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Abriendo Caminos: A Case Study of an Online Bilingüe MSW Program

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ABRIENDO CAMINOS:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

Latine students are underrepresented in social work education. This case study focuses on the Online Bilingual MSW (OBMSW) Program, the first bilingual (Spanish and English) and online MSW program in the mainland United States. The purpose of this study was to explore and have a greater understanding of how the OBMSW program is providing an alternative educational pathway specifically for Latine students. Purposeful sampling was used to identify seven interview participants who have had direct involvement in the creation, design, and/or implementation of the OBMSW program. A document review of program documents was also conducted. Data were analyzed using the analytical frameworks of LatCrit and Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth. Study findings revealed that the OBMSW's novel educational pathway includes specific program purpose, structure, and content; the fomenting and valuing of Latine-centered environments; and supportive approaches and practices for Latine students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This case study sought an in-depth exploratory analysis of the first bilingual (Spanish-English) online Master of Social Work (MSW) in the mainland United States.

In 2021, the Latine population in the United States reached more than 62.5 million representing 19% of the overall population (Krogstad et al., 2022). According to Lopez & Moslimani (2022), Latine immigrants in the U.S. made up 44% of all immigrants in 2019, but recent Latine population growth is attributed to births and not immigration (Krogstad et al., 2022). Overall, Latines are young and represent the second youngest racial or ethnic group in the U.S. (Zong, 2022). Projections show that by 2060, the Latine population will reach 111.2 million or 28% of the country's population (Zong, 2022). Based on the current statistics and future projections, Latines and the issues impacting Latine communities will continue to be important in the U.S.

Social work is touted as an impactful, helping profession that fights for social justice by utilizing holistic approaches in their interventions. Before entering the profession, social work education programs are responsible for forming students committed to striving for a society free of structural barriers that target minoritized communities. The International Federation of Social Workers (2023) underscores the importance of social work education by describing it as "an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people." The range and reach of social work are demonstrated as

social workers are “found in every facet of community life, including schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, senior centers, elected office, private practices, prisons, military, corporations, and in numerous public and private agencies” (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2023).

Social work has an incredible opportunity to attract, help form, and prepare Latine students who can work with Latine populations with social work needs. Systemic oppression and structural inequities have created circumstances for Latine communities to require social work services. For example, almost eight million Latine adults reported having a mental illness (Murray et al., 2022); Latines are one of the groups overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness (Moses, 2019); immigrants from Latin America make up the largest undocumented population in the country (Millet & Pavilon, 2022); and the poverty rate for Latines in 2019 was 15.7% (Creamer, 2020). Unfortunately, much of the support required to face, navigate, and contest many of these inequities is impacted by barriers and challenges. Some of the barriers to accessing mental health care and health care for this group include linguistic and cultural barriers, lack of health insurance, and immigration status (Funk & Lopez, 2022).

This case study focused on the Online Bilingual (Spanish-English) MSW (OBMSW) program housed within Loyola University Chicago’s School of Social Work (LUC-SSW). Through a case study method paired with a Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) and LatCrit conceptual framework, this study described and analyzed the OBMSW program’s characteristics and practices that seek to address the underrepresentation of Latine social work students.

Problem Statement

Latine representation in higher education is growing but Latine participation, especially in graduate programs, is strikingly low. Data from the 2019 U.S. Census Bureau (Office of Minority Health, 2019) reports that 18.8% of Latines had a bachelor's degree and only 5.7% of Latines had a graduate or advanced professional degree. The most recent statistics from the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) (2022) survey of social work programs in the nation report that 14.9% of the students enrolled in master's programs in social work were Latine and, of the 26,514 degrees conferred from master's programs, 15.9% belonged to Latine students. A CSWE task force recognized the low number of Latine students within social work programs, as well as the need for social workers to work with the growing U.S. Latine communities (Weng & Gray, 2017; Olcoń et al., 2018). A decade after the CSWE task force report, the number of Latine social work students with graduate degrees had not significantly improved (Calvo et al., 2018). A barrier for Latine students is "the alienation and isolation they encounter on university campuses, particularly when their perspectives, cultural orientations, and views of the world are considered 'exceptional' or simply invalidated" (Calvo et al., 2018, p. 265-266). Some social work programs have acknowledged the need to specifically recruit and retain Latine social work students through the examination and the meeting of their needs, circumstances, and strengths (Mendoza et al., 2019; Calvo et al., 2018.).

