"I Love How We Developed a Community Already":
A Graduate Student Orientation Model for Minority-Serving Programs and Institutions

Magdalena L. Barrera

San José State University

Abstract

In recent years, an increasing number of universities have qualified as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), thanks in part to significant growth in the numbers of Latinx students who are enrolling in bachelor's degree programs. A greater proportion of this student population is completing bachelor's degrees and continuing into master's and doctoral programs. Nevertheless, graduate orientation remains overlooked despite being a rich opportunity to support the identity development of Latinx students. This pedagogical reflection contributes to the discussion of Latinx student experiences by exploring an innovative approach to new graduate student orientation for a master's program in a Chicana/o Studies department at an MSI. The orientation provides holistic support for Latinx students by building an academic community founded on mutual support and bringing greater transparency to the hidden curriculum of graduate education that often elides Latinx students. The essay explores insights from student feedback on the orientation and provides reflection questions to help departments and MSIs bring a more equity-minded, supportive approach to welcoming and retaining new Latinx graduate students.

Keywords: Latinx students, graduate education, student retention, identity development

The purpose of this pedagogical reflection is to share an orientation model that eases new Latinx graduate students' anxieties, through concerted community-building and discussion of the hidden curriculum (i.e. unspoken rules and norms) of higher education, both of which are critical to establishing a strong foundation for graduate school. This pedagogical reflection is offered as one way to develop a comprehensive orientation program that supports the identity development of Latinx graduate students. Such interventions are critical in light of the increasing numbers of Latinx students pursuing advanced degrees, and the corresponding rise in the number of universities qualifying as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Recent years have seen considerable growth in the number of MSIs across the United States. In 2014-2015, for example, approximately 700 institutions were recognized as MSIs and enrolled nearly five million students of color (Taylor, 2017). Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) now comprise nearly 15% of non-profit institutions, and enroll 63% of Latinx students (HACU, 2018). The growth in the number of MSIs and HSIs is driven in large part by the dramatic increase of Latinx students receiving bachelor's degrees (Snyder, de Brey & Dillow, 2019). In fact, Latinx students now represent nearly 20% of overall college enrollment (Bauman, 2017).

As more Latinxs are completing undergraduate degrees, it is no surprise that between 2002 and 2012 there was a 103% increase in the number of students who earned master's degrees and a 67% increase in those earning doctorates (Excelencia in Education, 2015). In 2017, more than half of Latinx first-time graduate students were pursuing degrees in the arts and humanities, education, public administration, and social/behavioral sciences (Okahana & Zhou, 2018). Nevertheless, they represent only a small percentage of the overall graduate student population. Significant barriers to post-baccalaureate education remain in place for Latinxs, much of them rooted in the disjuncture between student's ethnic identities and values, and those of mainstream academic culture (Torres, 2006). Latinx graduate students grapple with feelings of alienation from both academic culture and their peers, and often struggle to adapt to the first year of graduate school, leading many to wonder, "What am I doing here?" (Ramirez, 2014). Moreover, one study found that more than 40% of Latinxs with doctorates in social science fields attended universities with lower research profiles (Fernandez, 2020), institutions that often have fewer resources to provide the range of supports that graduate students need to meet their educational goals.

Graduate Orientation: A Critical Form of Support for Latinx Students

Orientation programs are an important way of easing the transition process for all students. Numerous studies have explored the impact of orientation programs on students' ability to navigate and integrate themselves into institutions of higher education. However, graduate orientation remains overlooked at many institutions (Mears et al., 2015; Lang, 2004; Stiles, 2012) and, when it is offered, features widely varying content (Poock, 2004). Such findings are dismaying, as students need specific guidance for understanding how graduate school differs from the undergraduate experience (Brown, 2012).

The days before classes commence are an especially critical window for developing graduate students' sense of identity and community. Taub and Komives (1998) found that this anticipatory stage is the best time for interventions that help students gain realistic expectations of graduate study. Drawing from framing theory, socialization theory, and the scholarship of social support, Mears et al (2015) argue for the importance of graduate student orientations. Their results demonstrate that students who feel supported during their initial contacts with the institution develop a positive frame by which to view their place within it and absorb more information from orientation as their new-student anxiety subsides.

