

**“Gang Membership or Post-Secondary
Learning: How Silvana Mexican/Latinos
Make the Choice”**

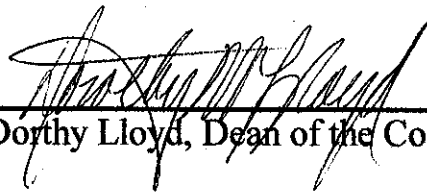
Jesus D. Galindo

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Masters of Arts in Education
California State University, Monterey Bay**

© by Jesus D. Galindo. All Rights Reserved

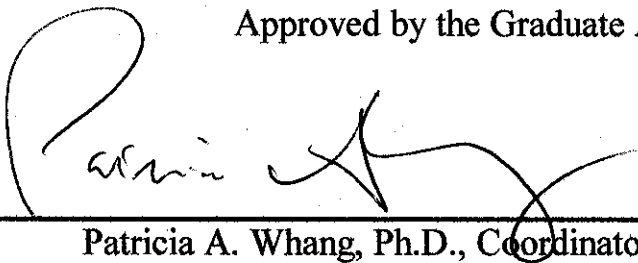
Gang Membership or Post Secondary Learning: How Silvana Mexicans/Latinos Make the Choice

By Jesus D. Galindo



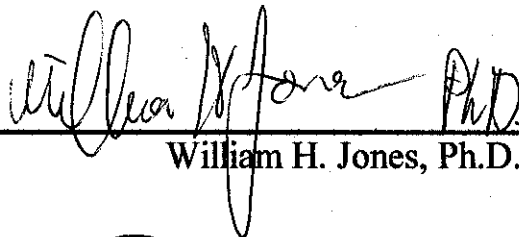
Dorothy Lloyd, Dean of the College of Professional Studies

Approved by the Graduate Advisor Committee

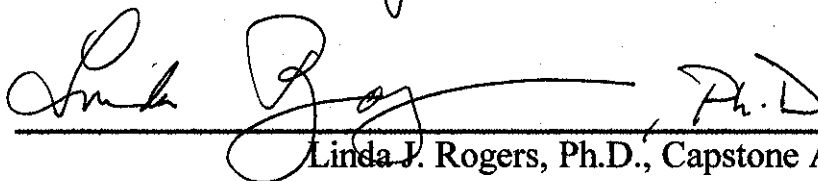


June 3, 2002

Patricia A. Whang, Ph.D., Coordinator Master of Arts in Education



William H. Jones, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor



Linda J. Rogers, Ph.D., Capstone Advisor

Acknowledgements

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.”

In 1994, I started a journey to fulfill three goals in life that I had set for myself. These goals included earning a Bachelor's Degree, Teaching Credential and a Master's Degree. Today my goals have been accomplished!

My journey would not have been possible without some special people in my life who have helped me in numerous ways. Like the encouragement, love and support I have received from my immediate family; Gabriela, Sabino, Sofia and Letty. “Gabby” thanks for the help and advice you provided for me in high school and throughout my college career. Sabino, for the spirit that people can change and make a difference, and you have. To my two “little” sisters, Sofia and Letty, all things are possible mijas, with hard work and dedication.

There are also those who have helped me in other ways, shapes or forms. Whitney Grummon (my high school English teacher), for all the editing and advice you gave me as I struggled to put two and two together. Lori Lowensen for the revisions, typing, modifications, and of course the dinner you made for me. The Adelman's who taught me more than anyone else that life is more about giving than it is about receiving. Also for the love, commitment, and support you gave me as an eighteen-year-old away at college.

Audelia, for the motivation, desire, and attitude you employ daily. It has rubbed off on me immensely. You are a true role model that every Mexican should try to imitate.

To my uncles, aunts, cousins, niece and nephew, much love. To all the CSUMB faculty and staff (Bill Jones and Linda Rogers), for your patience and support throughout my two years in the Master's program. To my “homies”, I did it and so can you! To my four high school participants, with your time, energy, and efforts, we hopefully have made Silvana a better place for you and for me.

Last, but not least, para mi mama y mi papa. Gracias por todo el apoyo, amor y ejemplo que me han dado en esta vida. Ustedes son mi heroes!

Abstract

Growing up in a rural area permeated by the violence of drugs and gangs made it very difficult to resist joining in. Since there were little or no after school programs available for me and my friends, I decided to focus upon an after school program that would promote academic progress, computer literacy, sports activities and visitations to post-secondary institutions. Four Silvana residents that attend Millet High School participated in the program and agreed to create an imovie to counteract the gang culture. The hope is to have more Silvana residents pursue a post-secondary education instead of running with the local gang.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Personal Narrative	Page 2
	Purpose	Page 3
	Research Questions	Page 4
	Demographics of School/Participants	Page 8
	Considerations and Constraints	Page 11
Chapter 2	Literature Review	Page 12
	Any Similar Studies?	Page 19
Chapter 3	Research Design/Perspective	Page 20
	Research Subjects/Participants	Page 22
	Collection of Data	Page 24
	Developing the After School Program	Page 26
Chapter 4	Data Analysis	Page 27
	How I Recommend People Use This Project	Page 30
Chapter 5	Recommendations and Conclusions	Page 34
	Bibliography	Page 41
Appendix A	Student Participant Interview Questions	Page 43
Appendix B	Millet High School Staff Questionnaire	Page 44
Appendix C	Adult Participant Interview Questions	Page 45
Appendix D	Consent to Participate	Page 46
Appendix E	Sample Interview Questions	Page 47

Chapter One

**"If you came from the hills [barrio], you were labeled
From the start.... Already a thug.... It was a jacket I
Could try to take off, but they kept putting it back on" (Pg.84)**

**Luis Rodriguez (1993)
"Teaching in Tensions: Latino Immigrant Youth, Their Teachers, and the
Structures of Schooling"**

Personal Narrative

I was raised in a small, well established, farming community in Northern California deemed Silvana for the purpose of this paper. Silvana is located in North Monterey County at the intersection of Highway 183, 156 and U.S. Highway 1; it is a town where 80% of the population identify themselves as Latino and living in low-income housing with my parents and four siblings was difficult for me to accept. In 1997, according to the census population 5,403 people lived in Silvana. Today the population in Silvana is closer to 8,000 people. With little or no economic stability for my parents, as both were field and packing shed laborers, an education was not necessarily a part of my future plans. Pressure from friends and family members turned me away from school because most of my friends and family members felt isolated and stereotyped at school. Their ethnic background experiences, like my own, were unpleasant. Disinterested in school because I did not feel valued, I got involved with drugs, violence, and gang membership.

Gangs, according to several experts, can be classified as three or more people. Gangs come from all kinds of ethnic backgrounds and youth gangs continue to grow in

size. Youth gangs have shown an increase in crime, not only in neighborhoods but in schools as well. Juvenile delinquents were once viewed as rebels who dressed in leather jackets and caused trouble in “hidden places.” Today they call themselves “gangbangers” because of the semi-automatic weapons they use to terrorize neighborhoods. The teenagers living in the Silvana Apartments were gangbangers. As our parents labored in the fields from dawn to dusk, the only “after school program” for us was “causing trouble.”

Purpose

For years I watched my parents suffer as they worked long hours for small wages and tried to show my siblings and me to value the importance of an education. They told, and retold, their stories of exhausting, brutal days laboring in the fields and they explained why we should not follow in their footsteps. Following their footsteps meant dead end jobs, no formal education, and twelve- hour workdays. These emotional moments are what caused me to change. Seeing them suffering physically and financially, I decided through their encouragement, and my own initiative, to change my life. Redirecting my life included taking school more seriously by studying, reading about important events and facts for my classes, not “running around” with the local gang anymore, and respecting my parent’s struggles in an ever-changing world by adhering to the values they had wanted to instill in me from birth. Eventually, I became the first in my family to graduate from a university. Today, I want to help those from a similar background to find a way to pursue some post-secondary education.

