education environments. Audience and visitor research will be examined to gain a better understanding of the Latinx museum experience based on several factors that either draw or prevent engagement in these communities. It is my responsibility to be as inclusive as possible in this research, but the focus of this research will focus solely on the Latinx student experience.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The theoretical frameworks of this study are based on culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and experiential learning through the museum's efforts in providing inclusive educational programs for Latinx students. Gloria Ladson-Billings states that in multicultural education, students learn about static images of cultural histories, customs, and traditional ways of being; however, culture is always changing, (2014). Some educators expect students to connect to the context of history repeated throughout education without taking into consideration representation in this type of learning.

Education researcher, Hassimi O. Maiga, stated that there is a need to reconnect to the real world beyond the classroom through the process of research-based instruction that connects the learners to their community and their world beyond the classroom, (1995). The basis of the study is to understand what is needed to improve the learning experience of Latinx students from the perception of the educators; there needs to be an understanding of culturally responsive teaching in formal and informal spaces. Moreover, according to researcher Magnus Bassey, culturally responsive teaching focuses on social change and social justice, motivating students to engage in civic and social justice initiatives (2016). Throughout this study, these two educational theories will support the significance of the research question.

The third, experiential learning theory is based on learning experiences outside the classroom (Dewey, 1897). Field trips, field experience, traveling abroad, are all some forms of experiential learning. This type of learning builds on the knowledge that has

been acquired in the classroom but can also create new awareness. According to John Dewey's proclamation in his education creed published in 1897, he states,

There is, therefore, no succession of studies in the ideal school curriculum. If education is life, all life has, from the outset, a scientific aspect, an aspect of art and culture, and an aspect of communication. It cannot, therefore, be true that the proper studies for one grade are mere reading and writing, and that at a later grade, reading, or literature, or science, may be introduced. The progress is not in the succession of studies but the development of new attitudes towards, and new interests in, experience. (Dewey, 1897)

Dewey's appreciation that knowledge is acquired outside of the classroom is relevant to this study because the focus is on the Latinx learner experiencing the museum and how representation in the museum enhances learning.

Purpose of the Study

For this study, data from a survey, individual interviews and a focus group with secondary social science educators who have directly been involved in a professional development, field trips, student workshops, or teacher workshops created by Holocaust Museum Houston will be utilized to answer the research question: What are the perceptions of secondary social science educators regarding Latinx representation in museum education programs? Participants interviewed identify as former pre-service teachers (at the time of the museum participation), K-12 professional teachers, and school administrators. All participants are from public education, with the majority working in Title I schools. This study is designed so that the findings can provide a better understanding of the importance of developing programs, exhibits, professional roles, and

inclusive methods or best practices in museums that represent the students and communities that learn from the museum space.

Supplemental Definitions:

Latinx- A person of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina).

Representation- The description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way or as being of a specific nature.

English Learner (EL)- English learners are a diverse group of students, with a different language, academic, and social-emotional needs. Students who speak the same language or have similar levels of language proficiency may need very different kinds of support to succeed in the classroom.

Undocumented Immigrant- is defined as the following: entered the US legally and immigration status has since expired; entered the US without inspection; or submitted immigration application/petition is denied and continued to remain in the US. Most undocumented students have lived in the United States for most of their lives, attended elementary, middle, and high school in the United States and currently lack a way to become legal residents or citizens of the United States.

Holocaust- The systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933. They believed that Germans were "racially superior." They claimed that Jews were "inferior" and a threat to the so-called German racial community.

Title I schools- of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high

numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

This study aims to examine the learning experience of Latinx students in a Eurocentric space with a focus on the significance of Latinx representation in museum exhibits, education programs, collections, professional development of educators, and in the staffing of the museum employees. Throughout the history of museum education, studies have been created to measure the learning experience of students as visitors in art, science, and history museum spaces. In researching publications related to this study, my main goal was to find research that highlights museum education, but also how theory is connected back to the research question. It is through these studies that we can learn about the effectiveness of the exhibits, programs, and professional development that is created specifically for the museum. The research focused on the interactions of students, educators, and administrators in a museum space that can provide a glimpse into how learning is acquired in an informal learning environment that can evolve to meet the needs of Latinx students. The literature cited in this chapter will provide an understanding of learning in museum spaces and help provide insight to the Latinx learner.

General Background

Studies on the museum visitor experience have provided new understandings on how these museum spaces can develop or enforce the learning experience of the audience. Falk (1999) stated that museum-going was one of the most popular out-of-home leisure activities in America and was almost exclusively the preserve of the wealthy and well-educated. Today museums serve a wider audience with diverse content and initiatives. Though not all museums across the United States maintain cultural awareness

and inclusivity, there has been new methodology and best practices created to reflect a multicultural experience within the museum space. Multicultural programs and exhibits dedicated to the interests of communities of color can enhance awareness of the institution, as well as increase the attendance of visitors from these communities.

While numerous studies have been done on the visitor experience, studies on the Latinx representation and student engagement within museums are limited. Nevertheless, these studies are essential in understanding the development of programming, professional development, and exhibitions to be reflective of the Latinx students' background. In connecting with the Latinx students' background, the museum educators and curators can develop new methods to engage learning. According to Falk (1999), there have been significant investments made by museums to engage historically underrepresented communities. Museums historically geared to a Eurocentric experience, for example, a history museum on the Holocaust, have expanded their outreach to include some form of multicultural educational curriculum and programming to create relationships with the diverse student groups that visit the museum. One reason for this change may be the increasing demographics of Latinx communities throughout the United States.

This literature review will discuss informal learning, Latinx representation in museums, the impact of multicultural learning in museum spaces, and the relevance of social justice programs and how it impacts students of color. A summary of the content reviewed in this chapter provides context to the research questions in this study that will further explain how representation in museum institutions is relevant to the learning experience of Latinx students in museum spaces.

Informal Learning: Museum Education

Informal learning is a non-traditional form of education that is common to museum programming and activities created to attract the attention of the visitor or student. Falk and Dierking (2000) explain that informal learning spaces provide an opportunity for the visitor to self-select information that is an intellectual, physical, and emotional challenge. In these museum settings, the visitor, especially students, have the liberty to learn about diverse topics that may be restricted due to time, resources, curriculum, or standardized testing expectations in the traditional K-12 classroom. It is through the work of museum educators, curators, and other roles in the institution that make exhibits and museum collections accessible to students to enhance their learning experience. According to researcher Geneva Gay (2010), classroom-learning experiences are reflective of students' home lives and cultural experiences outside of school.

Falk and Dierking (2000) explain that the museum represents a community of practice, where multiple perspectives are brought together to teach and learn from. These activities include guides and docents that lead student tours or other non-school related group tours that can build or enforce the theme of a museum space. These guides and docents can develop or create new knowledge within the timeframe of the visitors' experience.

According to Laura M. W. Martin, author of the article, *An Emerging Research Framework for Studying Informal Learning and Schools*, cultural practices that are related to learning are essential in understanding how children and adults internalize information and how thinking is generating, (2004). An institution needs to understand

the visitor, and it is essential to create programming and activities that will be effective in interest and learning.

As museum educators, researching the communities, cultural backgrounds, traditions, and beliefs of the student visitors can provide access to creating engaging and inclusive informal learning environments. Rennie and Johnston (2004) explain that "a learning experience requires engagement, some mental, physical, or social activity on the part of the learner...a person's past experiences, be they cognitive, affective, behavioral, social, or cultural, will help to structure the new learning in personal ways" (p. 6).

Falk and Dierking (2000) state that it is fundamental for museums to support the participation of visitors from a wide range of learning backgrounds. This can be done by the active role of the museum to understand the narratives of the communities that visit the institution. In the case of Holocaust Museum Houston, there is a large student demographic of Latinx students that visit the museum on school field trips.

Falk and Dierking (2000) separate the informal learning experience into three contexts that have been identified as personal, social, and physical. All three of these add to the learning outcomes of the museum visitors. The background knowledge and experience of the visitor before visiting the museum space is the personal context. This includes the interests of the visitor and the knowledge of the museum content. The social context of the visitor learning experience is affected by the surrounding interactions of the visitor with people within the museum. This can include the people that the visitor first interacts with upon entering the building.

Representation in museum spaces adds to the visitor experience and the comfort level of the visitor, especially if language or special needs are recognized as essential

components of audience engagement. Falk and Dierking (2000) describe the last context as being focused on the physical space of the institution, such as the architecture, the exhibitions, the labels, and the layout of the museum. The physical context of a museum also adds to the learning experience of the visitor for several reasons, such as labels and audio guides that are accessible for the hearing and visually impaired that can enhance the museum experience. The physical context of the museum can also include labels that are diverse languages based on the communities the museum primarily serves.

Staff, docents, and other museum workers that represent the demographics of the public visitor add to the inclusive space of the institution. The signage and staff members within the museum are the first introduction to space for the visitor/s. They should be able to communicate effectively to provide an inviting and comfortable experience. This experience adds to the learning experience because it provides a welcoming message to the visitor. For example, bilingual or English Learners would feel included in a space that provides them with translated material or guides/docents that could help explain the content of the museum, instead of being in a space that is not inclusive to their needs. Translations, guides, and services that help the visually and hearing impaired can enhance informal learning in museums such as aides help in the traditional classroom.

These contexts help identify the needs of museum space to enhance the interest and learning experience of the visitor, but it is aware of the purpose of the visit to the museum that contributes to the development of knowledge. Rennie and Johnston (2004) assert that students in a school excursion will have a unique experience than children in a family group. It can be noted that these contexts may not necessarily help identify the needs of museum space to enhance learning since every visitor is distinctive to their

personal experience. In Falk and Dierking's research (2000), it is noted that visitors can learn broad generalizations in all types of museum spaces, such as history, art, and science museums. However, the way learning occurs is defined in the individual's experience.