Exemplary departments enculturate graduate students by fostering collegiality within the cohort, encouraging professional relationships between new students and faculty, and clarifying program structure and faculty expectations for incoming students (Boyle & Boice, 1998, p. 87). Studies of orientations in specific academic fields underscore such findings. Benavides and Keyes' (2016) study of public administration and public policy master's programs found that a comprehensive orientation that reflected the mission and purpose of the program enhanced graduate students' retention, learning, and socialization; the greater the socialization component, the less likely students were to drop out of their programs. Davis, Bissler and Leiter (2001) demonstrate that sociology graduate orientations that included hands-on demonstrations and practice of required skills ultimately create cohesion, equalize basic skills, clarify expectations, and familiarize students with their new environment, resulting in a greater sense of security and a smoother transition for new students.

Given their connections to student retention, orientation programs play an especially critical role for graduate students of color. Taylor and Miller (2002), for example, identify six factors that support the integration and persistence of minoritized students. These components

include ethnic and peer attachment; social integration; feeling worthy and competent; reliable alliances through a community of support; guidance in the form of faculty and administrator mentorship; and leadership opportunities. Establishing mentoring relationships is another key aspect of the preparation of graduate students of color because it provides psychological, social, and career-focused supports (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). Unfortunately, many universities focus more on recruiting historically underrepresented graduate students rather than on ways of retaining them (Poock, 2007-2008), despite the fact that students of color, more often than white students, view orientations as playing a critical role in the social transition into higher education (Mayhew et al, 2007).

Students of color often leave their graduate programs because institutions do not comprehensively support their social integration into graduate school—not because they cannot handle the work (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000). Researchers have argued that a critical aspect of supporting graduate students of color is to establish department cultures where "[i]nstead of insisting that students discard the distinctive competencies that may result from cultural heritage in favor of conforming to the school's cultural standards, students are encouraged to take advantage of such competencies" (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001, p. 554). As Brayboy, Solyom, and Castagno (2014) explain in their work exploring the links between graduate programs, self-education, and tribal nation-building for Native peoples: "Faculty, students, and programs that embody respect, engage relationally, and practice reciprocity would necessarily produce a very different kind of knowledge, research, and project" (p. 578). Thus, programs and MSIs that are able to offer orientations that provide a cultural-wealth-based framing early on can radically shift the educational landscape to more comprehensively support historically underserved students.

Transforming Our Orientation Model

Situated within an MSI, my home department was established in the late 1960s as a master's (M.A.) program, though undergraduate degree programs are now offered, as well. The M.A. program historically has attracted a wide range of students, from those who are interested in pursuing a doctorate but want to acclimate to graduate training by first earning a master's degree, to those who plan to work with community organization centered on Latinx communities and seek to develop a solid intellectual base for undertaking that work. Cohorts

generally have ranged in size from eight to fourteen students; nearly all are Latinx-identified, come from working-class, immigrant households, and represent the first in their families to enter higher education. Our graduate courses are offered during evenings and weekends, as nearly all students in the program work full-time and have considerable commutes within the region. As a result, community-building primarily takes place in class because students are often unable to attend campus events, visit regular office hours, or easily meet up with each other to study outside of class. These factors highlight the need for a robust orientation program in order to help them establish a strong foundation and community for their studies.

Through the fall of 2013, our new graduate student orientation took the form of a two-hour social on the evening before the first day of instruction. After a round of introductions, incoming students received a brief overview of the program and general advice about graduate study before transitioning to informal question and answer (Q&A). While students were excited to meet the department community, they described leaving with more questions than answers about how to start the program on strong footing. This approach to orientation also did not provide faculty with the opportunity to share substantive advice about the issues many first-semester Latinx students struggle with, such as confronting writing anxieties and effective time management.

In the meantime, a colleague then teaching in our graduate program organized a series of summer writing workshops to help students develop a current writing project. Her approach was a critical intervention founded on helping students recognize their writing anxieties and learn how to manage them (Negron-Gonzales, 2014). Inspired by her leadership, we began to reflect on how we could incorporate core principles of her workshop into other aspects of our graduate program.

In the summer of 2014 we transformed our department orientation from the brief evening social into a daylong series of workshops to supplement the general university-wide graduate orientation, which included campus tours, introduced students to resources such as the career and writing centers, and provided an overview of requirements, and candidacy. Affirming the culturally-rooted epistemological and ontological knowledge that students bring with them, the department orientation addresses key aspects of the graduate experience for first-generation Latinx students: identity development, core skills for graduate-level education, and the importance of developing a community of support.