Increased enrollment and a successful experience for Latine students require a shift in the traditional outlook, approaches, practices, and design of MSW programs. Critical race theory (CRT) and its extension of Latine Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) provide lenses to examine, question, and challenge the oppressive power structures within educational institutions and center the experiences unique to diverse Latine communities (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal,

2001). CRT and LatCrit both serve to "give credence to critical raced-gendered epistemologies that recognize students of color as holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 107). Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) (Yosso, 2005) highlights the community cultural capital that students of color hold and utilize to navigate educational structures that are not built for them. Various social work programs are endeavoring to implement asset-based frameworks on the journey toward equity and justice in education.

Statement of Purpose

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) pose an important question: "Whose stories are privileged in educational contexts and whose stories are distorted and silenced?" (p. 36). More than twenty years later, this question remains relevant and is the basis for this study. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the model of the first online bilingual MSW program focused on Latine students. The hope is that knowledge and understanding about this educational model and how it was conceived, developed, and how it has grown might extend useful insights for those taking on the challenge of reimagining and redesigning educational pathways for historically marginalized students.

Social work education has great ambitions and, therefore, a great responsibility to examine its own practices and ensure that the profession's goals of social justice and social change are being addressed within its classrooms. Obstacles in practicums (Manoleas & Carrillo, 1991), the need for more Latine faculty members (Mendoza et al., 2019), the importance of mentorship (Rojas Schwan et al., 2013), cultural and racial isolation (Daniel, 2007), and the lack of Latine-related issues in the curriculum (Daniel, 2007; Chandler et al., 2014) are some of the various issues known to negatively impact Latine social work students. Social work education must take action to address these and other issues through a strengths and assets-based

perspective that recognizes the need for the educational system to change and adapt to Latine students. An MSW model, such as the OBMSW, specifically designed by Latines and a non-native English speaker, for Latine students with the objective of preparing students to work with their own communities is groundbreaking; it can directly influence the needs of the social work profession, the academic discipline, the U.S. Latine community, and, most importantly, Latine social work students.

Research Questions

This study's primary research question was: How is Loyola University Chicago's Online Bilingual MSW Program providing an innovative educational pathway for Latine students? The following subset of questions helped answer the main, broader question:

1. What aspects of Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model are embedded and fostered within the Online Bilingual MSW Program?
2. What tenets of LatCrit are present in the program?

Research Approach

The qualitative case study explored the rationale, inception, design, and the key components implemented within the OBMSW. Furthermore, this study utilized a LatCrit perspective and a Community Cultural Wealth lens. CCW, an asset-based outlook, was utilized to determine the types of cultural wealth, if any, present *within the program* and at student disposal. LatCrit was applied to learn if the program does provide a Latine focus and to learn how the program challenges and reverses educational hierarchies and traditions of inequity that typically impact Latine students. These frameworks aided in obtaining a greater understanding of if and how this first-of-its-kind program has paved a distinct and supportive pathway for Latine students pursuing an MSW degree.

A qualitative single-case study method was appropriate as the study sought an in-depth and thick description of the OBMSW program's unique processes and implementation (Yin, 2018). This study relied on primary and secondary data, including semi-structured interviews and documentation. Thematic analysis was implemented to categorize the data and address the research questions. LatCrit theory and CCW guided the analysis and facilitated a critical exploration of the OBMSW program's structure and practices strategies. The objective of this case study was not to generalize, but to learn about and thoroughly communicate the particulars of the OBMSW program.

This study was informed and guided by critical theory. Critical theory has the ontological position of historical realism (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). That is, "reality exists, but it has been shaped by cultural, political, ethnic, gender and religious factors which interact with each other to create a social system" (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p. 57). When it comes to its epistemological position, it is subjective (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) and indicates that all that is researched and investigated is impacted by the researcher (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Critical theory's aim of exposing, challenging and reforming the structures that create oppression (Bohman, 2015; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016) paired well with the study as it sought to describe and critically analyze, through the lenses of LatCrit and CCW, a program that claims to be innovative in addressing traditional barriers impacting Latine students.