This study is solely based on Latinx learning from the perception of secondary social science educators who have been affiliated with the museum. This can be problematic in thoroughly understanding the Latinx student learner if the educator does not have a Latinx cultural background. Gay (2009) states,

One of these is the fact that most culturally diverse students and their teacher live in different worlds, and they do not fully understand or appreciate one another's experiential realities. Daily interactions with one another are sporadic and superficial, and their knowledge about cultural diversity is filtered largely through mass media. These kinds of contacts and related information are far from desirable and often produce distorted perceptions of beliefs about, and attitudes toward ethnically and racially diverse individuals, groups, and cultures. (p. 143)

In experiential learning, students are learning in informal environments that engage the learner in direct experience and focused reflection. This connects back to field trips and docent-guided tours in the museum. When a Latinx student participates in a field trip experience, they are engaged in leaving their communities, visiting a new space, and experiencing a new form of learning.

David Kolb (1984) stated that knowledge is continuously derived from the experiences of the learner. His cycle of Experiential Learning Theory focuses on learning engagement through experience. His theory developed and understanding of how

experience leads to real reflection. The cycle begins with the exploration of the learner to question the relevance, next the experience leads to hands-on engagement followed by connections to prior knowledge and experiences. Next, the learner creates new understanding, followed by the learning sharing and integrating innovative ideas and observations. Lastly, the learner reflects, and the knowledge is cemented, and the cycle repeats. This theory can be observed in museum spaces as students and visitors experience learning in an informal space, be through self-guided or docent-led tours.

This theory can work if the learner has the opportunity to learn based on language and access. In cases where the learner is in a space with barriers caused by language, the learner will not have direct access to new information from text or docent-led tours in the museum. Grenier and Sheckley (2008) state,

To master the work of a docent, one must balance content knowledge and practice in a multifaceted approach reinforced by experiential learning. If, as this article contends, the experience is the basis of learning, it should not simply apply to visitors. Instead, it should be grated fully into all aspects of museum education, including docent preparation. By doing so, museums strengthen their ability to serve the public, foster the role of docents, and support the educational mission of the institution. (p. 89)

Access to the museum site may be a barrier as well, since some public schools do not have access to field trip funding, thus removing the opportunity for the learners to experience a new knowledge in a different learning environment. Many obstacles prevent this type of learning from occurring, such as docent bias that prevents the learner from feeling comfortable in a space in which the docent does not feel safe to ask questions and

explore. Kolb's theory is critical for Latinx students to learn in museum spaces. Representation in these spaces contributes to Kolb's theory because it provides a connection to the narrative. Not only is representation outstanding in the content of the museum, but it also needs to be seen in the museum leadership, educators, and in the spaces that are accessible to visitors.

History of Holocaust Museum Houston

The mission of Holocaust Museum Houston is "dedicated to educating people about the Holocaust, remembering the 6 million Jews and other innocent victims and honoring the survivors' legacy. Using the lessons of the Holocaust and other genocides, we teach the dangers of hatred, prejudice, and apathy." (1996). Houston Holocaust survivors and their family members established the museum in 1996 that included a permanent exhibition, memorial, and classroom spaces for educational programming. Within ten years, the museum was able to create a space for school tours, lectures, professional development for educators, and public programming based on the Holocaust and other genocides.

By 2004, the museum developed a leadership program for Holocaust organizations in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay. These initiatives were led by former Director of Education, Christina Vasquez Chavarria, in which she worked with Latin American institutions and Yad Vashem to present on the importance of teaching the Holocaust in Spanish to educators and students. Though some programming was developed for Spanish speaking educators, it was not until 2015 that the development of inclusive methods was incorporated into the institution.

In the summer of 2015, I became the Associate Director of Education- Latino Initiatives at Holocaust Museum Houston. This role is significant to the Houston museum because it was the first initiative taken to create an inclusive museum space for the Latinx communities in the Greater Houston area. As Associate Director of Education, my efforts include outreach to bilingual Spanish school programs, creating educational workshops and events for teachers, parents, and community leaders, and working with local, national, and global organizations dedicated to serving the Latinx community. I have had the opportunity to work with students and teachers from multiple school districts in a non-traditional learning environment via the museum's outreach and programming. The purpose of my work is centered on the learning experience of students of color, primarily focused on the experience of the Latinx student. As the lead in these initiatives, I have worked with the various departments within the museum to recognize the importance of creating an inclusive space for a Spanish speaking audience. My efforts include creating programming that builds a platform for narratives focused on Latin America and the Latinx history of the United States.

Holocaust Museum Houston reopened its doors to the public in June 2019 after a \$34 million expansion, doubling in size to a total of 57,000 square feet. This development ranks HMMH as the nation's fourth-largest Holocaust museum and fully bilingual in English and Spanish in the United States. The museum features four new prominent galleries, including a Human Rights gallery. The newly expanded museum welcomes local and international audiences to learn not only about the Holocaust but past and current genocides and atrocities that occurred around the world. A Human Rights gallery provides a space to discuss social justice issues throughout history. The Latino Initiatives

expanded its programming to film series highlighting Central American narratives, lectures on intergenerational trauma, scholars speaking on the experience of children in border detention centers, all linked to the museum's mission of using the lessons of the Holocaust to teach the dangers of apathy, prejudice, and hatred.

Latinx English Learners

When considering the Latinx populations in the United States, we cannot assume that all students are fluent in English. Students that are not fluent are labeled as English Learners, ELs, and many of these students in the public K-12 schools are recent arrivals or "newcomers" to this country. This means that these students have traveled from countries of Spanish and indigenous languages, such as Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Places that have shown an increase in immigration in the recent five years in the United States for several factors, such as seeking asylum or refuge.

In 2014, there was an influx of unaccompanied children into the United States fleeing from extreme cases such as poverty, gang violence, sexual violence, oppression, as well as seeking political asylum and in search of legal immigration solutions for permanent stays. Immigrant students once enrolled in public schools, faced challenges that affected their academic development. Language barriers are a significant challenge, but they also faced challenges in their beliefs, identity, cultural differences, stress of poverty, family separation, and Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD). These factors were added to the many other challenges faced in public schools and among the pressures to assimilate into a new country.

English Learners in primary and secondary public schools face challenges when districts and curriculum are not inclusive to the needs of these students. Federal and state education policies, such as No Child Left Behind, created barriers in the academic growth of ELs via standardized testing and meeting required state standards. With standardized test scores being used to show academic growth and accountability, the authors Reyes and Villarreal state, "Dehumanization will not only continue as long as neo-liberal policies and the high stakes accountability system are present but as long as individual educators and leaders fail to reflect on and ethically respond to dehumanizing policy and discourses that infiltrate the perception of student sub-populations and the resultant pedagogy," (2016).

The role of teachers and administrators is crucial when working with English Learners, especially when the pressure of state standardized testing is the center of academic growth. Authors DelliCarpini, Ortiz-Marrero, and Sumaryono describe the educator's experience, "...as content teachers feel the pressure of the test, our colleagues have shared that they unwittingly tend to use traditional chalk and talk methods to move through the curriculum and ensure material is covered...Traditional methods and teaching to the test notoriously ineffective with language learners" (2010).

Public schools, parents/guardians, and the community are essential stakeholders in a student's path to academic achievement. In cases in which students are undocumented, the support of the community and the school leadership is necessary for creating an inclusive environment and safe space for ELs and their families. These methods of inclusion begin at a state level and can be nurtured in the professional development of educators and administrators to cultivate communications with

undocumented Latinx ELs. It is crucial that education leaders provide translation services at meetings, social service information by school counselors and provide a space for ELs and their families to share their narratives.

The Latinx undocumented student faces many challenges in their personal and academic lives. Resources may not be available in many public-school districts, and at times districts do not hold these resources as priorities for the students' needs. Changes in budgeting at a local or state level may affect these accommodations and could have all resources removed from the classroom that would have provided some access to improving or cultivating academic achievement. The priority for language development can be seen in privileged settings and in public schools that have the parental/guardian engagement that encourages dual language programming. Unfortunately, the voices in underprivileged communities are not being heard or instead are being ignored as considered a problem with the increase for undocumented Latinx EL student demographics increasing in public schools.

This topic has been included in this literature review due to the relevance of the study and the demographics of students that visit museums via field trips, at their leisure, or through other non-school related organizations, such as religious groups. Title I schools that have a high percentage of students from low-income families can receive free transportation and other free services for their students to visit local museums. Based on data collected by the Division of Research and Analysis Office of Governance and Accountability Texas Education Agency (2019), Hispanic students accounted for the most significant percentage of total enrollment in Texas public schools in 2018-19 (52.6%), followed by White (27.4%), African American (12.6%), Asian (4.5%), and multiracial

(2.4%) students. Data from the TEA Public Education Information Management System (2018), the largest school district in Harris County, is the Houston Independent School District, with 91% of the students enrolled in Title I schools, and 61% of the entire public school district are of Latinx background. This is essential data for Houston museums because the effectiveness of learning will depend on how the museum's programming, exhibits, lectures, and other services, connect to the students' cultural background.

Latinx Representation in Museums

In order to understand the need for Latinx representation in museum spaces, there needs to be an understanding of the Latinx audience. "Museums are in the position to re-articulate and challenge stereotypes by introducing important histories and experiences to the public" (Velasquez, 2001). Institutions that acknowledge the needs of the Latinx visitor can create a space of inclusion that opens the doors to increase interest in museum participation. Staffing should reflect the language, appearance, culture identity, values, along with communications in Spanish, (Acevedo, Madara, 2015). Like other groups of visitors, the Latinx audience seeks to find educational opportunities that can be connected to their own experience and identity, as well as learn about other cultures, art, history, sciences, and traditions. Exhibitions and programs that are created to connect with Latinx culture create a sense of inclusion that can provide an increase in the learning experience.

There needs to be a consideration that, "...one show or program will only scratch the surface of this complex Latino experience...one show—even one with many layers, many voices, and many stories—cannot speak with a unified 'Latino' voice," according to the curator, Steve Velasquez of the National Museum of American History, on Latinx projects (2001). Institutions must create space for the exhibitions and programs that

create bridges between the Latinx experience and other cultural experiences that can make connections to various narratives. In a report created by researchers, Acevedo and Madara (2015), they explain the importance of inclusion,

The Latino visitor expects and desires an experience that feels inclusive in the broadest sense of the word. He or she simultaneously expects and demands to be treated just like any other visitor offering Latinos the culturally specific services and acknowledgment that will provide them with the same or comparable visitor experience that other groups enjoy. Delivering this nuanced experience organically, an authentic way may depend on the extent to which the organization's staff mirrors the demographic reality of its community.