Research Questions

As a teacher in my community of Silvana, and an advocate for education beyond high school, I am interested in exploring why so many Mexican/Latinos living in Silvana do not pursue an education beyond high school, and why they turn to gang membership? Also, what are some of the things we can do to get more of Silvana youth going on to higher learning institutions? Can an after school program help with this? They revert to gang membership for several reasons or, as one teacher put it, "To feel connected-to belong and feel secure. A type of "family." A counselor at Millet High School in Silvana added, "For a sense of belonging, they've been either not loved or not wanted for years and the gang will "take care" of them. Also, once in a gang it becomes a generational thing. My grandpa, my dad, my brother they did it and so will I." Most gangbangers know and understand the consequences involved in "running" with a gang. They are willing to pay the price to be "loved" by the "family." Paying the price may involve drugs, violence, incarceration, and torture to others and one's own immediate family members.

I conducted interviews with two adult volunteers, one male and one female, which have classified themselves as gang members. Now, they both want to pursue a higher education and stop running with the local gang. The interviewees live in Silvana and did not pursue an education beyond high school. The purpose of the interviews were to identify the factors that lead to gang membership and what made these two individuals decide to not pursue post-secondary education immediately after high school.

I filmed an after school program which included visitations to post secondary institutions. I filmed a variety of activities for ten to fifteen minutes each day we met.

Four high school students, who classified themselves as gang members, will be the students involved in an after school program for twelve weeks. The students are under eighteen years of age, live in Silvana, and were willing to stay after school two days a week. The twelve-week program included, but was not limited to, team building, academic learning (English and Mathematics), sports activities, and computer literacy. Also, there were visitations to higher learning institutions, such as Hartnell College; Monterey Peninsula College; Heald Business College; California State University, Monterey Bay. In these twelve weeks I met with the four students twice a week for an hour to see if an after school program with structure, led by a positive role model, would help them decide to pursue a post-secondary education and a life away from gangs. This program was designed to develop high self-esteem, increase literacy and knowledge in the areas of math and computers. Math and reading literacy was the focus so that the students were exposed to the type of questions on the math and reading proficiency exams needed to graduate from high school. My hopes for an end product would be to have them turn away from gangs and pursue a higher education. Second Chance Youth Coordinator Brain Contreras (Interview 2002) states, "its like a right of passage (to be in gangs) now they gotta do it, everybody's done it, it's cool, they say we gotta hook up with a barrio (gang), if it's just for a short time, to say I've put in my time."

What is computer, math, and English literacy in this study?

Literacy according to Merriam Webster's School Dictionary is the "ability to read and write characterized by education and culture." To me, the after school program in literacy meant receiving basic skills and giving them tools to increase ways to find

answers. I felt every one of the participants has the potential to reach their optimum "literacy" level and this is where we wanted each of them to get by going and tapping in on their prior knowledge. Most of the English, math, and computer literacy were done in the classroom and in the computer lab. The environment in the classroom and in the computer lab was a relaxed setting. Students could help each other and work in-groups of three and four in order to find answers. There was no real way to show how much growth the four participants had in these three areas of literacy. Going to school from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and testing the participants to show growth would have made them uneasy and probably scared them away altogether. The relaxed setting increased the depth of skills and competency in all three areas from where they started at the beginning of the program to what they accomplished at the end of the program.

In English literacy, the students were exposed to daily oral language, which included sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Students also wrote on different scenarios given by the teacher. We then wrote about the different scenarios and discussed them as a group. In math literacy it included sample questions from the math proficiency exam and state exit exam to better prepare the students for the math proficiency exam and state exit exams. In computer literacy the students surfed the web to find areas of interest such as cars, sports, and class assignments/projects. Moreover, I exposed them to Microsoft Word since two out of four were never introduced to Microsoft Word.

The information gathered would be a tool for teachers and parents to examine so they can begin to understand and identify characteristics in their students and children that may lead to gang membership or the lack of desire to pursue post-secondary

education. School personnel including a teacher, a guidance counselor, and the school's on-site probation officer, will be interviewed, to indicate what they think some of the factors are that can help contribute to Silvana's youth wanting to pursue a higher education.

Why visitations to higher learning institutions and sports related activities?

The visitations, I felt were necessary to help aid the participants envisioning themselves at a post-secondary institution. The visitations motivated them to "experience college life" as we walked around the different campuses, talked to academic counselors, and visited certain classes. The college experience was moving and inspirational as they looked in awe at the different post secondary institutions. I also wanted them to see people of similar cultural backgrounds enrolled at these institutions to help inspire them a little more. The purpose of the filming was to have each of them along with family members look back and see themselves "actually there" walking, talking, and inside of the different facilities at these institutions.

The sports related activities were implemented to promote sportsmanship, teamwork, and leadership. The majority of the filming was done in the weight room and in the gymnasium. Students participated in sports such as basketball, football, and weight training. The purpose of the filming was to show good sportsmanship and to have the participants be leaders at some point in the sports related activities. The whole purpose of the *imovie* was to show the participants, staff members, and parents the type of after school program they were involved in and the things they did throughout the two months in the after school program.

Demographics of School

Millet High School is a public 9-12 high school located in Silvana a few miles from the middle school and elementary school. Millet High School is the lone high school in Silvana, and it caters to about 1,600 students. In the Wasc (2000-2001), report the ethnic breakdown of Millet High School is as follows: 50% White, 46.5 % Mexican/Latino, 2% Asian, 1% African American, and 0.5% other. Millet High School first opened in 1978 and its first "official" graduating class was in the summer of 1982. In 1998, 60% of Millet High School graduates completed courses required for entry into California State and University of California colleges. Millet High School currently has a low dropout rate of 2%, with a total of 12 students who dropped out in 1999-2000.

Participants

I have selected one male and one female living in Silvana, who have classified themselves as gang members. They are over the age of eighteen, and did not pursue a post-secondary education. In addition, four students who attend Millet High School in Silvana, who are under the age of eighteen, and also classify themselves as gang members will be included. The criteria for their selection was as follows:

* Interviewed Participants:

- Silvana resident
- Mexican/Latino identity
- No Post Secondary education
- Eighteen years or older

- Volunteered to be interviewed after I approached them at the Silvana Recreation Center after a basketball game in which they talked about resenting not having pursued a higher education and instead having membership in the local gang.

* After School Program Participants:

- Silvana resident
- Mexican/Latino identity
- Under eighteen years old
- High school students
- Gang affiliation
- Can stay after school two days a week for one hour

This project also explores explicitly ethnic issues, it examines the reasons why so many Mexican/Latino youths living in Silvana don't pursue an education beyond high school. I want to look at their school experiences, the role models in their lives (or lack thereof), and what programs have been available to them, if any, while in school. I also want to examine their families and specifically what the parents' educational backgrounds and feelings about school are. I became interested in this project because many of my friends, cousins, and uncles, who are of Mexican decent, living in Silvana, did not graduate from high school and joined the local gang, either before or after high school. Today, many of them want to get back into an educational program that will enable them to get a better paying job.

The literature speaks to the many problems Mexican/Latinos are facing in our

schools today. It examines how the media impacts our children to do things that are unacceptable such as drugs, gang participation, and verbal abuse to teachers and parents. It also discusses the experiences that Mexican/Latino gang members are experiencing during their educational journeys. Most of the interviews that were conducted expressed the negative attitudes many Mexican/Latinos feel towards the school system regarding their inability to assimilate. One of the ways they felt they could "fit in" was to join a gang. The gang offered a feeling of being "wanted" and "accepted", unlike the school setting. The end product I'm ideally looking for is to have more Mexican/Latino youths choosing an education beyond high school, whether it is college, a university, or a trade school, instead of choosing gang membership. This is very important to me because friends, cousins and uncles regret not going on and getting a higher education. The problems that stopped them in the first place were feelings of not being accepted in schools, gang involvement, lack of role models, and lack of support such as an after school program.