Role of Researcher

Positionality "implies that the social-historical-political location of a researcher influences their orientations, i.e., that they are not separate from the social processes they study" (Darwin Holmes, 2020, p. 3). The researcher identifies as a Central American of mixed-race; born and raised in California, USA; daughter of low-income immigrants; bilingual (Spanish-

English); a cisgender woman; heterosexual; first generation college student; a LUC MSW alumnus; and a doctoral student within the School of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago. These are the identities that have shaped and continuously influence her interactions, worldview, and this study.

Along with multiple other privileges, the researcher has had the fortune of living in Central America for various years after obtaining her undergraduate degree. Her professional work, including research, has centered around working with Latine communities in the U.S. and in Latin America. She is currently grappling with her racial-ethnic identity caught in-between the socially constructed U.S. and Central American racial and ethnic frameworks. Her relationship with and perspective on the Spanish language is perpetually evolving and is innately and intricately related with her racial-ethnic identity. The linguistic imperialism (Ravishankar, 2020) of her two known languages (Spanish and English) are not lost on her. Yet, she greatly values her bilingual and bicultural identities and assets that have enriched and strengthened her experiences and perspectives.

The researcher's experiences as a doctoral and MSW student within a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) has greatly impacted this study. Due to those experiences, the OBMSW program instilled hope in the researcher. Additionally, the researcher has had the fortune of collaborating with students, faculty and staff members on various projects within the OBMSW program.

The researcher understood and was aware that her identities, experiences, and relationships with social work and the OBMSW program were advantages that could also be obstructive in the research processes. The researcher could have been a student within the OBMSW program and acknowledged the need to be constantly aware of her positions with the

research participants and settings, as it can have implications for data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Darwin Holmes, 2020).

Rationale and Significance

The rationale for this study derived from the researcher's yearning to explore and comprehend an innovative social work educational program that recognized the need to modify its approaches and structure to meet Latine student assets, circumstances, and aspirations. The researcher had a particular interest in comprehending and analyzing the program's practices in case its particularities can inform social work programs designed for groups of students who have been underrepresented and sidelined within the discipline.

Numerous studies regarding challenges and barriers for minoritized students in higher education, including Latines, have been conducted. If educational equity will be achieved, it is important to challenge deficit models such as the perspectives associating barriers and challenges within Latine students. Instead, the lens should be shifted toward the barriers and challenges within the dominant educational institutions that obstruct minoritized students. LatCrit and CCW lenses helped reveal if the OBMSW program is one that is defying typical educational norms.

There are various studies that have utilized the CCW lens to understand the types of cultural wealth that Latine and marginalized students utilize in their higher education settings (Garriott, 2019; Whitehead, 2019; Olcoń et al., 2018; Luna & Martinez, 2013). Yet, to the researcher's knowledge, there are no MSW programs dedicated to the recruitment and retention of Latine students and, as such, an inquiry of the OBMSW is justified. Additionally, a LatCrit and CCW analytical framework applied toward the MSW program, and not the students, shifts the onus of higher education preparedness from the student to the higher education institution, which is necessary and overdue.

This study may be of interest to higher education professionals, especially social work educators and administrators, who are seeking innovative programs, models and practices that are worthy of racialized and minoritized students. Furthermore, as the Latine population and Latine enrollment in higher education continues to grow (Cantú, 2019), it seemed to be an opportune time for this social work study to occur.

Key Terminology

Latine: The gender-neutral form of the word "Latino." The word Latine follows the definition given by the U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.) that utilizes the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" and defines them as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race." Latinx, Latino/a, and Latin arise within the study and refer to the same meaning as Latine. These are ethnic categories not racial categories.

1.5 generation: Refers to those who migrated in their youth and have lived substantial part of their lives in the country of destination.

First generation immigrant: First generation immigrant refers to a person who is foreign-born (Budiman et al., 2020).

Second generation immigrant: Refers to those born in the U.S. with at least one foreign born parent (Budiman et al., 2020).

First-generation college student: Students who are first in their family to attend a higher education institution (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022).

Bilingual/bilingualism: Refers to abilities in two languages (Rosa, 2016). In this particular study, this term referred to abilities in the Spanish and English languages.