Though the sessions have changed slightly year to year, the following represents the core elements of the orientation:

- *Welcome* (15 minutes). The day begins with a round of introductions, and a brief history of how and why we developed this orientation. We emphasize the intended takeaways are to reflect on the knowledge, skills, and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that students bring to the program; discuss concrete approaches to graduate-level work; and build community.

- *Session 1: Developing a Graduate Student Identity* (50 minutes). This session has been revised many times. Initial iterations included a mind-mapping exercise that enabled students to connect their intellectual interests to those of their cohort; later, we created an activity to identify the skills they bring to the program, and those they sought to develop. Currently, this session begins with an activity where students anonymously share what they look forward to in the program and what concerns they have. The purpose of the exercise is to underscore that none of them is alone in wondering, "Do I belong here? Am I ready to start a master's program?" We also outline the differences between graduate and undergraduate education, and share *consejos* (i.e. moral support passed from one generation to the next) compiled by students who recently completed their first year.

- *Session 2: Time Management During a Busy Semester* (50 minutes). This session explores the challenges of juggling the accelerated pace of graduate work, complexity of ideas, and volume of assigned readings. In a powerful group activity, students analyze the syllabus from each of the three core courses first-semester students anticipate taking; each group notes the amount of reading from week to week, and the due dates of assignments. They then transfer this summary onto large monthly calendars posted on the wall, enabling the cohort to gain a big-picture view of the total amount of work across the courses. We then dive into time management techniques, drawing from Rockquemore's (2010) approach of careful weekly planning and identifying priority tasks.

- *Session 3: Reading and Preparing for Class* (50 minutes). Here students learn techniques for managing the reading load while simultaneously critically engaging with texts. We discuss how to prepare questions and organize their ideas for graduate seminars, and then we facilitate discussion of a sample reading. The facilitated discussion

guides the group through a sample "first class," so they can walk into their actual first class meetings with an idea of what to expect.

- **Session 4: Writing at the Graduate Level** (30 minutes). Drawing from the work of Negron-Gonzales (2014), the emphasis of this session is to remind students that writing is not an innate ability but instead a learned skill that improves with practice. Students reflect on the anxieties they bring to writing assignments and learn ways to create positive writing experiences, from committing to a daily writing practice and making writing a social activity to breaking a writing project into more manageable pieces and identifying specific writing goals.

- **Session 5: Overview of the M.A. Program** (20 minutes). We offer an overview of courses, emphases within our program, and options for the culminating experience (write a thesis, undertake an applied project, or take additional elective courses). This session is short so as to not overwhelm students with this information before they have begun their first semester of coursework.

- **Session 6: Student Success Q&A** (75 minutes). The final session features three alumni of the master's program who discuss why they entered the program, their experiences in it, and how they are applying their degree. New students have the opportunity to ask further questions.

- **Closing** (15 minutes). After all participants—including faculty and alumni—share final reflections, we collect anonymous qualitative feedback on the orientation, and end the day with an opportunity for new students to socialize with current students via a potluck sponsored by the department's graduate student organization.

To prepare for the event, incoming students are asked to save the date in August for a mandatory orientation (though technically there is no penalty for non-attendance). Two weeks before orientation, they receive instructions to read the sample article for Session Three and a set of reflection questions about the skills they bring to the program.

Findings Related to Student Perspectives on the New Orientation Model

Students completed a brief, anonymous questionnaire that included three open-ended questions: (1) What aspects of today's orientation did you find most helpful? (2) What changes, if any, would you suggest for next year's orientation? Is there a topic you would like to see

addressed that was overlooked or did not get much time today? (3) Please share a few insights from today that you hope to put into use as classes begin. Thirty-three total responses were collected from the years 2015 – 2016 and 2018 – 2019. Reviewing this feedback reveals a number of important themes.

In response to the first question, most students report "everything" was helpful, singling out two sessions as especially impactful. The first is the time management workshop. Orientation participants explain that the exercise of mapping out a semester of reading and writing assignments across three different classes puts the graduate student workload into clear perspective, underscoring the importance of time management. One respondent explains, "I visually understood how careful I need to be [with] my time." Others share that the session informed them of specific techniques for staying organized once classes begin. For example, a student writes, "I thought it was very interesting learning the different ways to plan out the semester. It added to my planning that I've been using." This response echoes the orientation's overall message to students that they already have many skills for academic success and that the purpose of the orientation is to add to their toolkit.