Living in Silvana my whole life, and being affiliated with gangs at an early age, I was going down the same road that many of Silvana's youth are headed in today. Furthermore, I want to help those who have doubts in themselves about post-secondary institutions to see that anything is possible with hard work and dedication. I want to be a role model who provides the guidance and inspiration necessary for their educational success. I want to find out if an after school program that involves academics, team building, sports, and visitations to higher learning institutions will encourage Silvana's youth to pursue an education beyond high school. I also want to understand what may have worked with these four students in the after school program which can then be used

as a “yardstick” by which other programs can be measured.

Considerations and Constraints

I saw minimal limitations involved in this project, since the subjects signed an “Informed Consent Page” and they could refuse to participate or ask that any information be withheld. All involved were able to view the video before it was submitted, or seen by anyone else. If inappropriate language, gestures, signs, or actions were used in the filming, they would have been edit out with a bleep or a blur to avoid any problems. The students were fully aware that everything was supervised, in a school setting, and all school rules apply in terms of action and behavior. I understand names can’t be changed in the *imovie*, since their faces are being shown, but for the written portion of the thesis, names were be changed.

One limitation the project was that some students would not finish the after school program for one reason or another. In the end all four of my participants finished the after school program. The solution to this problem was the alternative list of students who were willing to fill in if another student wanted to drop out of the after school program. The fact that there was a waiting list told me that this program is very desirable.

Chapter Two

“When I brought the book American Me (which portrays Chicano life) to my high school English class instead of the required Preludes, by Wadsworth, my teacher admonished me with these words: ‘Young man, you don’t decide the assignments in this class. If you can’t participate like the rest of us, I suggest you leave.’ I did, and I stopped going to the high school all together.”

**Poet Luis J. Rodriquez
Teaching in Tensions, pg. 4**

Literature Review

Friends, family members, and I have several stories and school experiences similar to Luis J. Rodriquez’. Close friends and family members turned away from school because they felt isolated and stereotyped there. I started hanging around with friends who had similar experiences. Disinterested in school, I decided to join the local gang. Deputy Police Officer and school resource officer Archie F. Warren of the Monterey County Sheriff’s Department stated, “The youth gang member is likely to be a poor student with little or no identification with the school or staff. He/She does not like school and only comes to school because the law or for social interaction that may be gang related.” According to Burnett (1999) four factors are primary in the formation of juvenile gangs:

- 1) The youth experiences a sense of alienation and powerlessness because of a lack of traditional support structures, such as family and school. This can lead to feelings of frustration and anger, and a desire to obtain support outside of traditional institutions.
- 2) Gang membership gives youth a sense of belonging and becomes a major

source of identity for its members. In turn, gang membership affords youth a sense of power and control, and gang activities become an outlet for their anger.

- 3) The control of turf is essential to the well being of the gang, which often will use force to control both its territory and members.
- 4) Recruitment of new members and expansion of territory are essential if a gang is to remain strong and powerful.

These are the reasons I associated with the local gang. At times I felt isolated at school and anger began to set in. Joining the local gang gave me a sense of belonging and power. With this in mind we caused havoc in the neighborhood, since it was our "turf." Eventually, younger children and teenagers wanted to be a part of our gang.

The literature researched also speaks to other reasons why teenagers join gangs. Some of these reasons include, but are not limited to, protection against victimization, sense of belonging, and "action affiliation" as quoted by Esbensen and Piper (1999). They mainly discussed that the reasons that teenagers (males and/or females) turn to gang membership is because they are isolated or neglected in our schools and this in turn leads to violent behavior in our schools. Making the problem even worse, discussed by Tellez and Estep (1997-98), is the lack of involvement and negative attitudes Latinos had in the schooling system because they did not feel "included". The article was conducted after numerous interviews with eight former gang members who went to high school. It clearly states, "This body of work has concluded that schools have flatly failed in their social mission to educate Latino Gang Members." Some of the student experiences with

teachers were not all negative, but as a whole they felt "isolated". One particular student said, "Teachers lose respect for you when they find out you are in a gang." We have to understand as a society that some children live in poverty and are not capable of having some resources necessary for academic success. Including these students more and making them feel "wanted" might motivate some of those students to improve and start taking school more seriously.

Over the past decade, gangs have dramatically impacted American Society. Not only has the number of gangs increased, but also the level of their criminal activity has been alarming. Some researchers estimate that the number of gangs increased 241% in just two years (from 1991-1993); and they report that over 580,000 gang-related crimes occurred in a single year, 1993. (Chase, 1996 Pg.2). Most of the research supports how students who are in gangs are treated differently than those who are not in gangs. It speaks to the many problems Mexican/Latinos are facing in our schools today. Boothe and Bradley (1999) speak about the impact the media has on our children to do things such as join gangs, do drugs, and verbally abuse teachers and parents. They also discuss the lack of parent involvement and the need of teacher training. This article summarizes the truth about how children are influenced by such as violence, drugs, gangs, and verbal abuse from the newspapers, televisions and magazines. The worst thing we can do to these children is give up on them at an early stage. Abandonment is only going to make these problems worse.

Esbensen and Piper-Deschenes (1999), show that both boys and girls are similar in their attitudes, friends, and involvement in dangerous activities, but boys still commit more crimes on the average. Girls will tend to join gangs at a much faster rate than boys,

especially between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. It is evident that both girls and boys need similar attention and support in order to succeed in our schooling system. If they feel some sense of isolation they will revert to gangs in order to obtain some emotional fulfillment or a sense of belonging.

Thompkins (2000) says gangs offer excitement, in contrast to the mundane; a challenge to be someone; freedom to those youths who are powerless; love for one's fellow gang members; a mutual loyalty with the intensity and commitment of "blood brothers". He states that students between the ages of twelve and eighteen were victims of approximately 225,000 incidents of nonfatal violent crimes in school and approximately 671,000 incidents outside of school. These statistics will continue to rise if we are not careful.

In 1996, Census Bureau reports made the projection that persons of Hispanic/Latino origin would total more than 31,000 by the year 2000. This would be 14% of the nation's total population. At the same time, the school drop out rate for Hispanic/Latinos has become the highest among all groups in the United States; 30% of Hispanics/Latinos, 13% of blacks, and 8% of whites dropped out in 1994. (Kantz, 1999, Pg.3).

In *Made in America*, immigrant students in our public schools express their alienation in high school and how they feel a sense of isolation immediately impacting their lives. One student put it best when she told her story about her arrival to America. She had just come from Mexico, and wore a serape on her first day of school. "It was a beautiful serape that my uncle had given to me when I left home. It is woven green and brown and is very soft and warm. I was excited on my first day that I could wear it to

school. But it did not feel beautiful when I got there. It felt wrong.” (Olsen, 1998, pg. 45). In “Gangs and a Culture of Fear,” it discusses the increase of media coverage of certain cultures/ethnicities that has helped “fuel the level of fear within our schools and communities.” We have to take time to educate our children about the many stereotypes that exist and the beautiful aspects of other cultures. These two books target the same idea about how students who are in gangs, or are from a different culture other than European White, are basically excluded throughout their schooling experiences.

In 1993, the National Education Association estimated that 100,000 youngsters carried guns to school everyday and that some 2000 students and 40 teachers were attacked every hour. Chase (1993). There seems to be no doubt that the level of fear has increased among students, parents, teachers, and community members.

Is there a correlation between gang membership and low levels of socioeconomic status as measured by father’s education? According to Richard Dukes and Ruben Martinez (1997), respondents whose fathers had not graduated from high school, 14% (113 out of 821) reported being gang members. Those respondents living with their parents only 5% (495 out of 10,391) were gang members. They also showed that adults viewed fighting, violence, and gangs as the biggest problem confronting public schools and results indicated that nearly one in twenty youths in public secondary schools are active at some time or another. The six participants in the study have all classified themselves as gang members and their parents (all have mother and father living in the home), did not get a high school diploma or equivalent. In Silvana, there is a correlation between gang membership and low levels of socioeconomic status as measured by father and mother’s education.