According to the research, museum institutions can build sustainable relationships with the Latinx audience by being consistent and constantly evolving to reflect the cultural diversity of the Latinx audience (Acevedo, Madara, 2015). In the article, *Engaging Latino Audiences* by researchers Veronica Betancourt and Madalena Salazar (2014), the perspective of the Latinx audience goes beyond the demographics of participation to focus on the culturally responsive study that incorporates the Latinidad of museum visitation. Within the study, the authors consider the importance of bilingualism in programming and exhibit spaces, with an acknowledgment of biculturalism in families that include multi-generations. In some cases, families that visit the museum space have diverse ages and languages, in which members of the family may code-switch with other members of the family from one language to the other, i.e., Spanish to English, English to Spanish. "These complex identities necessitate a wide variety of programs and strategies that serve the needs of many different Latino audiences, whether they are Spanish-

dominant, first-time visitors, or digitally engaged, bicultural millennials" (Betancourt and Salazar, 2014). This is significant in understanding the diverse types of culturally relevant engagement Latinx audiences need.

Social Justice and Museums

Advocacy for social justice in museum spaces has been on the rise across the country in many institutions that focus on art and history. The increased need to address social justice topics in these museum spaces has been motivated by the current political climate in the United States and globalization. Social justice actions are not new to museums and have had a long history of working in the areas of race, poverty, public education, immigration, the refugee experience, and other issues that affect communities directly. Museums have become spaces for discussions on social change amongst educators, students, and community leaders based on the connections made between the content of the museum and the issues. Exhibits, lectures, workshops, professional development can influence how social justice is incorporated into the school curriculum and lesson planning.

Museums have increasingly become spaces for discussions on social change amongst educators, students, and community leaders based on the connections made between the content of the museum and the issues. Exhibits, lectures, workshops, professional development can influence how social justice is incorporated into the school curriculum and lesson planning. In this section of the literature review, we will examine how museums are agents of change in many ways. This section will examine the role of museums and social justice issues that influence and affect Latinx students and their

communities, with an emphasis on how Holocaust museums can be agents of change in and out of the classroom.

In the mid-1990s, museum roles began a transformation to meet the standards of social justice advocates. These efforts were acknowledged with the increased attention to education in museums, and the vital influence this department has on the museum.

Schools and school districts began to collaborate with museums in new ways, including teacher training programs, curriculum development, and multicultural cultural awareness.

Rex Ellis, a former director of the Center for Museum Studies for the Smithsonian Institution, writes about the significance of the need for change in institutions, the need for diversity in museum workers, and the need for change on museum boards. He explains,

New voices are beginning to look at our field and question what we do. They are urging us to move in new directions, talking about what we collect, what we exhibit, whom we serve, why our structure and face should change. Many of these voices are coming from people who do not look like you, and they do not look like me anymore, either. Some of them talk differently, they know two of three languages, they are knowledgeable about the work we do, and they want in. They are not satisfied with politically correct or token efforts to temporarily fix the face of our institutions; they are demanding substantive, comprehensive, consistent, and qualitative change that includes them, their ideas, and their culture. (1995)

Ellis observed the need for diversity in elite institutions that catered mostly to white audiences and visitors. Through these observations, he noted that the change was being influenced by academia and that scholars of color were vocalizing their views about the

content of museum spaces. This perspective from the mid-90s showed the need for change and the need to create space for way content in museum programming and education that connected to visitors of color. Ellis (1995) states, "For me, serving, empowering, exciting, interacting, and sharing the threads that are common to us as a people will always be the prime directive." (p. 15)

Holocaust museums are places of memory and education that serve to teach the lessons learned from this period through artifacts, exhibits, public programming, and archival material. This space provides informal learning opportunities for adults and students about the history, but also provides a learning experience about contemporary social justice issues affecting the world. It is a way for students to use the information learned to make connections to the issues that may be closer to homes, such as discrimination, prejudice, and apathy. These spaces are also introducing many other social justice issues, such as homophobia, antisemitism, racism, and environmental justice to students, especially when connecting to the human condition.

Robin Grenier (2010) argues that Holocaust museums have moved beyond their mission statements to develop spaces that initiate critical reflection and perspective transformation on human rights issues. For example, Holocaust museums across the country have created outreach programs for students of all backgrounds to be actively involved in learning and teaching the dangers of apathy.

Along with lessons of history, these students learn how to be Upstanders in their communities by taking what they learn back to their communities and schools. Grenier explains, "When the exhibits are coupled with small group discussions and critical reflection, these experiences can serve to free an individual's thinking and actions and

results in his or her ability to try out new behavior...the outcome of these dialogues is changed at the individual level, thus preparing the learner to contribute to society..." It is the museum's responsibility to create an inclusive space for visitors and students.

Holocaust Museum Houston, in its twenty years as an institution, is dedicated to educating people about the Holocaust, remembering the six million Jews and other innocent victims, and honoring the survivors' legacy by using the lessons of the Holocaust and other genocides to teach the dangers of hatred, prejudice, and apathy. Through the museum's mission statement and the support of the board, this institution has been able to create education programs that focus on K-12 grade students, pre-service teachers, educators in the field, administrators, and the public. The All Behaviors Count Program, created in the late 2000s, sought to address issues of bullying after an increase of suicides by students in the Greater Houston area. This program was designed to focus on the five types of social cruelty in school life and in culture: taunting, rumoring, exclusion, ganging up, and bullying. This successful program has now broadened from school-age children to adult corporate professional development.

Other Holocaust Museum Houston programs that have a historical and social justice influence include the Naomi Warren Fellowship for Future Teachers and the Max Kaplan Summer Institute for Educators. These programs were created to work with educators who are just beginning their journey into education and educators who have been in education for several years. These weeklong programs focus on an annual theme and provide speakers from national and global perspectives on the Holocaust, genocide, and social justice.

Since the implementation of some language and cultural diversity, these initiatives have become a platform to Latin American and American Latino narratives that have been omitted from school History textbooks and curriculum. Based on the changing demographics, programming and exhibitions have been created to reflect the communities of the Greater Houston area through successful exhibitions such as the traveling exhibition from Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibitions (SITES), *Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program 1942-1964*. This exhibition was held in 2016-2017 and provided insight into the experience of Mexican and Mexican American laborers during World War II in the United States. Platforms for narratives from Latin America, through lectures and programming, open the opportunity for Houston communities to learn and share their firsthand experiences. In 2018, the spring lecture series "Intergenerational Trauma: History Carried Through Generations" introduced students and the community to unknown histories of Latino identity; a theme was chosen to connect to the generational trauma passed down from Holocaust survivors.

After extensive renovations, Holocaust Museum Houston reopened in 2019 as the fourth-largest Holocaust museum in the United States and second bilingual institution in Spanish and English. Beginning in 2020, the museum will host the David L. Silverman Latin American Institute, which will bring together 30 educators from Latin America and the United States to study the Holocaust, genocide, human rights, and social justice in Latin America and the United States. This bilingual Spanish/English conference will focus on Holocaust Education, Latino History in the USA, and genocide and human rights violations in the Latin American context. Educators in Latin America and from around the United States will learn an uncommon historical narrative and will also be

able to make connections to contemporary issues. Working together between several countries, they will create networks that will enhance ongoing collaborations.

Through these recently developed initiatives, the institution is working with local and national organizations that are dedicated to serving Latinx communities. Though this museum has held a Eurocentric perspective for most of the time that it has been open to the public, these efforts provide the institution with the opportunity to connect with audiences that have not previously seen themselves as a part of the story of the Holocaust or its legacy.

For many communities, a Holocaust museum represents a rare space to discuss issues of hatred, prejudice, and apathy openly. Holocaust Museum Houston is working to actively invite not only these topics but precisely on how they relate to the Latinx communities of the Greater Houston area and reflect the needs of their community in their programming. By engaging with and amplifying diverse voices and narratives, museums can contribute to the necessary national conversation on social justice and build more inclusive communities.

Summary

Current and past research shows that as the demographics of Latinx communities grow in the United States, the need to attract the interest, as well as keep the attention of this community, is essential in museum institutions across the country. By creating inclusive spaces such as representation in staff and volunteer programs, exhibits, and educational programming, non-Latinx institutions can develop relationships with communities that have previously been excluded or omitted from narratives in museum spaces. This research is necessary to understand how representation can influence

learning in students of color who visit these institutions. In reviewing the literature, there is an understanding amongst researchers that a learner gains knowledge through experience and that representation in content, exhibits, and programming connects the learner to new knowledge.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

This study aims to examine the perception of secondary level social science educators regarding how Latinx students interact and engage in an informal learning environment. The focus of this study is on the educational effectiveness and benefits of Latinx representation in a Holocaust museum, as seen through exhibits, educational programs, collections, educator professional development, and museum employees through the perception of secondary level social science educators.

Museum spaces have been fundamental tools outside of the traditional classroom to provide new learning and in supporting knowledge acquired in the classroom. Science and history museums create a space of hands-on learning and can create building blocks of background knowledge for all students. These spaces can significantly increase the understanding of English Learners who need additional learning experiences that can allow the students to question and comprehend a subject or topic. Students from underprivileged communities benefit from the non-traditional learning setting by being able to explore beyond their neighborhoods.

According to Greene (2014), students from underprivileged families are less likely to have enriching experiences that build background knowledge outside of the classroom if schools do not offer field trips. These museum spaces can add to the learning development of all students. The focus of this research will be the Latinx students' learning in a museum space that has been designated to the narrative of a Eurocentric experience, the Holocaust.

Representation in museums is essential in creating connections that amplify student critical thinking skills and self-confidence. "Museum going is currently one of the most popular out-of-home leisure activities in America. Once exclusively the preserve of the wealthy and well-educated, museums today serve an increasingly diverse audience." (Falk, 2018). Though not all museums across the United States maintain cultural awareness and inclusivity, there have been new methodologies and best practices created to reflect a multicultural experience within the museum space. Multicultural programs and exhibits dedicated to the interests of communities of color can enhance awareness of the institution, as well as increase the attendance of visitors from these communities.