Students also highlight the "alumni success" panel. Within this subset of responses, students reflect on the power of hearing about alumni experiences in the program, especially the strategies that enabled them to complete the degree. Alumni experiences are "inspiring and made the program realistic and [put it] into perspective." While the alumni speakers may be offering advice similar to that shared in other orientation workshops, it may very well be more impactful coming from near-peers rather than from faculty (Mears et al, 2015). The second theme is that the panel helps orientation participants see the many ways graduates have used their degrees. One participant was moved by hearing how the graduates connected learning to their professional careers. Another explains, "The [alumni] panel was extremely helpful because it allowed me to hear from students who went through the program and how it has helped them." What these comments reveal is that hearing from alumni enables them to envision pathways beyond the master's program. Such a vision is critical because it reminds students that the two to three years spent in the program is only a brief chapter of their lives that should connect to a personal vision beyond graduate school.

Orientation feedback overall points to the role of building community as a way to ease students' anxieties about entering a graduate program. "[T]he opportunity to meet others who are entering the program *before* classes begin was a great way to take the edge off," explains one participant; meanwhile, another emphasizes, "I loved how we developed a community already. This orientation helped 'break the ice.'" Yet it is not simply coming together that proves critical; rather, it is creating a space that acknowledges both the strengths and concerns of Latinx students pursuing a new level of higher education. "I am very relieved this program takes the time to give us some foundations to start with," observes a respondent. "I also really like the discussion on how we feel and our thoughts on the program. It is very reassuring to hear that I am not alone in my fears and excitements." Building on that note, another student reflects, "I learned everyone's fear is the same as mine and that this isn't a competition." Coupled with the encouragement of faculty and alumni, students gain reassurance they will be part of a community of support. For instance, one student writes, "I found it helpful to be reminded that it is okay to not know everything—it will be a journey. I will get through things." Finally, a participant acknowledges, "[I]t was interesting to learn how [staying] connected with others is a part of student success."

In response to the second feedback question (suggested changes), many explain that the orientation addressed most of the questions they had. When they do provide specific ideas, the responses fall into two categories. The first is a request for more information on resources for students, including financial aid, scholarships and grants, and housing. To acknowledge those requests, we have expanded our orientation to provide information and specific contacts for students seeking further resources. The second category is a request to hear more about the various options for completing the program (as mentioned above, choosing an emphasis and culminating experience). We now offer a brief follow-up orientation in January, entitled, "Semester Two: Now What Do I Do?" which goes into more depth in these areas.

In response to the final question about strategies students plan to adopt, two-thirds of participants indicate they intend to engage in careful time management. Responses also illuminate a narrative of discovering—in the words of one participant—that their "graduate student identity is a process." Another observes, "I think we are all nervous and excited, and I think the challenge is going to be to juggle all those emotions and help keep each other going." Such a response reveals the orientation's ability to provide tools and strategies that address the

rollercoaster of emotions students experience in graduate school. Moreover, the response points to the community of support each student can draw strength from and contribute to in pursuit of their goals.

Other takeaways highlight the importance of holding onto the aspirations that led students to the program. "I would like to keep the drive and passion I have now," a participant explains, adding, "I hope to keep in the back of my head the reasons and motivations that I had at the beginning and why I applied in the first place." The root of such statements is self-empowerment, as seen in the following example: "Owning my experience and setting my own pace so as to ensure I obtain what it is I need out of this experience in my own path. Thank you for encouraging us to take ownership over this experience!" The feeling of ownership is reflected in the comments of a student who writes (in all caps), "I CAN DO THIS!!" Thus, the orientation takes Latinx students on a daylong journey from feeling nervous to expressing greater confidence, understanding graduate school is not an end in itself but rather a process of self-discovery enhanced by engaging in a community of support that acknowledges the epistemological salience of their ethnic identity.

Implications for Adapting the Model for Other Programs and MSIs

MSIs and graduate programs can use these strategies to create a new graduate student orientation, or revamp an existing orientation program to support Latinx students.