I asked Shorty if she liked school, or if she felt isolated or neglected when she was growing up. The Silvana female gang member responded, "Yeah, by some teachers I felt isolated. They tended to show favoritism towards athletes, cheerleaders, and white people. The teachers that had to do with the school programs like sports, band, and dance were really bad. They really favored the white kids." When asked why she got into gangs, Shorty responded, "Well, I started hanging out because there was nothing else to do, and you know, the guys that I grew up with were all pretty much felt the same way. So we started hanging out, drinking and partying, since there was nothing else to do."

Miranda, like Shorty, is a male gang member living in Silvana. He also resents not pursuing an education beyond high school. When asked how he got involved gangs, Miranda's response was, "I started hanging out with my friends, I mean, you know, um, drinking every weekend, partying and getting into trouble. We got into fights, broke into stores and this is how it all started." Both Miranda and Shorty attribute their gang membership to a sense of isolation and favoritism of "opposite races" in school. They now see the need to get more kids involved in some type of after school program(s). Miranda said, "Have some programs that get the attention of the kids which makes them want to go. You know, so they'll stay off the streets, and look into what they want to do later, because, you know, um, I see things like kids hanging out with gang members and doing stuff they shouldn't. Like, if there were programs I was interested in, I wouldn't be in gangs, and I done the things I did. You know, um, like sports, I like to play basketball. If they had these programs, it would have helped me. If they would have had sports all year long, this would have kept me occupied and off the streets and not causing all kinds of trouble." Shorty agreed, "Yes, growing up in Silvana I know first hand that there is

nothing out there for kids to do. (Cough) There is nothing, um, for them except for them to get into trouble. They don't even have a theater or entertainment to pass the time. The only other alternative is drinking and partying and hanging out with their friends. That's what leads to them getting into trouble."

Dukes and Martinez (1997) showed that adults viewed fighting, violence, and gangs as the biggest problem confronting public schools and results indicated that nearly one in twenty youths in public secondary schools are active at some time or another. I believe parents, teachers, and staff members need to work together to establish a positive learning environment where every student regardless of style, color, class, or attire is viewed equally. I know from personal experience that I was looked at differently and it almost cost me my motivation to pursue a higher education. The data collected clearly shows the problem of gangs and violence does exist, but if we continue to ignore it, it will only get worse. Possible solutions could be intervention programs such as after school study halls, team-building programs, or sports programs that are open to everybody. Teachers and staff members at Millet High School say they want to adapt the curriculum to make everybody feel included by exposing students to different ethnic backgrounds. There is hope that some day everybody will be viewed equally and fairly. Thomkins (2000) states that students between the ages of twelve and eighteen were victims of approximately 225, 000 incidents of nonfatal violent crimes in school and approximately 671,000 incidents outside of school will continue to rise if we are not careful. I don't know the exact key to success, but I do know that the key to failure is not making others feel accepted and wanted in our schools and in society. The more we work together, the more I believe that it takes a whole community to raise a child!

Any Similar Studies?

The research conducted did not uncover any after school or extended learning program that is similar to the one being conducted at Millet High School and around the community. However, there are several program geared to help youths. Salinas Valley State Prison has adopted a program called CODE 4, where inmates serve as counselors and try to get to the root causes for their behavior. They educate "at-risk" youths about a life in gangs, drugs, violence, and incarceration. "Yes to Art, No To Gangs", is a program supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and is helping kids stay away from gangs through art. YARD (Youth at Risk Dancing) at Cleveland's School of the Arts provides dancing training for young men and Seattle's Experimental Gallery at the Children's Museum, which exhibits work of juvenile offenders enrolled in creative writing and drama classes. Bloom (1998), an elementary school teacher in the surrounding school district of Millet High School has implemented a program that exposes children to college at an early age. She motivates students to consider college, imagine college life through worksheets, activities, surveys, interviews, and brainstorming. The end result is a visit to a college campus where children are placed in separate groups and exposed to different activities throughout the day. These programs are come closest to what I've conducted at Millet High School and around my community.

Chapter Three

“Kids don’t grow out of gangs, they grow into gangs”

Tony Coleman, St. Louis Police officer

Gangs in School Targeted by Lisa Robinett

Research Design/Perspective

The research design that I used was an emancipatory study format. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) discussed the emic and etic perspectives. I took an in-dept look at my own environment and this look was from an emic perspective. The emic perspective is suitable for this study, since I’m a single male who grew up in Silvana where the research took place. It also takes a view from the etic perspective, because as much as I was around the gang members at an early age, I also got out of that environment and now I’m “on the outside, looking in”. It seems as if emancipatory knowledge comes from an oppressed group, through experiences and usually from your own culture. The person or group being oppressed gets to validate it through personal experiences, and the people who will benefit from it are those who did not know what they were doing (or not doing) was truly hurting others. Changes and awareness seem to dominate emancipatory knowledge. Since the people who have participated in this study are from Silvana and all attended Millet High School, and at one time or another have felt oppression at some time. It was time to try and make changes for the future.

What, When and Where?

Since many children who are residents of Silvana come from a family where both parents are field and packing shed laborers, whose median total income is \$32,000, an education after high school is secondary to many other things. Day after day, stories are heard about regret and fallen dreams of pursuing an education beyond high school.

The study that I designed included an after school program. In the twelve weeks of the program, I filmed the participants on visitations to higher learning institutions such as Hartnell College, California State University, Monterey Bay, Monterey Peninsula College, Heald Business College. They were filmed walking around the different institutions, talking to college counselors, and visiting college classrooms. This was necessary in order to see themselves in a position as students, and to inspire them to further pursue the goal of becoming students at one or other institutions similar to the one's visited. When the *imovie* was shown in full with the music playing a huge reaction from the four could be heard throughout my classroom. They pointed at each other laughed and remarked "look were in college" as they walked around the different campuses as shown in the *imovie*. The after school program also included, but was not limited to, team building, academic learning (English and Mathematics), sports activities, and computer literacy. The majority of the study took place in Silvana and at Millet High School. It also included the surrounding areas of the Central Coast. The filming of the literacy classes was to show them that they have the ability to get better and increase their literacy levels daily, the filming of the sports related activities was to promote leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

I met with the students two times a week for an hour to see if an after school program with structure, lead by a positive role model, will help them decide to pursue a post secondary education, along with a life away from gangs. The after school program is designed to expose these students to the possibility of an education beyond high school.

Research Subjects/Participants

The four participants in my after school program are Silvana residents who have classified themselves as Mexican and gang members, are under the age of eighteen, and can stay after school two days a week. Two of the participants are twin brothers whose parents were born in Mexico and came to the United States at the age of seven. "Casper" and "Montana" are seniors at Millet High School. Casper is 3 minutes older than Montana. Both are 5 feet 9 inches tall, with slender builds, coffee colored skin and moustaches. Montana and Casper speak English with an accent and both revert back and forth between the two languages (English and Spanish) when they are not sure of the correct English words to use. Spanish is the primary language spoken at home. Casper and Montana's dad is a mechanic and the mother is a housewife. Casper and Montana are the oldest of three children. At the start of the study, Casper and Montana had not thought of the prospect of going to college, even though they are both on target to graduate from Millet High School this year.

My third participant is "Mike", a fifteen-year-old sophomore at Millet High School. Mike is a short, stocky, baby faced teenager who is full of energy. Mike comes from a family of gangs and a few years ago lost a brother to them.

Mike's father and mother were both born in Mexico and came to the United States soon after they married. Mike and his brothers and sisters were all born in the United States. Mike's father is a field laborer and his mother is a housewife. Mike is the youngest of eight children.