Heritage speaker: Speakers who grow up in a bilingual or multilingual home environment with a minoritized language along with the larger society's dominant language (Wiese et al., 2022).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research study was to explore how the OBMSW program has offered a unique educational pathway for Latine social work students. This main question was to be answered with the aid of CCW and LatCrit. A literature review focusing on the circumstances relevant to Latine students in higher education and the conceptual framework was conducted.

This review begins with the factors that positively impact the recruitment and retention of Latine students in higher education. It then moves on to discuss social work education and Latine students, including the interventions that social work education has implemented to attract and retain Latine students. Finally, this chapter closes with the conceptual framework that guides the study.

Recruitment and Retention of Latine Students in Higher Education

There are various factors and circumstances that impact and influence the recruitment and retention of Latine students in higher education contexts. Medina and Posadas (2012) make it clear that providing support to Latine students goes beyond enrollment and numbers, which can be an issue even in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI). They state,

> It can no longer be assumed that the growth of Latino students at a given institution will translate into increased efforts by the institution to adapt its mission to better serve this student population. In fact, there are colleges and universities that meet the criteria for an HSI designation but whose administration and leadership have not articulated what it means to "serve" Latino students. (Medina & Posadas, 2012, p. 183)

Medina and Posadas' statement highlights the importance of the retention aspect of the Latine student experience. For example, it is important to take into account that Latine first-

generation college students face challenges when stepping into a new context (Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022; Medina & Posadas, 2012; Flores & Park, 2013; Galdeano et al., 2012) making a supportive environment and supportive programs imperative (Medina & Posada, 2012; Carolan-Silva & Reyes, 2013). A positive and supportive campus climate has also been identified as a factor impacting Latine student retention (Gloria et al., 2005; Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022; O'Hara, 2022). Additionally, the presence and mentorship from Latine faculty members and staff are key factors in the recruitment and retention of students (Alcocer & Martinez, 2018; Adedoyin, 2021; Medina & Posadas, 2012; O'Hara, 2022; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; Longoria, 2010). Similarly, peer relationships and mentorships are crucial and valued in Latine student navigation of higher education (Alcocer & Martinez, 2018; Johnson et al., 2014; Gloria & Segura-Herrera, 2004; Medina & Posadas, 2012). Aspects that should not be overlooked are the family and community supports that have been identified as imperative for Latine student retention and motivation in higher education (Suwinyattichaiporn & Johnson, 2022; Arevalo et al., 2016; Gloria et al., 2005; Hernandez, 2000).

Latines and Social Work Education

The latest published social work education statistics report from CSWE (2022) provides a picture regarding the presence of Latine students and Latine faculty in social work programs. Of the 51,951 BSW students enrolled in 2021, 19.4% identified as Latine. Of the almost 17,000 BSW degrees conferred in 2020-2021, 19.4% belonged to Latine students. Almost 63,000 students were enrolled in MSW programs and 14.9% identified as Latine. A total of 26,514 MSW degrees were conferred in 2021, and 15.9% were Latine students. Practice doctoral programs had 7.0% of their 2,126 enrolled students identify as Latine, while of the 1,371 students enrolled in research doctorate programs approximately 5.5% identified as Latine

students. A total of 178 practice doctorate degrees were conferred during the 2020-2021 academic year and 7.3% belonged to Latine students. Of the 196 research doctorate degrees conferred in the same academic year, 10.8% were Latine students. There were 5,240 full-time faculty members in social work programs in the fall of 2021. A total of 7.6% of those faculty members identified as Latine. Part-time Latine faculty members were 9.4% out of a total of 6,595. It is important to note that these CSWE (2022) numbers include students and faculty members from 6 accredited social work programs in Puerto Rico.

In 2006, CSWE formed a task force to explore Latines in social work programs (Calvo et al., 2018). Calvo et al. (2018) compared CSWE statistics on Latines a decade after the task force was established and found that, while social work had grown in that time, the MSW and doctoral degrees awarded to Latine students were lower than expected. Additionally and importantly, they found that the change in the number of full-time Latine faculty had been insignificant. Calvo et al.'s (2015) Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative paper calls for innovative models of social work education to address the underrepresentation of Latine social work students as well as addressing the need to respond to the social work needs of Latine communities. A discussion of social work education approaches with Latine students follows.