The Research Question Revisited

This qualitative study sought to answer one board question: What are the perceptions of secondary social science educators regarding Latinx representation in museum education programs? This study aims to examine how Latinx students interact and engage in an informal learning environment, with a focus on the educational effectiveness and benefits of Latinx representation in a Holocaust museum as seen through exhibits, educational programs, collections, educator professional development, and museum employees. The interactions of students, educators, and administrators can provide a critical lens on how learning is affected by the influence of informal learning. This study will examine the experience of secondary social science educators within the Greater Houston area and surrounding school districts in Harris County.

For this investigation, additional research questions will support the study of the participants. Questions such as: What is your perception of the effectiveness of museum

professional development?; What are your perceptions of social justice and Holocaust Museum Houston education programs; How significant is Latinx representation in museum education programs?; What have been your observations of Latinx student learning during visiting Holocaust Museum Houston?; What have been your observations of Latinx student learning during visiting Holocaust Museum Houston?

The Research Methodology

A phenomenological case study research approach was employed utilizing open-ended individual interviews with participants in education from Title I public schools. My decision to use this research design was based on Robert Yin's (2014) research on case studies that the type of research design as being used to understand a complex social phenomenon to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Through this design, I was able to collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures (Creswell, 2014) over some time. I also chose this qualitative design because it is a case study with multiple perspectives; museum, educators, and self-perspective. Through triangulation, I sought to validate my study (Creswell, 2014) by using data from a demographic survey, individual interviews, and a focus group discussion.

A criterion sampling method was used to identify six participants who were 7-12th grade secondary level teachers who had been directly involved in professional development, field trips, student workshops, or teacher workshops created by Holocaust Museum Houston. Interviews and observation data, along with written notes, and member checking of interview data was open coded based on predetermined (a-priori) categories as informed by the literature and theoretical framework, then re-evaluated and

focused coded to produce emergent themes. Themes were defined and named to create a clear definition of analysis.

Participants

The following chart and individual profiles were collected from the initial survey and provide background information of each participant in this study. The names of each participant have been changed to protect their privacy. Table 1 provides a summary of the participants' demographics.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Name	Ethnicity	Age	Certification	Years of Teaching Experience	Grade and Content
Sharon	White	45-65	Secondary Education (6-12), History and English, Speech/Communications	17	9, AP Human Geography
Karen	White	25-35	7-12 Social Studies Composite and ESL Endorsement	12	K-12 District Social Studies Specialist
Wilma	White	45-65	History 6-12, Government 6-12, ESL	20	10-12, Social Studies

Sierra	Latinx	36-45	Social Studies Composite 6-12, ESL, School	16.5	11, US History
Ann	White	36-45	Texas Social Studies 8-12; History 8-12	10	11/12 - IB History of the Americas (2 year course)
James	Latinx	45-65	4-8 English Language Arts	7	8, Writing

Participants were identified and reviewed before contacting individuals via email. These participants were identified base on enrollment records of teacher workshops, field trip tour information, and student workshop information collected by the museum. Approximately, twenty participants were initially identified as meeting the criteria of being secondary level social science educators who worked in a Title 1 school and had a diverse background in race and age. I emailed the twenty possible participants with information about the study and explained the survey that would follow when the participant consented. The participants self-selected and volunteered for the study. The twenty research participants were minimized to a final number of six participants and were accrued locally to complete the research procedures. Once the participant consent form was received, I emailed the demographic survey to each participant. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Diversity in the race and age background was a factor in choosing participants for this study concerning the culturally relevant pedagogy and a teacher's perceptions of their students based on their level of cultural awareness. The U.S. Department of Education published a survey of the state of racial diversity in the workforce in 2016, stating that studies have found that teachers of color can improve the school experience of all students. However, as noted in Table 1, the six participants who were able to be a part of the study were not as diverse as expected. Gender and race were important in determining enrollment, but in the final six participants, five participants identified as females and one participant that identify as male. Four out of the six participants were white women, and the remaining were male and female Latinx participants.

I received emails from the potential participants that were not able to volunteer in the study based on their teaching schedules, workload, or district and school regulations. Emails that I did not receive a response from potential participants were sent a followup email about the study but were removed from my list after a week of no correspondence. All six participants that agreed to volunteer to participate were enthusiastic about contributing to research that was focused on the Latinx student population in their classrooms.

The purpose of the survey was to gather information from the individual participants based on demographics and their involvement with the museum. Educators in this study were asked several identifying questions that helped develop an understanding of their school, the content and grade level, and their student demographics rather than a generalization of their student's backgrounds. Once the survey was completed, data was open coded and stored. Participants were contacted after the completion of the survey via

email and asked to fill out a Doodle Poll to schedule an individual informal interview via Zoom, Google Chat, or in-person. Communications for this study was conducted via email, Zoom, or Google Docs. All survey responses were collected through Google Forms and placed in a spreadsheet for accessibility and comparison.

Collection Procedures: Individual Interviews

The purpose of interviewing the research subjects was to ask more in-depth questions regarding curriculum and instruction before and after participating in professional development, field trips, student workshops, or teacher workshops created by Holocaust Museum Houston. Each interview ranged from 15 to 45 minutes in length, depending on the availability of the participant. Interviews were audio-recorded for the data collection on a separate device and did not include a video recording of the Zoom application. An iPhone Application called "Voice Memos" was used to record the audio, and these recordings were destroyed as soon as transcription had been completed. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix B. Interview questions were not reviewed by the participants; however, one participant was not audio recorded, due to scheduling conflicts. Instead, the participant was sent the questions in a Google Doc via email and responded to the questionnaire through written text.

After each separate interview, there was a verification of the recording by the participant, and my written notes were clarified and categorized. Interview data, along with written notes, and member checking of interview data will be open coded based on predetermined (a-priori) categories as informed by the literature and theoretical framework, then re-evaluated and focused coded to produce emergent themes. Themes were defined and named to create a clear definition of analysis. Creswell (2014) states

that researchers can build additional layers of complex analysis based on the themes and other data collected in the study. The participants were informed that an anonymous focus group interview would be conducted with all six participants.

Participants were contacted via email approximately two weeks after the individual interview as a followup reminder for a focus group interview. Data from the interviews were analyzed for clarification and explored further the topics discussed in the initial interview through member checking. According to Creswell (2014), member checking is used to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings. I communicated with the participants separately via email and confirmed the themes that were expanded from the initial individual interviews. The purpose of the focus group was to complete the triangulation of data to add validity to the study.

Based on the scheduling conflicts from the participants' teaching and personal schedules, I decided to change the focus group audio recording interviews to a Google Doc discussion board format, in which the participants could respond to one another anonymously through written text. As a former educator in the public school system, I understood that the teachers would have some conflict during the time of the study. Test preparations and entering a new semester added to the difficulty of confirming a group interview. The participants were asked open-ended questions expanding from the initial individual interviews on the Latinx representation in exhibits, programming, professional development, and museum resources. A copy of the focus group interview questions is attached to Appendix C.

I reviewed and categorized the data into the themes that had been previously identified and confirmed. Once all data from the survey, interview, and focus group were

categorized, I organized my themes and looked for data that overlapped or interconnected with one another. I found that some of the educators were not descriptive or elaborate with their responses, and some of the participants were very thorough with their answers.

I was left perplexed by some of the responses from the participants because, based on the criteria of the study, the participants had been chosen to be a part of the study due to their involvement with the museum, some who had connected with the museum for years. It was expected to have a detailed response from the participants. Participants were sent an email to thank them for their time and perspectives. I also confirmed with each participant the completion of their participation in the study. All participants were grateful and appreciated being included in my research.

Analysis

The data that was collected and the participants that were available to volunteer show that this type of study is essential in understanding the Latinx learner. Many factors influence the student's experience, such as the connection to an educator based on cultural background. There is also bias within the educator's perspective that is based on their personal experience related to the Latinx learner. Jacqueline Irvine (2010) discusses the importance of educators knowing their students well, developing a caring relationship with the student, and learning from the students' experience. This is relevant to the study because in understanding the Latinx learner, one needs to understand the educator's cultural competence and relationship to the Latinx learner.

The perceptions of secondary social science educators are relevant. Still, based on culturally responsive pedagogy, the question must be asked: Does the educator connect to the Latinx content from the classroom or textbook to the museum? And vice versa. One

must ask why is the educator teaching Latinx content, and what are the intentions of this teaching? I hope to continue to research these questions in museum education and the traditional classroom.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

Across the United States, the demographics of Latinx students in K-12 public schools continues to increase. According to the Pew Research Center, by 2060, the Latinx populations are projected to make up 27% of the overall U.S. population (2019).

Throughout Greater Houston, the Latinx community, according to the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, is 42% of Houston's diverse demographics. With the increase of Latinx students in K-12 public schools, representation in learning spaces is necessary for cultural competency and awareness. Within an informal space, such as a museum, some secondary level teachers look for connections to the classroom through various forms of representation for the support and acknowledgment of their Latinx students.

In this chapter, I will discuss the data collected and topics that emerge from the individual interviews and the focus group discussion. This chapter also includes and analysis of the data collected and how it connects to the research question based on grounded theory. The study's themes are focused on pre-student visits to the museum, cultural connections, curriculum support, representation in museums, and post-student visit responses.

The Research Question Revisited

This study seeks to answer the research question: what are the perceptions of secondary social science educators regarding Latinx representation in museum education programs. For this study, six secondary level social science educators who worked directly with Latinx students asked to participate. Through triangulation, the research for the study was conducted to develop survey answers, individual interview conversations,

and focus group responses. With these findings, the reader will have a better understanding of the perception of the secondary social science teachers on the impact of the Latinx representation in museum spaces.

The Researcher as Data Collection Coordinator

I completed my bachelor's degree and master's degree both in social sciences with concentrations in philosophy and history. I am certified in the state of Texas as an EC-6th Bilingual Generalist and was a public intermediate school educator for four years before becoming a museum educator. I have been teaching in a museum for five years. As a researcher for this study, my background was based on education in communities of color, specifically English learners. At my current role at Holocaust Museum Houston, I have helped create more diverse and inclusive practices, exhibits, and museum content. The museum staff and board is majority white, and there is no person of color in a leadership role in the museum staff. The participants of this study only know who I am from my position at the museum, but do not have a prior relationship.