My last participant is "Antonio." Antonio is also a sophomore at Millet High School. He stands about 5 feet 7 inches and is a pudgy kid with tan colored skin and the beginnings of a moustache. Antonio's parents were also born in different parts of Mexico. Antonio is the youngest of seven children, all born in the United States. Antonio's father is a mechanic for a company in Silvana and his mother is a housewife.

All four of my participants identified themselves as Mexican. They were also asked individually to pick their own pseudonym and all responded relatively quickly to their pseudonym name. They thought this was a cool idea to let them pick their own names.

Two females were also invited to be a part of this after school program and both had agreed to join. Unfortunately, they had obligations at home immediately after school and had to opt out before the program even began. The four students are important to the study because they have visions of pursuing some post-secondary education and they have discussed living a prosperous lifestyle that includes family and job security. While in my class, I invited them to discuss the visions I had of my study and allowed them to add some of their own suggestions. I told them that I would expose them to different post-secondary institutions in order to aid in their goals of an education beyond high school. They were ecstatic to be able to go on visitations to higher learning institutions and to see the process that it takes to become a student at one of these institutions.

During the study I also approached one male (Miranda) and one female (Shorty) who are Silvana residents, Mexican/Latino identity, and over the age of eighteen and I asked them if they would volunteer to be interviewed for my study. Neither had pursued a post-secondary education and had regrets about not doing so. We first talked after a basketball game at the Silvana Recreation Center and they openly spoke of the regret they felt for not pursuing any post-secondary education and their membership in the local gang. I chose these two individuals because they now want to pursue some post-secondary education and they don't want more teenagers living in Silvana to follow in their earlier footsteps. Following in their footsteps means low-paying jobs, no education beyond high school, and gang membership. The interviews tell the reasons why they joined a gang and why they did not pursue some post-secondary education and some advice of what we can do these days to help youths in Silvana be more successful.

Finally, I asked one teacher, our school resource officer, and a counselor at Millet High School, to fill out a questionnaire that asked questions such as: "Why do people join gangs?" "What can we do to eliminate the problem of gangs in schools?" and "What can we do to help more Silvana residents pursue some post-secondary education?" The teacher I chose volunteered to fill out the questionnaire. She has dealt with gang members in her classroom and has had a positive impact on their lives with her strict rules and stories about her life growing up in New York. The school resource officer and counselor also volunteered to fill out the questionnaire and are involved with trying to get kids to stay away from gangs and drugs, and are also encouraging them to go pursue some post-secondary education. The teacher, resource officer, and counselor have had a big impact on the lives of many teenagers at Millet High School.

Collection of Data

Throughout my project, I gathered my data through interviews and documents such as pictures, filming, questionnaires, observations and the final product of the *i-movie*. I interviewed each of the six participants for about twenty to thirty minutes individually. The adult participants who volunteered to be interviewed (Shorty and Miranda) were only interviewed once. They were not part of the after-school program. Both allowed me to let me interview them at their own homes. Each of the four participants who attend Millet High School was also interviewed for about twenty minutes. All four participants were interviewed at Millet High School in the classroom where I teach. These four Millet High School students were part of the after-school program. Each time we met in the after school program it was filmed for about ten minutes on the day's activity. Activities ranged from visitations to higher learning institutions, math and English literacy exercises, computer literacy work, and sports activities. Students, parents/guardians, and myself all signed an informed consent page and this gave me the permission to transport the participants to and from activities located at Millet High School and around the community. Observations were also conducted with the four participants each time we meet in the after school program. A teacher, a counselor, and the school resource officer filled out the questionnaires. All three have been instrumental in trying to help students at Millet High School go on to an education beyond high school and escape the gang life. The end product of the filming and pictures is to develop an *I-movie* to see if an after school program is instrumental in helping Silvana residents pursue some post-secondary education in the future and to expose them to several secondary institutions.

Developing the After School Program

I developed this after school program because from experience in living in Silvana, many children and young teenagers need some structured support programs after the final bell has rung to end their school days. From 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. many of Silvana's youths take to the streets in search of "something to do", while parents are still completing ten to twelve hour workdays. The Boys and Girls Clubs of the surrounding community about ten miles from Silvana adds to the need for more structured and supervised after school activities. "Campaign 3 p.m." is the theme of National Boys and Girls Club, which begins the week of April 7th to April 14th. The campaign is intended to draw attention to the importance of providing afternoon activities to give youngsters something to do to keep them away from drugs and violence. The unit director for the Boys and Girls Club of the Salinas Valley adds, "They should be doing homework and some kind of structured activity and not running the streets." I was no different, as a youth with no parents at home, no after school programs available, no movie theater to visit, no shopping mall to wander, and a seldom-used community center in Silvana in which to play. "Hanging out" with friends and creating our own fun, which often involved troublesome activities was the thing to do. With little advice from counselors at school and little motivation from teachers running with the gang it became evident that school was a distant second and my priorities were hanging out with the gang. Today, I want more offered more to Silvana's youth than I had when I was young. This is the primary reason why I developed this after school program, to expose more of Silvana's

youth to computer literacy, sports activities, visitations to higher learning institutions, and, of course, a life away from gangs.

There are a few biases of people growing up in Silvana, especially within the younger generation. One is that Silvana people don't take school seriously and parents would rather have their kids go to work instead of going to school. Another bias is that most teenagers look up to those who are in gangs and eventually they too will join the local gang. The last bias is that Silvana parents work dead end jobs and eventually their kid's end up working with them at the same job site. Biases in Silvana can be heard throughout the town and only a very few who are college graduates actually get treated with respect. Biases keep many Silvana people from going to college because they start believing that the biases are true.

Chapter Four

**"Bangin' ain't no part-time thang, it's full-time, it's a career.
It's bein' down when ain't nobody else down with you.
It's getting' caught and not tellin'. Killin' and not carin',
and dyin' without fear. It's love for your set and hate
for the enemy."**

**Monster: The Autobiography of
an L.A. Gang Member (pg. 12)**

As a researcher I have looked at the interviews, and the filming of the after school program, and the reactions of the students. This is my description and analysis of the project.

The two adults, Shorty and Miranda, stated that there needs to be some type of an after school program available for kids. One where they can play sports, learn computers, or get help with homework in classroom work sites after school. This will keep them in the "learning mode", so they stay interested in school. It should be structured and run by a role model to which they can look up to such as a teacher, parent, college student, or a community member. "You have to talk to a lot of kids to see what they are interested in, like what main programs," added Miranda.

The interview with Miranda and Shorty also revealed that there was favoritism towards the other races/ethnic backgrounds when they attended school. They were adamant about how teachers in the schools need to expose children to the different cultures and celebrate diversity throughout the year. "They tended to have favoritism towards athletes, cheerleaders and white people. Especially the teachers who had to do with the school programs they favored just white kids and those involved in sports and band or those who danced for the school," commented a disappointed Shorty. Olsen

(1998) offers similar reactions as immigrant students in our public schools express their alienation in high school and how a sense of isolation is immediately impacting their lives.

As for why the participants joined gangs, both Shorty and Miranda discussed that with little to do they joined the local gang. "Well, I started hanging out because there was nothing else to do, and you know the guys who I grew up with were all pretty much in the same predicament, so we started hanging out, drinking and partying since there was nothing else to do," stated Shorty. Moreover, Miranda added, "Well, uh, yea, I started hanging out with them and you know doing the same things with them. I mean you know, drinking every weekend, partying, getting into trouble like fights and breaking into stores." They both agree that there needs to be some "attention getter" that keeps kids interested in an after school program. Lastly, they both believe teachers and counselors should expose more high school students (Mexican/Latino) to options they can pursue for post-secondary education. They both regret not pursuing post-secondary education. Shorty has one regret "the only regret would be that I should have looked for information about going to school since nobody ever told me about it. I had to investigate myself and found nothing, so I was basically stuck."

