SUCCESS EN INGLÉS: THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EFFECTS ON LATINA/OS’ MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes nationally-representative quantitative data from the first (2002) and second (2004) waves of the Educational Longitudinal Study to examine the relationship between Latina/o secondary school students’ proficiency in: English-language, academic literacy and mathematics as well as high school program and teacher preparation. Using multilevel models to simultaneously analyze students as grouped within schools, this study contributes empirical evidence that English-language proficiency, academic language and literacy, college-preparatory curricula and teachers’ preparation are explanatory predictors of Latina/os’ mathematics achievement.

Summative assessment results influence school policies and practices in the United States. Providing “information about current status and progress of student achievement and quality of schooling,” summative assessment results often serve as the central catalyst for “reforming educational practices” (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009, p. 3). Since 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) has established national summative assessment requirements to document “disparities in educational opportunities and in student performance” (p. 4). In 2001, ESEA was re-authorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and assessment requirements were enacted as high stakes accountability measures. For schools, high-stakes assessments determine economic rewards and sanctions (e.g., programmatic funding, teacher reassignment, school reconstitution). For students, high-stakes assessments determine curricular experiences (e.g., academic track placement, grade promotion, high school graduation) (Heubert & Hauser, 1999).