Study Participants

For this study, I reached out to secondary level social science educators from various backgrounds, grade levels, and gender to gain a broad perspective of perceptions of Latinx students learning in informal spaces. The target population for this study was to have three to six participants who were male or female and differed in race and age. I considered secondary social science educators because grade levels of 6th-12th grade are the most common to visit the museum or study the Holocaust. As stated in my previous chapter, the study participants that self-selected were not as diverse as anticipated. After communications with twenty educators, four out of the six participants were white

women, and the remaining were a Latinx people. This is an interesting but not surprising group of participants since there is a lack of teachers in communities of color who reflect the community or the language.

Each participant was assigned aliases, in the order of their interview, to include Sharon, Karen, Wilma, Sierra, Ann, and James. These were created in regards to confidentiality and the privacy of each participant. This was stated in the consent form given to each participant to read and sign. Confidentiality of the participants' role in the study was taken into consideration to protect the participant from being identified. Each interview was different in tone and the responses towards the educator's perception of Latinx representation and their students' experience.

On the one hand, some of the educators were open to speaking about the neglect of the museum. In contrast, others were formal in their responses towards and stayed positive towards the student museum experience. My overall observation among the participants was that they all felt it was necessary to understand the Latinx learner to create better methods and practices within the museum space. One way that was repeated by the participants was by connecting the Latinx learners' background to the museum content. The data shows that there was an interconnection between themes, and the participant's interview responses would be repetitive. It was also noted that several participants did not elaborate or respond extensively on specific themes.

Table 2

Participants' Role

Table 2 provides a summary about the individual interaction with the museum prior to the study. These questions were initially asked in the demographic survey before interviews.

Name	Did you participate in a museum professional development program?	Did you and your students visit the museum on a field trip?	Did you or your students visit a specific exhibit or gallery?	If so, what exhibit or gallery did you and your students visit?
Sharon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Holocaust Gallery, Human Rights Gallery, Traveling Exhibit: Dolores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields
Karen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Traveling Exhibit: Dolores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields
Wilma	Yes	Yes	Yes	Holocaust Gallery
Sierra	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
Ann	Yes	Yes	Yes	Holocaust Gallery, Young Diarists Gallery and Human Rights Gallery
James	Yes	Yes	No	N/A

Sharon. Sharon was first and the quickest to respond to my email, introducing potential participants to the study. She was eager to participate since the demographics of her school are 66% White/Hispanic, 10% Asian, 16% African-American, 6% White/Non-Hispanic, 2% Other. The majority of her classes are filled with Latinx students, varying

from immigrant English learners to fluent speaking second and third-generation students. She mentioned that throughout her teaching career, she has worked with recent arrivals, undocumented, and refugee students, but states, according to her survey responses, that the 50% Latinx students in her classroom are not all reading at grade level.

Sharon is a white female in the 45-65 age range and teaches 9th-grade A.P. Human Geography which she describes as a *college-level (A.P.) Human Geography - study of people and events are and why (the why of where) and the spatial use of the earth*. She proudly states that she has been teaching for 17 years and is certified in Secondary Education (6-12), History and English, Speech/Communications. Sharon works with E.L. students but does not have an E.L. certification, which confused me since I always believed it was necessary by the state to have a certification that reflects the student body being taught.

Pre-Visit Student Experience. Sharon would prepare her students by discussing what they were going to see at the museum by providing a little background of the stories of the survivors. She has participated in professional development at the museum, and she has brought her students to the museum for many years. In the most recent visit to the museum, her students visited the Holocaust gallery, Human Rights gallery, and the traveling exhibition Dolores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields. The focus of the visit was to view the Dolores exhibit, which is a Latinx themed traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution. Her students were interested in seeing this exhibit because a portion of Sharon's curriculum was based on agriculture. Before visiting the Dolores Huerta exhibit, she explained to the students who she was and her role in Civil Rights history. Her purpose was to provide background knowledge of the museum and why they

were visiting the museum and provided an opportunity for the Latinx students to ask questions. She stated in her interview in regards to the pre-visit student experience,

Dolores went as part of my current unit on agriculture and I've used universe of obligation with my students. We kind of start out with it with a lot of things that the the museum offers in the curriculum because it's about humans and how we treat each other and being aware of each other . So I always start my year out with those topics just to kind of set the expectation for my classroom of respect and with the goal of understanding people who are different from us, so that we can be more acceptable of them, reach out to them , not look at them as different. Look for ways that we have something in common rather than differences. So when we get into the politics and economic development , which a lot of people who are minorities deal with that.

Sharon's interview brought up important points about state curriculum connecting to field trip experiences and how she followed the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or TEKS when making plans for her students' learning experience. In her interview, she was open about her concern for Holocaust survivors and their thoughts on transitioning from a Holocaust museum to a museum that featured not only Latinx themed exhibits and content, but other racial groups and religions.

Student Cultural Connections. The cultural backgrounds of Sharon's students at times are not included in the curriculum, nor does she have the time in the school year to teach beyond the content required by the state standards. She incorporates ways to create time for discussion of cultures. She states,

I think it's important because no matter who you are, you have a story and you have a heritage and you have a history. That should be honored and respected and available because some students don't really delve into their history. So if the way for them to learn more about themselves is through the museum and programs that the museum highlights, then I think that's all beneficial. For example, The students that I've taken so far this year had a lot of questions about Dolores Huerta, since they have heard of Cesar Chavez, but not her history. The exhibit was an addition to something that they were already kind of interested in with a different face. I think that's important that they see more than one side of the story are that there are more people involved, especially when we talk about women empowerment.

Sharon's involvement with the museum and the educational programming has influenced her to connect her students to history that is closely related to their backgrounds. She has incorporated the lessons of the Holocaust into her curriculum, and in that action, she can speak about human rights issues. She continues to work with the resources provide and sees the Latinx representation as a benefit to her students' academic understanding of social justice issues, especially when they hit close to home.

Karen. Karen was the second person to reply to my email and was interested in volunteering in the study because of her involvement with Holocaust Museum Houston for ten years. Karen is a white female in the age range of 25-35 and is currently is a K-12 District Social Studies Specialist. She supports all social studies courses, but most of her

time is spent at the high school level. Her certification is in 7-12 Social Studies Composite and ESL Endorsement and has 12 years of teaching experience. The Latinx demographics in her district consist of 34.66%; however, she did mention that there is not an equitable representation in advanced social studies courses at the high school level. Her most recent visit to the museum was also based on students visiting the Dolores Huerta exhibit.

Pre-Visit Experience. Karen explained in her interview that before field trips, she has a 10-minute discussion with students before visiting the museum, explaining the exhibits and what they expect to see. She stated that there was no other preparation before a visit, and language support was not needed because the students were fluent in English. Karen was able to connect her teacher's curriculum with the exhibit since Dolores Huerta and the Holocaust are topics that are both featured in the History TEKS. Karen referred to the prior visits to the museum in which she and her teachers used resources that were available by the museum. Karen was short with her responses, so I did not receive enough information to develop a clear perception of her Latinx students' learning experience. Her observation about the museum's Latinx representation provides some detail of how the museum influences her students' comprehension,

There is a conscious effort to reach and include Latinx students in the museum space. Holocaust Museum Houston is a leader in the Houston area regarding educational programing for Latinx students. It is extremely important to have Latinx representation at the museum especially given the demographics of both our area and the United States since it is underrepresented in curriculum.

Karen's history with the museum links back to the use of the content and materials created by the museum; however, I would have appreciated more detail about her student's experiences in the museum space. The interview was conducted via Google Docs through a questionnaire format due to scheduling conflicts with Karen's teaching schedule.

Cultural Connections. Karen was able to provide some input into the perception of her students' experience while visiting the Dolores Huerta exhibit,

We are expanding a unit on Civil Rights to include an opportunity for students to explore a person or event of interest. Students returned to campus (after visiting the exhibit) and shared their learning with other students. One student told his class that Huerta is "the Hispanic MLK" and presented to the other kids about what they saw (the student's idea not the teacher's). Anytime students can feel represented and connected to history, the more relevant the content is.

At the time of the student's visit to the museum, I had the opportunity to follow the tour of the exhibit with the group. I observed a diverse group of students enthusiastic and curious to witness a piece of history come to life in the exhibit space. The students read the text panels in awe of Dolores' work and sacrifices. I overheard students say that the exhibit was empowering. As they moved into the Human Rights gallery of the museum, they made connections to labor rights and the Civil Rights Movement. I was proud to see Black and Brown students represented in the museum, and listening to their thoughts was inspiring.

Wilma. Wilma was the third participant to volunteer in the study. The demographics of her district are 50% Latinx, 22% African American, 20% Asian, 8% White/other, and 50% of the students were Latinx in her classroom with the majority reading at grade level. She is a white female in the 45-65 age range and has taught 10-12th grade social studies for 20 years. She has certification in History 6-12th grade and Government 6-12th grade and is ESL certified. Throughout her teaching career, she has participated in professional development at the museum and had multiple trips to the museum with field trips. **Pre-Visit Experience.** She brought U.S. history students to the museum for years and usually brought them while studying World War II. Wilma would introduce the students to the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel, and she included a one or two day overview of the Holocaust before a visit to the museum. The English learners of her classes would have supplemental materials created for different reading levels and accessible information for the students that were in part created by her, but also some content from the museum. Wilma supplemented with newspaper articles at a lower level text than the reading level of the textbook. When I asked her about language support in the museum during field trips, she stated that before the visit, she would request a Spanish speaking docent for specific classes, but it was not common with her regular students. She was aware of who would need more language support and more help in understanding the content. The students were comfortable asking Wilma questions about things that were unclear during their visit. She stated,

I certainly think I may have spent more time on the topic and preparing my students. And obviously I feel like I had a good relationship with my students as well.

So I think those two things do to help. I always worked very hard to develop a good, positive, supportive relationships with the students as best I could and I think that does make a difference in how they responded to the museum. I think I did my best to make them feel very welcome in this space, even though it wasn't my museum or my space, but bringing them there I hoped that I made them feel connected to it in some way.