Statistics show the increased drop out rate for Hispanics/Latinos has become the highest among all groups in the United States, 30% dropped out in 1994. In addition to this, Tellez and Estep (1997-98) support this by adding, "It clearly states, this body of work has concluded that schools have flatly failed their mission to educate Latino gang members."

The interviews of the four participants in the after school program discussed

similar reactions to the reasons why people join gangs. Montana stated, "When I was growing up there was a lot of gangs around me and when I met them, they liked me and I started hanging out with them. I did drugs and drank beer." Mike, Casper, and Antonio responded that family involvement in gangs was the reason they joined the local gang. Antonio added, "Family members got me into gangs. I earned respect by hanging around with them and this got me more and more involved with gangs." Casper was twelve when he got into gangs. "Little by little, I started getting more and more into it." Burnett (1999) offers some of the same reasons in the formation of gangs; reasons such as alienation and powerlessness, sense of belonging, control of turf, and recruitment of new members.

Shorty, Miranda, and the four after school participants all suggested Silvana needs more recreational activities for the younger children. They emphasized that it is especially necessary after school is out for the summer. "There's nothing, only the Silvana Community Center. Like it's not open everyday, they have dog training two days a week," stated Casper. Antonio added, "Have more after school programs and a school especially for them. Take kids where they get entertainment that looks forward to their future." Mike would like Silvana to have more basketball courts. "Silvana needs to have more basketball courts, or something else. The Boys and Girls Club unit director supports this and she states, "The most important time in a kid's day is between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. She adds that structured programs are a necessity because if they are not provided youths will keep running the streets. This shows that if we don't offer more structured support programs for youth, especially after school the problems we face in our communities around this nation will continue to escalate. As for Silvana's youth they are hungry for

more to do after school as quoted by Casper, Antonio, Montana, and Mike.

How Would You Use This Project and How Do I Recommend Other People Use It

This project was developed due to the lack of after school support programs offered to youths living in Silvana. As a youth, I recall little support or extended learning programs, which helped Silvana's youth academically or socially. The participants at Millet High School gave suggestions on what would interest them if an after school program similar to the one I conducted would have taken place.

From the reactions of the four participants as I observed them in the after school program, they were excited to stay and increase their self confidence by engaging in computer literacy, math and English literacy, sports/team building activities, and visitations to higher learning institutions. This program seemed to encourage those Millet High and Silvana youth to pursue some post secondary education without any fear and to see a life away from gangs. At the beginning of the after school program, they were timid and lacked some self-esteem. They were timid because, (according to the four participants) in most classes they rarely speak. They also lacked some self-esteem as one of the participant's stated, "Here we feel more better, like more like a family in the other classes were kinda of quiet and sometimes scared to talk." An example of their timid ness and lack of self-esteem showed when I asked one of them to come in front of class and talk about their future plans after high school. None of them volunteered to go first and they sat quietly, motionless, as I encouraged them over and over again to be brave.

After several weeks they were encouraging and motivating each other, and by the end of the project they were a close-knit group. Several examples of how close they

became were in their sports activities when they encouraged, strategize, and respected each other as they competed to win. In the classroom and in the computer lab there came a time where each one at some point helped each other out through a troublesome activity, problem, or situation without me advising them to do so.

From its success, I would want this project to be used as a "yard stick" by which other projects could imitate. The youths had an exciting time learning and increasing their self-confidence in their abilities to accomplish tasks they thought were not possible before the project began. The computer intimidated Montana and Casper; they did not know how to turn one of them on. After several days of working on a computer their skills, dramatically increased and by the end of the computer lessons it was difficult to lure them away. Mike had never really played sports as a youth, but football, basketball, and weight training was exposed to him and his competitive nature kept saying, "let's play one more." Due to several Math study sessions Antonio's confidence grew as the State Exit Exam in Mathematics approached. He stated, "I don't feel so scared as I did a month ago." For future programs I would actually increase the number of participants and I would meet three or four times a week as opposed to two or three time a week. I would also speak more to academic counselors who could take the participants through a step by step process of how they can enroll at the different institutions we visited. In addition, I would also keep track of how much they improved in their math, English, and computer literacy by having a pre and post test assessment of some kind that does not intimidate or makes them uneasy. Lastly, I would have them keep a log of what they did between the hours of 4:30 p.m. after the after school program has finished and the time their parents arrived home from work.

Increasing the number of participants is important, as there were many more Silvana youth interested in the project, but due to lack of transportation and some obligations to stay after school, it reduced the number to four. Meeting four times a week as opposed to two or three allows more interaction between the students and teacher. It gives students extra days in team building activities, computer literacy, math and English literacy and sports activities. It also keeps them occupied more days after school, which allows less time to be hanging around with the local gang. On our visitations to higher learning institutions we met with only one counselor of the four institutions we visited. The reasons for this were different time constraints, Spring Break, transportation accommodations, and participant schedules. The visitations were still very inspirational and moving as the youths talked about how cool and exciting it would be to join one of the institutions they visited. Math, English, and computer literacy increased, but there was no real way to measure how much these students actually grew in English, math and computer literacy. The growth was there but how much growth could not be answered. If I were to do it over again I would have some pre and post -tests that could show how much growth the participants had over several weeks or months in the different academic areas. Finally, with being a teacher in my community, coaching basketball at Millet High School, and attending school to finish my Master's Degree keeping track of what the participants did between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. when most of the participants parent's arrive home from work was too difficult to keep track of. If I were to do it over again, I would interview the guardians/parents of the participants to see where their children were when they got home from work on most days. The participants would also keep a daily journal/log on what they did after they left the after school program,

with whom they did it, and for how long to see how much time was spent on school related activities and how much time was spent with the local gang. Judging from their participation, enthusiasm, confidence and being on time to the after school program it seemed as if the participants were choosing a life away from gangs and a future towards an institution beyond high school.

The project turned out to be much better than anticipated. At the end of the project the participants wanted it to continue for several more weeks, and recruitment to the project increased week by week. The four participants had at least three to four friends who wanted to join, but lack of transportation prohibited any other members from doing so.

Chapter Five

“There are choices you have to make, not just once, but every time they come up.” - Chente

**Always Running La Vida Loca:
Gang Days in L.A. (pg. 132)**

What do I Think? What do They Mean?

From this study I learned that young teenagers who have felt isolated and alienated in our public schools need a structured support program that inspires and motivates them to pursue dreams that they thought were once impossible. Hopefully along this way comes a life away from gangs and drugs.

At the beginning of the project I envisioned having trouble getting the participants to share and to feel comfortable around myself and amongst each other. It did not take long for the participants to open up and feel comfortable in the after school program. From the observations and talking to the four participants, they enjoyed being in a program that gave them guidance and inspiration to pursue their goals as opposed to “just running with the local gang.” Looking back on the surveys and interviews which were important parts of this project, they still took a back seat to the most important part of the project, which was having the participants show up for the after school program in order for it to be taped and put into an *imovie* for others to see what took place two days a week. I constantly encouraged them to attend, especially at the beginning of the project. I motivated them by stating how special it would be to have them be the first four students to start a project that encouraged more students like themselves of Silvana to pursue a goal of a lifetime: to be a student enrolled at an institution beyond high school. On several occasions, I also provided lunch and drinks (with my own money) which sparked

more interest, and played music to their liking as they entered my classroom to start the after school program. At school, several students carried CD players and I asked them what they were listening to and this made it easy for me to pick up on the music to which they listened. So I borrowed and bought such CD's. We also discussed how other students, teachers, and community members might look at this after school program and start something similar to the one we conducted. After the first two weeks much of the same remained and they started showing up on there own and even on days we weren't scheduled to meet. By showing up on days we did not meet and visiting my classroom often, I got a good feeling that they believed in what our after school program could do for them and for others.