Social Work Education Approaches Toward Latine Students

Manoleas & Carrillo's (1991) article focused on the field experiences of Latine students and the conflicts many of them face when completing the internship placement component of their social work education. Manoleas & Carrillo argue and recommend that an internship environment requires a space where students can discuss race, class, and ethnicity. They maintain this is extremely important due to the likelihood that conflicts between the students' social work identity and ethnic identity will develop. Therefore, Manoleas & Carrillo emphasize

the relevance and the salience of the relationship between the student and the internship instructor. The opportunity to discuss issues related to intersectionality with an internship instructor can lead to "psychologically healthy Latino social workers who have linguistic abilities, cultural skills, and an interest in working with their communities" (Manoleas & Carrillo, 1991, p. 142).

Negroni-Rodríguez et al.'s (2006) article presents a model to specifically advise Latine students within social work programs. The authors highlight a model utilized within the school of Social Work at the University of Connecticut, which also created and housed a Puerto Rican/Latino Studies Project. This model is grounded in ecological-systemic and empowerment theory and utilizes Latine student strengths and needs to improve recruitment and retention. The advising process, implemented mostly by full-time faculty, addresses internship and academic matters with all students. The culturally competent advising model includes, "(1) the institutional commitment and support, (2) the learning environment, (3) the advisor, (4) the advising process and (5) the mentoring relationship" (Negroni-Rodríguez et al., 2006, p. 209). Negroni-Rodríguez et al. conclude that the presented advising components should be combined and not implemented individually to "create an ambiance of acceptance, pride and support that positively impacts Latino/a students and students in general" (p. 218).

In Olcoń et al.'s (2018) article entitled *Recruitment and Retention of Latinos in Social Work Education: Building on Students' Community Cultural Wealth,* the authors present a study "In an effort to understand the strategies to recruit and retain Latino students in social work programs" (p. 349). The article presents a case study of a BSW program within a bilingual (Spanish-English) college where 90% of the student population identify as Latine and 75% of the full-time college faculty identify as Latine. Olcoń et al. (2018) state that the "BSW program

incorporates several administrative and pedagogical strategies that build on the community cultural wealth of the students" (p. 353). Olcoń et al. recommend that social work programs invest in creating a sense of belonging, ensuring there is an inclusive curriculum, and there is financial assistance in order to strengthen the Latine students' community cultural wealth and, therefore, positively impact the recruitment and retention of students.

Calvo et al. (2018) present a conceptual model to increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Latine students within social work education. The elements of the conceptual model include,

> (a) increasing the representation of Latinxs in social work education, (b) creating student-faculty networks that will lead to meaningful mentorship opportunities, (c) initiating a culturally relevant research agenda, and (d) developing a Latinx-based implicit *and* explicit curriculum that teaches a social work practices that builds on cultural capital in a supportive safe environment. (Calvo et al., 2018, p. 267)

Additionally, they present a case study to showcase how the Latinx Leadership Initiative (LLI) at Boston College's (BU) School of Social Work implements the conceptual model to implement a "purposeful approach to educating future social workers" (Calvo et al., 2018, p. 264). The LLI utilizes a CCW framework that pays special attention in the recruitment of Latine heritage Spanish speakers. LLI's curriculum is taught in Spanish, includes an internship component, is focused on Latine communities, and includes Latine cultural capital values. The program provides mentorship opportunities that go beyond advice and provision of resources by pairing "students with faculty mentors (and field advisors and supervisors) who understand the dilemmas faced by many Latinx professionals, both in institutions of higher education and in social service agencies" (Calvo et al., 2018, p. 270). It is important to note that the authors do not clarify if the faculty mentors are Latine themselves. The LLI looks to increase Latine representation within social work education by recruiting Latine doctoral students. Finally, the

program implements “a research agenda that includes evidence-based practice and translational research with Latinx communities,” (Calvo et al., 2018, p. 272) with the goal that Latine doctoral students design and conduct research focused on Latine communities.