Cultural Connections. Wilma stated in her interview that her students faced daily discrimination in the lives and were not afraid to speak about what they faced during and after school. She believed that the visits to the museum connected her students to the narrative of the Holocaust. Most of her students were of Latinx background, and they would connect to the stigma of being known in society as the “other.” She stated in regards to her students’ perceptions of their experience during the visit,

I think they saw themselves in in a group that feels discriminated against and maybe not respected in some ways. I think they connected with empathy for what they saw in the information. But I don't think they saw a direct relationship to themselves here in the space. I found that, as I said, many of them really connected with the story of the Jewish people and what happened during the Holocaust and how it connects to the world today. And it was actually two Latino students who came to me that were in my Holocaust class, after we had done a work shop there, they were so motivated, inspired that they said, we want to start a club and we want to call Upstanders Club. These two students began this club and they brought in lots of other kids. And in fact, the kids were from all

different backgrounds that joined the club. There were times where we had 70 kids in a room! So it was really, really powerful to see that they themselves were they were the catalyst. And it was because they had studied this history, gone to the museum, and met actual Holocaust survivors.

Wilma's enthusiasm about the study was very obvious in the interview, and we discussed how a future study on the students who organized the Upstanders Club at her school would be interesting in order to see how that club and the museum experience affected their lives and the lives of others in their universe of obligation.

Sierra. When I met with Sierra via Zoom, she was very soft-spoken, and I sensed she was limiting the amount of information she wanted to express. Sierra is the only Latina woman in this study, and she is in the 36-45 age range, she currently teaches 11th grade U.S. History and is certified as a Social Studies Composite 6-12, ESL, School Counselor. She has been teaching for 16.5 years, and the demographics for her current school district are 52.39% Latinx, 29.23% African American, 12.16% Asian, 4% White, and 2.22% Other. 65% of her students in the classroom are Latinx and not reading on grade level. She has participated in professional development at the museum, and her students have visited the museum on field trips.

Pre-Visit Experience. She would schedule her field trips around the context of covering World War II and always included the Holocaust. She stated that she only would have time for at least a day or two for Holocaust material. Sierra would use the books, such as *Number the Stars* because it was on reading level. She always had a docent-led tour, and

she would still stand towards the back of the group, allowing students to whisper and ask questions. She would use the limited museum resources that were in Spanish before going to the museum to provide background knowledge. Very few of her students had traveled outside of either the United States or their home country. She observed that her students would keep the museum pamphlet to have something from when they visited.

Language Support. Since Sierra had a high percentage of Latinx students who were English Learners in her courses, I asked her about her students' perceptions of the bilingual museum. She stated,

All my students have some level of English learning capabilities , but being able to read it in Spanish, I think that they'll just stand there and be able to read it , understand it , because even those students who are very strong in English , it's not their home language. We've spoken about how they don't think in English, so they're constantly having to translate, which is why they read slower. So to be able to read it in Spanish , I think we'll take more time because they'll be more interested. I'm excited about that and I'm excited about the audio tours being available in Spanish also.

Docent experience and Cultural Connections. With many of her students being Latinx English Learners, I was asked her for her perception of her students' experience with docents. At the time of her visit, the entire docent group of approximately 80-90 docents was white, and 3 out of that number were fluent Spanish speakers. She stated,

Usually my students in their in school settings do not have lot of Hispanic or Latino teachers . So they're used to that being the culture (white) of their

teachers . It wasn't a shock to them. I try would to tell the docent that my students were very smart and very intelligent people. I would tell the docent that they just need you to give them a moment to process and translate what you're saying. Please don't think that they're not listening. Please don't think that they're not understanding or don't care. They need a few more minutes, a little more time to process the question that you're asking them, because many of the docents will ask them questions and they would have to translate it in their heads. Then they have to think of an answer and then they need to translate that back into English. So I would kind of give them that heads up. Once I started doing that , I felt that the overall experience with the docents would be better when they realized. The last few years , once I started doing that , as soon as I got off the bus , I think that that helped both the docents and the students not feel frustrated.

Sierra and her students' experience was a common occurrence for students of color to experience during a visit to the museum. In my five years working at the museum, most of the docent group did not recognize me as an educator. I was not respected nor taken seriously for my work at the museum. As the years progressed and I witnessed docents speak to students of color in a degrading manner or made stereotypes of Title I students as being dumb and undisciplined, I began to push for more docents of color to join the group to have representation in guided tours. It was not until the reopening of the museum in 2019 that the museum began recruiting Spanish speaking docents to lead tours. Knowing that being a docent is a privileged position, I knew that the group size would be small. However, the Spanish speaking docents have slowly begun to gain

attention in the museum space. Unfortunately, the museum has not helped with marketing, funding, or support for multi-language docent lead tours.

My goal is to provide tours in the most spoken languages in the Greater Houston area, such as Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Mandarin. I do not believe the museum is ready to take it to this level and needs to acknowledge the whiteness of the institution and how it is affecting the organization. In the months before the reopening, I also pushed for anti-bias training for docents, volunteers, and staff members. I led the docent group in practice, and while most appreciated the content, some of the elder white men of the group were not pleased with the anti-racist content I discussed. On a positive note, with my constant observations about how docents treated students of color, I was added to the docent recruitment committee to help screen new docents for the museum.

Ann. When I met with Ann, she was in the middle of becoming a docent at the museum. She stated that her involvement in professional development at the museum had inspired her to become a docent. Ann is a white female and is in the 36-45 age range. According to Ann's survey responses, she teaches 11th and 12th-grade I.B. History of the Americas, which is a two-year course. In the 11th grade, she teaches US, Canada, and Latin American history in 4 units - Emergence of Americas in Global Affairs from the 1880s to 1920s, the Great Depression in the Americas, Civil Rights in the Americas, and the Cold War in the Americas. In her 12th grade classes, she teaches Causes & Effects of 20th Century Wars, The Global Cold War, and Rights & Protests, this is a case study of US Civil Rights and South African Apartheid. The demographics of her school district are

56% Hispanic, 38% African American and 50 % of her students in her classes are Latinx. Ann has ten years of teaching experience. Her students have visited the Holocaust gallery, the Young Diarist Gallery, and the Human Rights Gallery during a recent visit to the museum. Ann stated that she has not worked with recent arrivals, but has worked with undocumented and refugee students.

Pre-Visit Experience. Before visiting the museum, Ann would give her students an overview of the Holocaust. Spanish is the first language of most of her students and their families, and none of her students required any supplemental support. She did note that she had a Latinx student who was visually impaired who was accompanied by her occupational specialist. The specialist was able to explain and describe the exhibits to the Latinx students in Spanish. I am glad she mentioned her student's experience because not until recently, the museum has created audio tours in Spanish and descriptive tours for the visually impaired.

Diversity and Cultural Connections. I asked Ann what she thought about her students' perceptions of the Latinx representation in the museum at the time of their visit. She stated,

I think it's extremely important because just in the diversity of our city alone, more than half of my students are Hispanic and more than half my school is as well. Their language ability, it just varies . You know we have some that are freshly new into the country. They are more limited and then we have some that speak better than some of my native English speakers. But I do think that it's very important to have that. Luckily , I teach a curriculum called History of the

Americas for my junior year and it is the US plus Canada and Latin America. So I spend a lot of time discussing a lot of Latin American history . A lot of it with relation to the U.S. because the U.S. does have such a big influence in Latin America from the nineteen hundreds on in . I also teach the Nicaraguan revolution to my seniors. My kids also get to pick a research topic that they can write on and a lot of them pick to do things dealing with Central and South America . One of my favorite kids did something about the Salvadorian Civil War because his grandparents lived through it and he interviewed them. So those are always really great when they have that personal connection and touch to it.

Ann connected her curriculum to the museum's Human Rights gallery. She stated that the inclusion of Latin American atrocities in the gallery shows the public that we are inclusive of other narratives. She believes that in the future, she will be connecting her docent experience to her students' knowledge and encourage them to become student docents.

James. James was the only male Latinx participant in this study. He is a Latino male in the 36-45 age range and has been teaching for seven years. He is certified in 4th-8th English Language Arts and teaches 7th grade English Language Arts. He describes this course as *teaching writing (Grammar & composition) to 4th graders by incorporating daily reading of various texts across all genres*. The demographics of the school district are majority Latinx, and according to his survey responses, his classroom demographics were 100% Latinx, and his students are not reading at grade level. He participated in

professional development at the museum, and his students have visited the museum on a field trip. There were no specific exhibits or programs her students visited at the museum. James has worked with recent arrivals, undocumented, and refugee students.

Pre-Visit Experience. James would read Houston Holocaust survivor Helen Collins' book with his seventh-grade class before the field trip. He would use the museum's digital curriculum trunk program to create a whole unit on the Holocaust. Most of his students were advanced and spoke the English, so minimal accommodations were used for the students to comprehend the content. James would use Spanish dictionaries or the native language to help the students understand specific vocabulary related to the Holocaust.

Cultural Connections. James' students at the time of their visit were middle school students who he believed had a deeper connection to the museum based on the stories of the survivors the students had learned about in his class. He stated,

The common thing that I saw immediately without even asking is the shock and the emotional part of the museum. A lot of questions that I remember not being able to answer right away. A lot of students asking for additional books related to what they saw. And I do remember there were a few students who were interests were certain specific topics of the Holocaust. There was a couple who were interested in reading more about the Hitler Youth or the different groups that we mentioned during the visit. Well, that was one of my favorite parts about the museum, is that at the end when we returned to the classroom we were able to discuss what we saw. The interest kept on going. So I suggested books for them to read on their own. Why don't you try reading this other book? And so it continued

throughout the year. So that's why I scheduled to do my field trips early on in October , because then I would always start with the Holocaust unit because that's kind of my foundation getting through the whole year . And we kept on revisiting throughout the year and made connections.

James was a docent of the museum for a few years during his teaching career. He led Spanish tours and worked with the Education Team, before my role, to translate documents and curriculum. He believes that the museum as a bilingual space for Spanish speaking visitors will be beneficial for the young and old. He sees the space as being an opportunity for non-English speakers to learn more about the Holocaust and the stories of the Houston survivors.

Student Cultural Connections and Post- Visit Responses

Table 3

Student Cultural Connections and Post-Visit Responses

Table 3 is a summary of the participants' observations of connections students made to their cultural background during a visit to the museum and the students' post-visit responses.

Name	Cultural Connections	Post- Visit Responses
Sharon	Students could relate to the topics of stereotyping and prejudice.	Students were in disbelief and had many questions.