Gangs, violence, and drug use among teenagers is at an all time high and it will continue to rise if we are not careful. This after school program, which was implemented over two months, two times a week for about an hour, changed the way these youths who participated looked at their futures today.

Laughter, hard work, inspiration, smiles and increased self-confidence dominated the after school program. Academic learning, computer literacy, team building, sports activities and visitations to higher learning institutions, exposed these youths to activities and sights they thought never existed or would seem impossible to see or do.

This is what worked in the community of Silvana. Does it mean it would work in a major city such as Los Angeles or San Francisco? That question may never be answered, but one thing I do know is that if we continue to alienate children in our schools, gang violence, drug abuse and the drop out rate will continue to rise at an alarming rate. Gang violence, drug abuse and drop out rates are a problem not only in

Silvana, but also in other communities around the nation. It seems almost impossible that an after school program which promotes academic learning, team building activities, visitation to higher learning institutions and a positive role model would not work in any community around the nation. The more I spent time around the four participants, the more special they truly have become. To think that a drug, or being at the wrong place at the wrong time could take away the life of one of these youths because they lack self esteem, or they felt they did not "fit in" would be a devastating way to lose one of them. As the saying goes, it truly does take a whole community to raise a child.

Specific Recommendations

Speaking to the two adult participants and the four Millet High School students in the after school program, these suggestions arose: There needs to be more advice on how high school students can go about visiting different higher learning institutions and a step by step approach on how one can enroll in these institutions. All six have discussed, in one way or another, that counselors and teachers need to do a better job of informing high school students of the process of getting into higher learning institutions. Examples would be by hosting workshops, guest speakers such as former Millet High School students, and visitations to higher learning institutions.

The participants also discussed a need to have more programs for youths living in Silvana, whether it is more basketball courts, sports programs or academic learning. Something must fill the gap to occupy the time between after school and the time parents get home from work. This is the time that most youths are "looking for something to do" and it usually means running with the local gangs and getting into trouble with drugs or

the law.

Finally, most of the participants have joined gangs due to a lack of interest in school because they have felt isolated from classes and school functions. Administrators, teachers, and staff need to do a better job of including everybody by designing curricula and activities that benefit all ethnic backgrounds.

This program has had a huge impact on my life, not only were the participants eager to come, they learned to have more confidence in themselves when they approached tasks and different activities whether they were academic or sports related. Through the visits and speaking with others who are enrolled at post secondary institutions they learned that they too could be successful post secondary students with hard work and dedication. Gang Membership or Post Secondary Learning: Will these youths make the right choice? Working with them in the after school program it seems almost a sure bet each of them will make the right choice, and it's the choice I made several years ago that changed my life!

Conclusion

At the beginning of the after school program I did not have any intentions of continuing with the after school program in the years to come. I looked at this project as one of the assignments necessary to get my Master's Degree, but with the impact it had on the participant's lives I have no choice but to continue with the after school program. I plan on doing the after school program in the years to come after basketball season has ended with the intention of adding the recommendations to make it more effective. If I were to pursue a Doctorate Degree I would do a longitudinal study on the four

participants to see what they did after high school, what they are currently doing in their lives today, did they enroll and complete some post secondary education, and in their eyes was the after school program they participated in effective? These are the questions I would try to answer several years later. The Federal Government spends millions of dollars on standardized testing, which implies that test scores are more important than the rarely Federally funded after school programs which can be really effective in helping students with self-esteem, motivation, and social skills as shown in the after school program conducted at Millet High School and around the community. The test scores that students often receive usually discourage many minority students to pursue a higher education. These tests have very little in common with those living in low-income communities and their parent's educational backgrounds. We must invest our money in ways that will benefit "us all."

With little or no after school programs around Millet High School and around the community parents, teachers, and community members need to be aware of some possible early signs in children who may be involved in gangs and drugs, as quoted in the Salinas Californian (2001) issue. If academic performance plummets does that mean your child is involved with gangs and drugs? Probably not, but if a few of these warning signs are happening at the same time you probably need to be aware that he/she needs help, advice or counseling in order to get through these tough times. The longer we wait or if we ignore these possible warning signs the harder the task becomes.

Warning Signs

Early signs for parents and teachers that children may be involved in gangs:

- Academic performance plummets

- Little or no involvement with school
- Getting tattoos or is marking their skin
- Uses gang graffiti on items such as book covers or folders
- Starts to use tobacco, alcohol or drugs
- Changes friends and hangouts
- Suddenly wants or is buying clothing of all one color (specifically blue or red)
- Changes hair style
- Uses graffiti on personal property such as clothing, schoolbooks, etc.
- Uses hand signals
- Relatives are or have been gang members
- Becomes suddenly argumentative or develops rebellious attitude towards teachers and parents
- Wants too much privacy suddenly
- Is being disciplined excessively

Advice for Parents

A Roosevelt Elementary School teacher gives the following tips to help parents keep their children out of gangs:

- Spend time with your children. Occupy their time
- Develop good communication with your child
- Set limits, rules, and maybe laws with your children
- Do not allow your children to stay out late or spend lots of unsupervised time at home or on the streets
- Do not allow your children to write or practice writing gang names, symbols

or other gang graffiti on walls or on their books, papers, or clothes

- Discourage your children from hanging around with gang members
- Learn about gang and drug activity in your community
- Participate in your children's education. Take an interest in their school activities
- Get involved in your community. Know your neighbors.

Contreras (Interview 2002) when asked what can we do to diminish gangs and violence he added, "Education for parents at an early age about gangs and violence. Parents education programs and those parents who are involved (with gangs) counseling, redirection, help, whatever intensive work they need, then place them with jobs. That's the only way. Parents need to accept the fact that their kids are in gangs and there should be no denial."

The literature, interviews, and books clearly support that Mexican/Latinos have been alienated in our schools. The struggle to "fit in" and feel valued has been the biggest challenge in the past and in the present. It took two months, two days a week, for an hour a day, for four classified gang members named Montana, Mike, Casper and Antonio to feel valued and now they look at life a little differently because somebody cared about their feelings, emotions and struggles. Shouldn't you be that person in your community? Now, only the big question remains: Will it be Gang Membership or Post Secondary Learning? Only time will tell!

Bibliography

- Boothe, James E. and Bradley, Leo H. 1995. America's Schools Confront Violence. USA Today Magazine. Vol. 122, Issue 2584, Pg. 33.
- Burnett, Gary and Walz, Gary. 1999. Gangs in School. Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education. Digest Number 99, Pgs. 1-4.
- Dukes, Richard L. and Martinez, Ruben O. December 1997. Precursors and Consequences of Membership in Youth Gangs. Youth and Society. Vol. 27, Issue 2, Pg. 139.
- Emerson, Robert M., Fretz, Rachel I. And Shaw, Linda M. 1995. Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. The University of Chicago Press.
- Esbensen, Finn-Age and Piper Deschenes, Elizabeth. September 1999. Differences Between Gang Girls and Gang Boys. Youth and Society. Vol. 31, Issue 1, Pg. 27.
- Katz, Susan Roberta. 1999. Teaching in Tensions: Latino Immigrant Youth, Their Teachers, and the Structures of Schooling. Teacher College Record. Vol. 100, Issue 4, Pgs. 1-24.
- North Monterey County High School Focus on Learning Self Study prepared for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, California State Department of Education. 2000-20001.
- Olsen, Laurie and Kohl, Herbert R. 1998. Made In America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools. The New Press, New York, New York.
- Robinett, Lisa. 1995. Gangs in Schools Targeted. Missouri Digital News. Pgs. 1-2.
- Rodriguez, Luis J. 1993. Always Running: La Vida Loca Gang Days in Fast L.A. Touchstone Corporation.
- Scott, Kody. 1993. Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member. The Atlantic Monthly Press. New York, New York.
- Stonebloom, Katy and McCue, Linda. 1998. Introducing Kids to College: A Curriculum Guide for Intermediate Grades to Accompany Kids Around the University.
- Tellez, Kip and Estep, Michelle. December 1997/January 1998. Latino Youth Gangs and the Meaning of School. High School Journal. Vol. 81, Issue 2, Pg. 69.
- The Salinas Californian. April 5, 2002. A Gannett Newspaper. Vol. 143, No. 81.