Leadership development is central in Cordero & Negroni’s (2013) article that highlights a Latino Project at the University of Connecticut’s School of Social Work. The Project was developed in the 1980s to address the lack of Latine population in social work. Its mission has been to “1) prepare social workers to competently serve the Latino community by advocating and promoting change and 2) advance knowledge about the strengths, challenges, and resources of Latino/a populations and communities” (Cordero & Negroni, 2013, p. 110). The program’s contribution at the time of the article publication was “many graduates, particularly Latino/a graduates, have gone on to serve in leadership roles promoting collective collaboration with Latino communities and organizations” (Cordero & Negroni, 2013, p. 110). In order to develop Latine leaders that will prioritize social justice for Latine communities, the Latino Project model requires institutional support and commitment; the creation of leadership opportunities; and, community partnerships for community emancipation. The creation of leadership and mentoring opportunities component of the model involves students, faculty, staff and alumni of the program. Faculty, who share the Latine identity with students, guide students toward leadership opportunities. Additionally, there is a study abroad course in Puerto Rico linked to a research scholarship awarded to two students who propose research focusing on health disparities on the island. The research project is supervised by a faculty member of the project.

Latine Client Populations and Non-Latine Social Work Students

Most of the studies within the subject area of social work education and Latine communities omit Latine social work students and instead focus on preparing non-Latine

students to work with Latine client populations. Furman et al.'s (2006) qualitative survey responses from social work faculty indicated that faculty do not believe that non-Latine students are appropriately prepared to practice in a "culturally sensitive" manner with Latine clients. Various articles describe the growing Latine population in the U.S., the various social issues the growing population might face, and the contexts that might call for particular knowledge, skills, and preparation on behalf of non-Latine social work students preparing to work with Latine groups (McNutt et al., 2001; Revens et al., 2018; Sanchez Mayers et al., 2020; Sisneros & Foster Alter, 2009; Vollmer Hanna & Ortega, 2016; Quiros & Araujo Dawson, 2013; Calvo & Figuereo, 2013; Vidal de Haymes & Kilty, 2007). Multiple articles focus specifically on preparing non-Latine students in "cultural competency" to work with Latine clients (Arreola, 2013; Chapa & Acosta, 2010; Boyle & Springer, 2001). An example of this is Cordova et al. (2013) presenting a collaboration between non-Spanish speaking BSW students and Spanish major students to facilitate interaction with Spanish-speaking Latine day workers who are immigrants.

Bilingual Social Work Education Interventions

The need to provide social services for growing Latine and immigrant populations has called attention to language diversity training and education within social work programs. The limited literature about bilingual (English-Spanish) and Spanish language interventions in social work education includes some literature that takes Latine heritage (Spanish) speakers into account. Yet, much of the social work literature has identified that there are not enough Latine social workers and social work students prepared to work with the increasing Latine population in the U.S. Nonetheless, instead of looking at the root of that issue, much of the social work literature presents information, strategies, and programs to prepare non-Latine, mostly white,

students to work with Latine communities. Calvo et al. (2018) state it best "when a profession such as social work does not *intentionally* pursue a path to increase the presence of a group which is s*ystemically* absent, the profession is sending a clear message regarding their place" (p. 265).

Language proposals that have emerged to try and meet the need for Spanish-English bilingual social work students include a BSW program with a majority Latine student and faculty population which takes on an assets-based perspective that values and centers Latine student linguistic wealth (Olcoń et al., 2018). The program views the utilization of Spanglish as "a valid form of communication rather than a linguistic drawback" (Olcoń et al., 2018, p. 356). The LLI program featured in Calvo et al.'s (2018) article teaches the program curriculum in Spanish. Other social work linguistic interventions include a workshop to train monolingual and multilingual students and practitioners (Doering-White et al., 2020), a certificate program that includes a language component aiming toward graduating students fluent in the Spanish language (Sisneros & Alter, 2009), specific courses created to improve clinical vocabulary in Spanish (Sevilla et al., 2018; Lusk et al., 2014; Citrón et al., 2018), a cross-cultural service-learning project utilizing consultants from the Spanish department (Belliveau, 2011), and cultural immersion study abroad trips to Latin America (Cox et al., 2006).