- ***Survey current and/or recently-graduated students about their needs***. It is critical to ask graduate students directly about their needs. The benefit of checking in with current students is that they have some experience in the program to generate suggestions for future student orientations. Research demonstrates that engaging students is a necessary first step towards creating tailored programming (Nesheim et al, 2006; Haworth, 1996; Nerad & Miller, 1996).

- ***Consider recent cohorts of graduate students in your department's program.*** Who are your students? What strengths do they bring to your program? Are there areas where they seem to struggle, and why? Make note of the trends over time. Some aspects of entering a graduate program have remained present across generations: anxieties about fitting in with one's cohort, fighting feelings of the imposter syndrome, etc. Yet other aspects may have changed with new generations of students who have

access to different tools (time management apps) or perhaps even less experience with going to the library, due to the rise of electronic versions of books, and journal articles.

- ***Reflect on faculty within your graduate program.*** Where do they struggle the most in supporting students? For example, graduate faculty within my department were alarmed by a rise in "incomplete" grades assigned to graduate students at the end of each semester. Our time management workshop is not only a support for students, but also for faculty to deliver the tools upfront, at the start of the term, to help students stay on track for timely course completion.

- ***Choose formats that reflect students' needs and availabilities***. When we began to redesign our orientation, we initially considered a two-day series that would enable us to engage intensively on the critical topics. However, we kept it to a single day given that our students' work schedules and commutes make a multi-day orientation impractical for them. What topics are most important for your students? How much time is needed to provide them with both the knowledge and hands-on practice for each topic?

Ongoing Adaptations in Response to Changing Circumstances

It is critical to constantly assess graduate orientation in order to respond to the changing needs of diversifying student populations. Case in point: As this essay was in development, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 radically altered the landscape of higher education. Our campus is one that will continue using remote modalities until the health and safety of our campus community can be ensured.

In response to the current inability to bring students into physical proximity, our department is reimagining orientation in a way that maintains coverage and substance with a minimum of synchronous delivery, which can be mentally and physically taxing (Sandler & Bauman, 2020). We are creating a series of brief screencasts to deliver key points of each orientation session. Incoming students will view this content asynchronously, then join a ninety-minute synchronous orientation where they can meet each other and the faculty; engage in small-group discussion about the videos; share their academic success tips; and hear from two alumni. While this format is far from ideal, even an online orientation significantly reduces the anxieties of incoming students (Hullinger & Hogan, 2014). Moreover, the content will remain

available after the orientation through a learning management system module, enabling students to reference the strategies throughout the semester.

An important question emerging from this experience is how faculty and administrators can employ online technologies in ways that build upon the cultural capital of Latinx students—especially during a global public health crisis that disproportionally impacts the home communities of this student population. Such issues will surely stretch our training, skills, and imagination as leaders within higher education. However, we cannot afford to do otherwise if we want to not only recruit but also retain and graduate diverse student populations.

References

Bauman, K. (2017, August 28). *School enrollment of the Hispanic population: Two decades of growth*. United State Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/08/school_enrollmentof.html.

Benavides, D., & Keyes, L. (2016). New-student orientations: Supporting success and socialization in graduate programs. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 22*(1), 107-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2016.12002231

Boyle, P., & Boice, B. (1998). Best practices for enculturation: Collegiality, mentoring, and structure. *New directions for higher education, 101*, 87-94. https://doi.org/10.1002/he.10108

Brayboy, B. M. J., Solyom, J. A., & Castagno, A. E. (2014). Looking into the hearts of Native Peoples: Nation building as an institutional orientation for graduate education. *American Journal of Education, 120*(4), 575-596. https://doi.org/10.1086/676908

Brown, C.S. (2012). Maximizing success in your graduate training. In P. Giordano, S. Davis, & C. Licht (Eds.), *Your Graduate Training in Psychology: Effective Strategies for Success* (pp. 13-22). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452240527.n3

Davidson, M.N. and Foster-Johnson, L. (2001). Mentoring in the preparation of graduate researchers of color. *Review of Educational Research, 71*(4), 549-574. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543071004549

Davis, S. N., Bissler, D.L., and Leiter, J. (2001). Leveling the playing field: An orientation to graduate study in sociology. *Teaching Sociology, 29*(4), 454-462. https://doi.org/10.2307/1318946

Excelencia in Education. (2015). *The condition of Latinos in education: 2015 factbook*. Excelencia in Education.