Karen	Students can feel represented and connected to history the more relevant the content is.	Students returned to campus and shared their learning with other students.
Wilma	History of the Jews of Spain during the Inquisition and Latino Jewish studies.	Many of the students connected with the story of the Jewish people and what happened during the Holocaust and how it connects to the world today. Two Latino students who were in the Holocaust class were so motivated and inspired that they said they wanted to start a club and we want to call it the Upstanders Club.
Sierra	Students connected to the immigrant experience.	Students wanted to learn about the aftermath of the Holocaust and the survivors' stories.
Ann	Latinx Genocide History	Students want to bring families to museum.
James	Refugee experience	Students asked for additional books to research the history on their own.

Focus Group Themes

The following results are based on the focus group interview with five of the study participants. One of the participants, Sharon, chose not to participate in this part of the study due to a lack of schedule conflicts. There was no attempt by the participant to respond to the focus group discussion. The format of the focus group was in the discussion board form.

Learning about the Holocaust. Ann's Latinx students are all proficient in English. Still, because she participated in museum workshops and field trips to the museum, she has been much more intentional in her vocabulary, word choice, and word definitions. She states that she does not assume that her students understand the words when she teaches the Holocaust. Sierra said that the information she learned from museum workshops and professional development offered by the museum has allowed her to explain better the Holocaust as well as other historical events like the Civil Rights Movement. Specifically with her ELs and her Spanish speaking population with the use of resources provided by the museum. Wilma stated that the museum professional development she participated in inspired her to find ways to connect her students to the history of the Holocaust. Over the 15 years that she organized field trips for 11th graders to the museum, she saw her Latinx students respond with empathy and activism.

Their response encouraged her to find ways to connect to their histories. The museum workshops and professional development have helped Karen become more knowledgeable about the Holocaust and genocide to answer student questions, reframe the way she teaches, and considers new perspectives. In her recent visit to the museum, the temporary exhibit featuring Dolores Huerta's work and the new Human Rights gallery was powerful in encouraging students to connect with their histories. And finally, James helped his students to reflect and think about specific stories from survivors and victims, and the photos of families they saw in the Holocaust Gallery. He states that students were able to make powerful and meaningful connections immediately.

Suggestions for Educators. Ann suggested that educators should let the students know that the museum is fully bilingual for ELs to feel comfortable reading the panels in Spanish. She suggested that if the educator has students that are less proficient in English, then they should request a Spanish-speaking docent for the tour. Sierra agreed with Amber by making students aware that the museum is fully bilingual. She believes that it would pique the interest of more students. She states that the museum becomes more accessible to students and reduces anxiety levels for students who may be afraid that the museum may not be welcoming to them. However, Wilma suggested that educators should be aware of the Human Rights Gallery and how the Holocaust fits into the struggle to protect human rights. She believes that it would widen the focus of the visit to the museum will help all students make connections and feel included.

Karen suggested that with the recent addition of bilingual panels, maps, and multimedia features makes the museum and its content more accessible to a broader group of students. She agreed with Silvia in that it reduces student anxiety and supports language development. James suggested focusing on a theme, or a specific story of a survivor or family allows all of us to find something we can connect to as humans. He states that Latinx students can see that empowering, as they can relate to something they may find familiar and meaningful.

Museum Created Material. Ann believed that museum created class materials would be helpful, especially for those Latinx students who are less proficient in the English language. Sierra stated that although there are many translators available now, it would be

great to receive material that helps engage lower-level students. Wilma agreed that lesson resources for students could deepen their understanding - putting the information into context and that all resources should be bilingual. Karen noticed there were some discussion questions on panels throughout the permanent exhibit and believes that it is a suitable place to start. James stated that these types of resources would allow educators to reach all students and accommodate their individual needs.

Latinx Families. Ann does not include the families in museum visits, but she had some family members of students visit her classroom. One of the topics she covered was the Nicaraguan Revolution, and one of her students told her that her grandmother had fought with the Sandinistas. She asked if her grandmother would come to class to discuss her experiences, and she did, and the impact was tremendous. Ann stated that students always love learning about the first-hand experience. Sierra said that she has never thought about inviting families to attend, and she believes that parents would have to fill out background/ volunteer forms with the district to be able to accompany the group as a chaperone, and that may be intimidating for many.

Wilma stated that during the time she brought students to the museum, it was challenging to bring parents as chaperones. Most parents were not able to attend, and students received a ticket to bring their parents to the museum, and some were able to do that. For her recent visit, Karen invited parents and guardians to chaperone. James believes that ideally involving the families in the experience would be a way to empower our community. However, many parents work more than one job, or the timing is not

feasible for them. James hopes the museum continues to provide a way for the parents and family to visit at a different time. Providing students with complimentary tickets for their parents is a wonderful way to start with that.

Suggestions for Latinx Student Learning. Ann had no suggestions for Latinx student learning, and Wilma suggested that continued programming to include Latinx history, as well as language support through bilingual/Spanish tours, would be significant to the learning experience. Karan agreed with Wilma and suggested more bilingual docents. James agreed with Karen, ensuring a bilingual docent scheduled for a tour that requires it.

Suggestions for Teacher Professional Development. Ann believed that it would be beneficial to have some professional development on Human Rights issues specific to the Latinx population - i.e., Guatemala. She states that those are little known issues that would resonate with the Latinx community in classes. It would be necessary for educators to learn about this history. Wilma stated that professional development related to human rights and Latinx history would help educators who work with Latinx students.

Karen agreed that professional development related to Latinx history would be significant. She stated that if teachers do not have the comfort of knowledge, they cannot teach accurately. James noted that professional development that focuses on immigration and individuals like Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez, would be a wonderful way to begin, as well as bringing in discussions about conflicts in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua.

The professional development would allow all the students and educators to learn parts of history that we may not otherwise know.

Returning to the Museum. Ann had students return to the museum with their families. As part of the IB History curriculum, students must pick a research topic, and after visiting the museum, several students picked issues of genocide to do further research. Sierra stated that in the past, she had students return with their families to visit the museum. Wilma noted that she had seen some of her former students at the museum on their own. They often told her that the visit to HMH was a powerful memory of their high school years. Karen stated, she had students return with their families to visit the museum. James noted that many of his students continued their independent reading and research.

Student Feedback. According to Ann, one of her students said, "she was so glad the museum was bilingual because then she would not have to translate for her parents and they will get the full benefit of the museum as well." Wilma remembers some of her students putting money in the Tzedakah box because the experience of visiting the museum very moved them. James remembered a student came back the following school year to ask for Helen Colin's Memoir.

Analysis and synthesis of findings/results

Based on the results of the study, there was limited evidence of the impact of Latinx representation on museum education programs through the perception of secondary social science educators. Results show that the educators have some

understanding of the representation in their curriculum and the museum space as having some influence on the students' learning. The participants provided information about the learning experience of the Latinx student in the museum while on a field trip, and most of the participants stated that the students were able to connect to the history based on the themes presented on racism, discrimination, prejudice, exclusion, and oppression.

As one educator noted, a Latinx student in her class was motivated to speak about their family history of oppression during warfare in their home country. This type of connection not only opened a safe space for the student to talk about complicated narrative in their lives but also created an opportunity to empathize with the history being presented in the museum. Another teacher noted that his Latinx students were intrigued by the topic and asked to learn more after visiting the museum, thus breaking the stigma that students of color can not relate or understand the Holocaust.

All the educators suggested that more resources and accessibility to bilingual tours should be made available to student groups, as well as their families. Programs that encourage family participation was recommended to educate family members. I agree that the involvement of family or guardians in a museum space could motivate a student to want to return or further their understanding of the topic. Researchers Stein, Garibay, and Wilson state,

“While museums currently tend to favor inquiry-based learning, this may not work with communities that value a more didactic approach; and some current models of family learning, in which a child may be encouraged to ‘scaffold’ experience for an adult, will not necessarily work well in a cultural context in

which parents and grandparents are seen as the knowledge holders. In these cases, programs that involve parents and grandparents in both the presentation and acquisition of knowledge and skills can be effective.” (2008)

It was noted that the educators did not involve families in field trips or in-school programs, but did state that some of the Latinx students were interested in returning to the museum because of the inclusion of Spanish in the exhibit texts and audio tours.

Chapter V

Inferences

This chapter will summarize the findings collected during this study. Details about the participation and collection of the data will be described, along with questions that remain unanswered about this study. Participants of the study were not as accessible to the interviews due to teaching schedules, workload, and personal time. Overall, the topic of the study was about the perception of Latinx student learning in a museum space; however, as the reader will note, the data from the study should have been collected from the Latinx student experience with the support of secondary social science teachers. The time and the length of the study are discussed in considering the outcome of the data collection. The first section of the chapter is a self-evaluation that includes personal bias and information about the study's results through the lens of the researcher. The following section will discuss the implications for practice and will provide the next steps for further research in Latinx student learning in museum spaces.

Researcher's Self Evaluation

This section discusses the researcher's background and experience concerning the study. As a Latina who grew up in an impoverished community with a lack of resources and access to museums, this experience is a potential bias. I am a first-generation college-educated Latina and a former Bilingual educator that has seen first hand the circumstances that Latinx students face in everyday learning, as well as within informal learning environments. I approached this study with a perspective of highlighting the value of representation in museum spaces for Latinx students and knowingly

acknowledging that the participants in this study would not relate to the Latinx student experience due to the participants' ethnic background and level of cultural awareness. My awareness of the lack of teachers of color in public schools concerned me when creating this study. I knew this would be a problem with the data collection because there is a cultural barrier, as well as misunderstanding of the needs of students of color that are beyond the classroom setting. The goal of this study was to show there is a need for representation in all aspects of education, especially in spaces where students do not see their history interconnected within all history.

Implications for Practice

The following section is a discussion of the findings of this study and how these finds can be implemented in practice. The results of the individual interviews and focus group questionnaire are included in the discussion. These findings will show that there was some significant relation to the literature review of this study. Still, it will show some detailed connection to the research question, and the purpose of this study was missed in the interviews.

The six educators that chose to participate in this study met the requirements of working with Latinx students and participating in some involvement with the museum. The lack of diversity in the group showed an imbalance of perspective that did not provide essential details of Latinx learning in their classrooms or the museum. The study was able to identify that the educators all agreed that culturally relevant connections to the museum exhibitions, curricula, and resources would enhance the interest of the Latinx student body. The educators decided that creating materials for students pre and post

visits to the museum were essential in developing comprehension skills and connections to history.