Latine Recruitment and Retention in Social Work Education

Many of the factors that impact recruitment and retention of Latines in general higher education can be translated to social work education. A small number of studies focus on the elements that positively impact Latine students in social work programs. As mentioned before, Manoleas and Carillo (1991) discuss the importance of a practicum learning environment where students can discuss race, class, and ethnicity as well as the importance of the relationship with

the practicum instructor. They caution that if Latine students do not have a space to do so, students could end up leaving social work. Numerous studies have underscored the importance of the presence and mentorship of Latine faculty and staff (Mendoza et al., 2019; Cordero & Negroni, 2013; Rojas-Schwan et al., 2013; Olcoń et al., 2018; Negroni-Rodríguez et al., 2006; Calvo et al., 2018). Mentorship provides support for the transitions and adjustments to higher education, retention, and academic achievement (Alcocer & Martinez, 2018). The integration of Latine focused curriculum content and research (Chandler et al., 2014; Calvo et al., 2018; Olcoń et al., 2018), financial aid and funding incentives (Tijerina & Deepak, 2014; Negroni-Rodríguez et al., 2006; Longoria, 2010; Olcoń et al., 2018), and bilingual (Spanish-English) courses, materials, services (Calvo et al., 2018; Olcoń et al., 2018; Negroni-Rodríguez et al., 2006) have been found to be important in the Latine social work student environment and experience. To foster Latine leadership, Cordero and Negroni (2013) recommend that social work programs demonstrate a commitment to Latine leadership development, including the hiring of Latine staff and faculty, a commitment to culturally effective ways of recruitment and retention of Latine students, support of the development of a Latine community setting, and the commitment toward culturally attuned mentoring relationships. Tijerina & Deepak's (2014) findings highlight relationships, including family, peers, and mentors serving as motivation in completing the MSW degree. Importantly, along with the call from scholars in various disciplines, Olcoń et al. (2018) stress that social work programs and their universities must take on asset-based perspectives and build on students' community cultural wealth.

Latine Student Challenges in Social Work Education

Similar to the insights regarding the recruitment and retention of Latine students in social work, the challenges and barriers to Latines in general higher education can be assumed in social

work education. A key factor found to negatively impact Latine social work students is the underrepresentation of Latine faculty and staff to help guide and mentor students (Tijerina & Deepak, 2014; Rojas-Schwan et al., 2013). The Tijerina and Deepak (2014) study findings underscored that the perceived separation or distance between students and their families, peers, and community due to education attainment was a challenge for Latine MSW students. Another challenging factor was the balancing of work, familial responsibilities, and school responsibilities. Finally, Tijerina and Deepak report various barriers linked to institutional policies, practices, and the academic culture of MSW programs, an isolating and unsupportive environment, academic expectations, and entry requirements such as the GRE and statistics courses. Negroni-Rodríguez et al. (2006) identify financial limitations, immigration status, adjustments to non-Latine environments, being a non-traditionally aged student, discrimination, limitations with English proficiency, and job and familial responsibilities as challenges for Latine social work students. CSWE's Task Force on Latino/a Social Work Education report names inadequate financial aid along with "high cost of tuition; insufficient representation of Latino faculty and staff, either in the social work program or within the institution; lack of a large pool of Latino applicants, and no focused recruitment efforts toward Latino students" (Ortíz et al., 2007, as cited De Jesús, 2013) as common obstructions in the recruitment and retention of Latine students in social work education.

Online Social Work Education

Social work education via an online delivery method has become more prevalent. Between 2012 and 2017, online MSW program offerings increased from 11% to almost 20% (Detres et al., 2020). CSWE (2022) reported that in 2021, approximately 14.7% of the 347 BSW programs offered over 90% of their online coursework. Of the 370 MSW programs in 2021,

16.8% indicated their program delivery methods consisted of over 90% of the coursework online. Of the 14 practice doctorate programs and the 51 research doctorate programs, 57.1% and 5.8% respectively indicated that over 90% of their coursework was online.

Various benefits of online social work education were identified before the COVID-19 pandemic forced a transition to online education. Forgery & Ortega-Williams (2016) state, "The benefits of online social work education have been documented, and clear evidence has been mounting to its effectiveness" (p. 60). One of those important benefits is the access online social work education provides for non-traditional students (Jones, 2015). The online delivery method also provides flexibility and benefits students with limited transportation, and work and family responsibilities (Kurzman, 2013). Along with limitations due to internet access in rural areas and low-income communities (Eruchalu et al., 2021), Kurzman (2019) cautions that online social work education has limitations due to the difficulties in implementing internships at a distance, as well as higher attrition rates, and the need for online students to be well-organized, motivated, and diligent.