Fernandez, F. (2020). Where do Latinas and Latinos earn social science doctorates? *Education policy analysis archives, 28*(97), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.28.4889

HACU. (2018). *2018 Fact Sheet: Hispanic Higher Education and HSIs* [Fact sheet]. Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. https://www.hacu.net/images/hacu/OPAI/2018_HSI_FactSheet.pdf

Haworth, J. G. (ed.). (1996). *Assessing Graduate and Professional Education: Current Realities, Future Prospects.* Jossey-Bass. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.37019969209

Hullinger, M. and Hogan, R. L. (2014). Student anxiety: Effects of a New Graduate Student Orientation Program. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and Research, 4*(2), 27-34. https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.3

Lang, M.E. (2004). The need for graduate orientation. *Journal of College Orientation and Transition, 11*(2), 49-51. https://doi.org/10.24926/jcotr.v11i2.2597

Lovitts, B. E., and Nelson, C. (2000). The Hidden Crisis in Graduate Education: Attrition from Ph.D. Programs. *Academe, 86*, 44–50. https://doi.org/10.2307/40251951

Mayhew, M. J., Stipeck, C., and Dorow, A. (2007). The effects of orientation programming on academic and social learning with implications for transfers and students of color. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Kansas City, MO.

Mears, D. P., Scaggs, S. J. A., Ladney, R. T., Lindsey, A. M., and Randon J. W. A. (2015). Successful transitions to graduate school: Using orientations to improve student experiences in criminology and criminal justice programs. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 26*(3), 283-306. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2015.1018914

Negrón-Gonzales, G. M. (2014). The power of the pen: Writing mentorship and Chicana/o

M.A. students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *13*(1), 62-70. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2013.800819

Nerad, M., and Miller, D. S. (1996). Increasing Student Retention in Graduate and Professional Programs. In J. Grant Haworth (ed.), *Assessing Graduate and Professional Education: Current Realities, Future Prospects*. Jossey-Bass. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.37019969207

Nesheim, B. E., Guentzel, M. J., Gansemer-Topf, A. M., Ross, L. E., and Turrentine, C. G. (2006). If you want to know, ask: Assessing the needs and experiences of graduate students. *New Directions for Student Services, 115*, 5-17. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.212

Okahana, H., and Zhou, E. (2018). Graduate enrollment and degrees: 2007 to 2017. Council of Graduate Schools.

Poock, M. C. (2004). Graduate Student Orientation Practices: Results from a National Survey. *NASPA Journal, 41*(3), 470-486.

Poock, M. C. (2007-2008). A shifting paradigm in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate students. *Journal of College Student Retention, 9*(2), 169-181.

Ramirez, E. (2014). "¿Qué Estoy Haciendo Aquí? (What Am I Doing Here?)": Chicanos/ Latinos(as) Navigating Challenges and Inequalities During Their First Year of Graduate School. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, *47*(2), 167-186.

Rockquemore, K. A. (2010). The Sunday meeting. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2010/09/20/sunday-meeting

Sandler, L. and Bauman, O. (2020, May 19). Zoom fatigue is real — here's why video calls are so draining. TED. https://ideas.ted.com/zoom-fatigue-is-real-heres-why-video-calls-are-so-draining.

Snyder, T.D., de Brey, C., and Dillow, S.A. (2019). Digest of Education Statistics 2017 (NCES 2018-070). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

Stiles, C. G. (2012). The relationship between graduate orientation programs and satisfaction with institutional choice. [Doctoral dissertation, Johnson and Wales University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Taub, D. J. and Komives, S. K. (1998). A comprehensive graduate orientation program: Practicing what we preach. *Journal of College Student Development, 39*, 394-398.

Taylor, M. (2017, July 26). *Minority serving institutions perform better than federal graduation rates suggest*. Higher education today. https://www.higheredtoday.org/2017/07/26/ minority-serving-institutions-perform-better-federal-graduation-rates-suggest.

Taylor, J. D. and Miller, T. K. (2002). Necessary components for evaluating minority retention programs. *NASPA Journal, 39*(3), 266-283. https://doi.org/10.2202/0027-6014.1173

Torres, V. (2006). Bridging two worlds: Academic and Latina/o Identity. In Castellanos, J., Gloria, A. M. and Kanimura, M. (Eds.), *The Latina/o pathway to the Ph.D.: Abriendo caminos* (pp. 135-147). Stylus.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, *8*(1), 69-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006