This study framed on cultural conscience, and culturally relevant pedagogy that showed not only do museums need to be aware of representation, but so do the educators of the Latinx student group. The participants of the study discussed that Latinx learning was connected to family and community, as one participant noted, students from Central American countries felt provoked to speak about their individual experiences with genocide, violence, and oppression. The secondary social science educators in this study showed only a tiny sample of how to interpret Latinx student learning.

Learning about the Holocaust. The consensus of the educators is that Latinx students learn when they connect to their histories, with empathy being the response to their experience. The educators perceived student activism and empowerment when the content of the museum was directly relatable to their lives. It was noted that the professional development and student workshops created by the museum could improve the knowledge of the educator as well and improve the learning experience of the Latinx students, thus supporting and encouraging student questions. The following are ways of increased Latinx student learning:

- Advanced Holocaust professional development for educators connecting to Latin American history.
- Encouraging Latinx students to participate in museum student workshops focused on Holocaust history.

- Museum created volunteer opportunities for Latinx students for docent led tours and student ambassadors for the museum.

Suggestions for Latinx Student Learning. Most of the participants suggested that providing Latinx centered programming, exhibitions, and resources would be the best way to support learning in the museum. Spanish docent-led tours would create a more inclusive space for Latinx students who are English Learners, as well as supporting families who may return with the student in future visits to the museum.

Suggestions for Teacher Professional Development. Participants suggested that future educators who desired to maintain a connection with the curriculum and the Latinx student needed to develop their understanding of Human Rights and its relation to the history of Latin America. As one educator noted, if teachers do not have the comfort of knowledge, they cannot teach accurately. Possibilities for professional development include the following:

- Intensive PD for educators on Human Rights, Holocaust, and Social Justice education, focused on how to implement these topics in highly populated Latinx schools and classrooms.
- Professional development for school administrators to support future field trips to museums for Latinx students.
- In-school cultural connections to the community via professional development for educators, focusing on specific Latin American history, immigration, and atrocities.

- Creating curriculum and museum resources in multiple languages that are accessible for educators, parents, and students.
- Assess the cultural competency of secondary social science educators who work in Latinx communities or all communities of color.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the study are based on secondary social science educators' perceptions regarding the impact of Latinx representation in museum education programs on Latinx students. These recommendations are to develop a clear understanding of how educators in formal and informal spaces can achieve increased comprehension, interest, and confidence from Latinx students. The research and data collected during this study only provide a glimpse of Latinx learning, and further research with secondary level Latinx students could provide more insight into the impact of representation in museum spaces.

Educators in this study understand that more needs to be achieved by the schools and museums to connect with the Latinx community. The efforts done by the museum have to lead to new programming and exhibitions that have found ways to highlight the history of Houston communities of color, specifically the Latinx community. The inclusivity of bilingual audio and text has added a new element to the way the museum's mission is perceived. The museum has gone beyond the narrative of the Holocaust to include Human Rights narratives. Representation in these spaces will create culturally relevant material and access to educators that will enhance the Latinx student learning.

One aspect of this study is missing, the perception of Afro-Latinidad student

learning when representation is not present in a museum space. It is possible that the secondary social science educator does not understand the cultural and social differences of a student that identifies as an Afro-Latinx student than a Latinx student. This affects the perception of the educator, and as the reader may note that there was no mention of the Afro-Latinx student's learning experience.

Future Research. Due to time restrictions, the present study was restricted in access to additional interviews and focus groups with other secondary social science teachers. Future research and studies can be formed by including the Latinx students' perspectives of their learning experience in a museum. The following are actions that can expand the current research to create a better understanding of the research question:

- Future studies using the same framework to study how implicit bias affects the educator's perception of Latinx student learning in an informal setting.
- Assessing the bilingual materials and resources created for Latinx students.
- Studies highlighting the museum educators and the workshops created for Latinx students and communities.

Summary

For many communities, a Holocaust museum represents a rare space to discuss issues of hatred, prejudice, and apathy openly. Holocaust Museum Houston is working to actively invite not only these topics but precisely how they relate to the Latinx communities of the Greater Houston area and reflect the needs of their community in their programming. By engaging with and amplifying diverse voices and narratives, museums can contribute to the necessary national conversation on social justice and build

more inclusive communities. In the Fall of 2019, Holocaust Museum Houston hosted the traveling bilingual exhibition, Dolores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields/Dolores Huerta: Revolución en Los Campos, an exhibition that explores Huerta's public life as an activist and co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), and what led her to become a Latina civil rights icon. In correlation with this exhibit, Dolores Huerta was invited to speak at the museum to the Houston community in December 2019. Her presence and words that evening empowered the audience and evoked a call to action; to use our voices and privilege to change voting laws and policies in Texas. This simple request left many in the audience in awe of her dedication to social justice, and many walked out that evening inspired to do the work. A 6th-grade teacher, who had previously made a visit to see the exhibit on a field trip, was able to bring two of her students back to meet Dolores. Her students, who were from Guatemala and many whose native tongue is Q'eqchi, were inspired by La Causa and Dolores' role in the movement. This was an example of how representation matters in spaces where black and brown students are learning about social justice issues.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how museums can make connections to Latinx students. We have seen this through the eyes of the educator and their experience. This research study allowed for the discussion of representation and equity to be included in the school curriculum and the museum setting, two different learning environments that benefit from the accessibility, as Gloria Ladson Billings states, "...culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning," (Ladson-Billings, 161). It is with cultural competence and willingness that

educators can be guides for Latinx learning in environments that have previously been known not to include narratives that acknowledge Latinx history.

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Appendix A

Demographic Survey Questions

1. Ethnicity:
2. Age:
3. Certification:
4. Years of Teaching Experience:
5. School:
6. Grade and Content:
7. Role of participant at the time of interview:
8. Role of participant at the time of participation with museum programming, exhibit, student workshop, and/or professional development:
9. What are the demographics of your school/ school district?
10. Do you work with ESL or ELL students? Are ESL certified? Are you Bilingual certified?
11. Do you work with students with special needs?
12. Do you work with students who are recent arrivals to the United States?
13. Do you work with students who are undocumented or refugees? Years of experience working with ESL/ELL students.
14. What is the percentage of Latinx students in your classroom?
15. Are your Latinx students reading at grade level?
16. Describes the class or course you are teaching?
17. Did you participate in a museum professional development program?
18. Did you and your students visit the museum on a field trip?
19. Did you or your students visit a specific exhibit or gallery?
20. If so, what exhibit or gallery did you and your students visit?

Appendix B

Individual Interview Questions

1. How did you prepare your students for their museum visit?
2. How did you find out about the professional development?
3. Latinx representation was present at the time of your visit?
4. Did you and/or your students have the opportunity to visit an exhibit or program that was based on Latinx representation?
5. Latinx students made connections to museum content, materials/resources, and/or curriculum?
6. Supplemental support was available for ESL or ELLs at the museum site?
7. How important is it for you to have Latinx representation at Holocaust Museum Houston?
8. What was the role of Latinx staff in the museum?
9. What museum resources have you used in your classroom?
10. In what ways were you able to incorporate Latinx culture into your curriculum based on your museum experience?
11. What types of Latinx representation were seen or heard during your visit to Holocaust Museum Houston?
12. Did you and/or your students have the opportunity to visit an exhibit or program that was based on Latinx representation?
13. How effective are the educational programs towards Latinx students?
14. What have been your observations of Latinx student learning after visiting Holocaust Museum Houston?
15. What have been your observations of Latinx student learning during visiting Holocaust Museum Houston?
16. How significant is Latinx representation in museum education programs?
17. What are your perceptions of social justice and Holocaust Museum Houston education programs?
18. What is your perception of the effectiveness of museum professional development?
19. Did you need (visual/audio/language) accommodations for Latinx students in the museum?
20. Was the content in the galleries relevant to your curriculum?
21. How did Latinx students react to the bilingual text and audio in the museum galleries?
22. Did your students have questions about the content of the museum?

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

1. In what ways did you change your curriculum to meet the needs of your Latinx students?
2. How did your museum visit, workshop, professional development, or field trip change the way you teach Latinx students about the Holocaust?
3. What are some suggestions you would have for educators who work with Latinx students and plan on bringing a group to the museum on a field trip?
4. Have you created new material (i.e. worksheets, handouts) to help guide students during visits or in classroom learning?
5. What challenges did your Latinx students face in the classroom or in the museum regarding the content?
6. Do you or plan to involve you Latinx students' families in museum visits or in-school lessons?
7. How much time do you spend preparing and/or creating supporting materials for your Latinx students?
8. What suggestions do you have regarding Latinx student learning in the museum?
9. How much of an impact did your Latinx students receive from your involvement?
10. Will your Latinx students visit or return to the museum to continue learning?

Appendix D

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

December 17, 2019

Michelle Tovar
mtovar3@uh.edu

Dear Michelle Tovar:

On December 3, 2019, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	The Impact of Latinx Representation in White Spaces: A Study on Student Learning in a Holocaust Museum
Investigator:	Michelle Tovar
IRB ID:	STUDY00001962
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Tovar Email, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Michelle Tovar Consent, Category: Consent Form; • Michelle Tovar, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Michelle Tovar, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Michelle Tovar, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Michelle Tovar, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Michelle Tovar Followup , Category: Recruitment Materials; • Michelle Tovar, Category: IRB Protocol; • Michelle Tovar, Category: Completed Checklists;
Review Category:	Exempt
Committee Name:	Noncommittee review
IRB Coordinator:	<u>Maria Martinez</u>

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

The IRB approved the study on December 17, 2019; recruitment and procedures detailed within the approved protocol may now be initiated.

As this study was approved under an exempt or expedited process, recently revised regulatory requirements do not require the submission of annual continuing review documentation. However, it is critical that the following submissions are made to the IRB to ensure continued compliance:

- Modifications to the protocol prior to initiating any changes (for example, the addition of study personnel, updated recruitment materials, change in study design, requests for additional subjects)
- Reportable New Information/Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others
- Study Closure

Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office
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<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/>