The Salinas Californian. November 12, 2001. A Gannett Newspaper. Vol. 142, No. 274.

Thompkins, Douglass E. January 2000. School Violence: Gangs and a Culture of Fear. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Academy. Vol. 567, Pg. 54.

Verdugo, Richard. 1997. Youth Gangs: Findings and Solutions for Schools, Communities, and Families. National Education Association.

Wolcott, Jennifer. 1998. Yes to Art, No to Gangs. Christian Science Monitor. Vol. 90, Issue 226, Pg. 81.

Interviews

Brian Contreras, March 2002

Shorty, November 2001

Miranda, November 2001

Casper, February 2002

Montana, February 2002

Mike, February 2002

Antonio, February 2002

Appendix A

Student Participant Interview Questions

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What do you want to do after high school?
- 3) How did you get into gangs?
- 4) Do you ever feel isolated or neglected at school?
- 5) What do you think teachers and counselors need to do in order to get more high school students to go on to college?
- 6) What does Silvana or Millet High School offer for entertainment?
- 7) When school is over what do you do when you get home?
- 8) When you were younger, in Elementary/Junior High School, was there any after school program you remember?

Appendix B

Millet High School Staff Questionnaire
(Answered by a teacher, School Resource Officer, and counselor)

- 1) What is your view on gangs?
- 2) What things are you or the school doing in order to eliminate the problem of gangs at Millet?
- 3) Why do you think people join gangs?
- 4) How do you deal with students in gangs who are in your class?
- 5) How do you identify students who are in gangs?
- 6) What do we need to do in order to get more Silvana/Millet High School students going on to post-secondary institutions?

Appendix C

Adult Participant Interview Questions

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) How long have you lived in Silvana?
- 3) Where did you grow up in Silvana – a house or an apartment?
- 4) Did you like school when you were growing up? Did you ever feel isolated or neglected at school?
- 5) What things did people at school do to make you feel isolated or neglected?
- 6) I grew up in Silvana and it is tough seeing so many kids not going to college. Why do you think so many kids in Silvana don't pursue an education beyond high school?
- 7) What do you think we as teachers and counselors need to do to get more kids to go to college?
- 8) During your school days was there one particular teacher or student that talked to you about college, somebody that recommended you should go?
- 9) Living here in Silvana with not too many things for the kids to do such as different activities, do you think we should set up any after school programs such as computers or sports?
- 10) Why did you get into gangs?
- 11) When you have children, what would you tell them about growing up and going to school?
- 12) If you have any regrets what might they be?
- 13) What kind of education did your parents have, if any?
- 14) Did you think your friends had something to do with your involvement in gangs?

Appendix D

Thesis Project Approval (Informed Consent Page) Approval of thesis at Millet High School by parents and students

I _____ (parent/guardian) am fully aware that Jesus Galindo is conducting his thesis project at Millet High School and around the community. I understand that my son is taking part in the study (an after school program). I have been informed of the subject matter of this thesis project – gang affiliation and lack of post-secondary education in Mexican youth. I am fully aware that my son will use the facilities at Millet High School. My son will be filmed, interviewed, observed, and taken on various field trips as part of his study. In the end, my son has the right to refuse any information that is incorrect or inaccurate and I understand that names will be changed and students and parents will see the *imovie* before it is released for further viewing.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Jesus Galindo

Appendix E

Sample Interview Questions

The following page is a sample of the interview questions that were given to the participants. Shorty's answers are highlighted on the form.

~~Parents/Family~~
~~Teachers/School~~
~~Personal Info~~
~~FACTORS OF A KID~~
~~People get into gang~~
~~Programs for kids/After School~~

Galindo: How old are you?

Shorty: twenty-five years old (female)

Galindo: How long have you lived in Castroville?

Shorty: All my life

Galindo: All your life huh!

Shorty: Yea

Galindo: Where did you grow up in Castroville, did you live in a big house or apartments?

Shorty: I lived in low income housing labor camps, seven people (five siblings and my parents).

Galindo: Did you like school when you were growing up and did you feel isolated or neglected?

Shorty: Yea, by some teachers.

Galindo: What things did they do to make you feel isolated or neglected?

Shorty: Well, they tended to have favoritism towards athletes, cheerleaders, and white people. Especially by teachers who had to do with the school programs were mainly just white kids and those involved in sports and band or those who danced for school. They tended to have a different attitude towards those kids.

Galindo: I have grown up my whole life in Castroville and it's tough seeing so many kids not going to college. Why don't you think so many kids in Castroville pursue an education beyond high school?

Shorty: Because there is not a lot of awareness out that there is money out there and assistance for them to go to college. I didn't think there was money to go to college and my parents couldn't afford for me to go to school and nobody ever told me there were programs.

Galindo: What do you think we as teachers and counselors needs to do to get more kids to go to college?

Shorty: Well the main thing is to make kids aware that there are programs out there to help them go to school. There are a lot of reasons why kids don't go to school, but I think the main problem they run into is money. This is the reason why kids get discouraged

Felt isolated just like the research

they say it's very expensive and their parents can't afford for them to go to school. When they are not aware that there are not programs out there to help them go to school they just decide it's not for them. They just start working.

Galindo: During your school days was there one particular teacher or student that talked to you about college, somebody that recommended you to go to college?

Shorty: No, nobody ever said anything about going to college or programs or anything to me.

Galindo: Living here in Castroville with not much things to do for the kids such as different activities, do you think we should set up any after school programs such as computers or sports?

Shorty: Yes, because growing up in Castroville I know first hand that there is nothing out there for kids to do. [Cough] there is nothing um for them to do except for them to get into trouble. They don't even have a theater or entertainment to pass the time. The only other alternative is drinking, and partying and hanging out with their friends and that's what leads to them getting into trouble.

Galindo: Why did you get into a gang?

Shorty: Well, I started hanging out because there was nothing else to do, and you know the guys who I grew up with were all pretty much in the same predicament so we started hanging out drinking and partying since there was nothing else to do.

Galindo: Do you have any children?

Shorty: No

Galindo: When you have children what would ^{you} tell them about growing up and going to school?

Shorty: Well, I would find things for them to do after school such as social activities or sports or music something to get them interested in. Something other than to go out on the streets and just hanging out and this is what starts the bad road. I think I would try and educate them early and have them involved at a very early age in some type of activities.

Galindo: One of my interviewees told me that he wants to teach his kids good from bad, how do you teach kids good from bad?

Shorty: Well, first of all you have to discipline your kids and it's very important to make them understand at an early age what's right and what is wrong. That's where they pick it up. If you let them get away with things at an early age it develops a pattern and by the time parents realize that their kids are out of control it's too late. So you need to start at an early age discipline and making sure they understand what is wrong and right. Make

*Aminda
had similar
ideas why
he got into
gangs*

*Aminda
Shorty
ad
regain
similar
ideas*

sure you explain to them in simple words so that they understand that what they are doing is not right.

Galindo: If you have any regrets what might that be?

Shorty: Well you can't change how you grow up and all that but the only regret would be that I should have looked for information about going to school since nobody ever told me about it. I had to investigate myself and found nothing so I was basically stuck.

Galindo: Do you think teachers and counselors should have informed you about that?

Shorty: Yes, because if they would have told me I would have taken advantage of programs that were available for me at that time being from a low income farm labor family and since I didn't know that um I just didn't think that there was anything for me to do. Without a university close by in the area it seemed impossible for me to go to college.

Handwritten notes:
Miranda
Shorty
had regrets
about school
A.P. does
about school