Conceptual Framework

This study utilized LatCrit and Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) as its conceptual framework. This framework allowed for an examination and the centering of the educational circumstances for the Latine students within the OBMSW program. While there are various studies that utilize LatCrit and/or CCW, most are focused on challenging dominant educational systems through LatCrit and learning how Latine students draw upon and utilize CCW to navigate educational pathways that are not created for them in mind. While LatCrit was utilized to critically examine the OBMSW, the CCW lens was utilized to gauge how the OBMSW is embedding aspects of community cultural wealth within the educational pathway it

is offering Latines. Furthermore, both LatCrit and CCW stem from Critical Race Theory (CRT), which allowed for a natural and complementary framework.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory originated in the 1970s and 1980s as a response to the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement. The importance of CLS was marked by its origins that argued that legal interpretation was political and not neutral, and in the 1970s by claims that "the law is not and cannot be disinterested in the status quo. These scholars declared the law as established by societal power relationships and court decisions as reflective of this bias with a mask of blind legitimacy" (Martinez, 2014, p. 17). Yet, CLS did not include racism in its critique (Ladson-Billings, 2008), which is the most essential tenet in CRT. It is important to note that the genesis of CRT also emerged from the critiques of "ethnic studies, women's studies, cultural nationalist paradigms, Marxist and neo-Marxist frameworks, and internal colonial models" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 474). Ultimately, CRT emerged as a retort to the "liberal status quo of enduring white supremacy and privilege in law and society despite civil rights commitments, devoting itself to effecting the legacy of 'equal opportunity' and ensuring fulfillment to the promise of 'equal justice under the law'" (Valdes, 2012, p. 513).

Earlier CRT scholars such as Bell, Matsuda, Delgado, and Crenshaw urged to see the law through the lens of race and racism (Martinez, 2014; Demaske, 2009) with the goal of developing a legal system that accounts for racism in U.S. law *and* strives to eliminate racism (Matsuda, 1991). Crenshaw et al. (1995) clarify that there is no one way or a firm set of methodologies utilized by all CRT scholars, but there are at least five recognized tenets of CRT: the permanence of racism; whiteness as property; interest convergence; counter-storytelling; and the critique of liberalism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

CRT in Education

Since the emergence of CRT in the legal field, it has also been applied to other disciplines such as education. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) and Solórzano (1997) were some of the first scholars to adopt and develop CRT in education research. Just as legal CRT scholars strive for the law to "serve as a tool of liberation rather than domination" (Gutiérrez & Lechuga-Peña, 2022, p. 608), CRT researchers in education recognize that educational institutions have the potential to emancipate and empower while also oppressing and marginalizing racialized students (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 2002). Matsuda (1991) addresses the goal and utility of CRT in graduate education by explaining that it seeks to:

> develop a theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical strategy that accounts for the role of race and racism in US graduate education and works toward the elimination of racism as a part of a larger goal of eliminating other forms of subordination, such as gender, class, and sexual orientation. (p. 472)

Similar to the general CRT tenets, critical race theory in education also has at least five tenets or themes that confirm its basic perspectives: 1) The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; 2) The challenge to dominant ideology; 3) The commitment to social justice; 4) The centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) The transdisciplinary perspective (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Solorzano, 1997). LatCrit shares these tenets and will be discussed more later in this chapter.

CRT in education and education research provide the tools "to challenge the genetic and cultural deficit theories" (Solorzano, 1997, p. 14) that are prevalent in educational contexts. Ladson-Billings (2008) shares that CRT in education can analyze and interrogate key aspects of the educational system such as curriculum, instruction, funding, and assessment. Relatedly,

Yosso (2002) proposes that CRT can be utilized to "analyze and challenge racism in curricular structures, processes, and discourses" (p. 93). CRT's utility in education is clear, especially when it is evident and common that "Although students of color are holders and creators of knowledge, they often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal education settings" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 106). In order to achieve educational equity, a rethinking and redesign of educational institutions is called for, and CRT is an essential tool that can aid in exposing issues of race and racism and other forms of subordination, while also recommending radical solutions (Ladson-Billings, 2008).

Latine Critical Race Theory

LatCrit draws on CRT but is employed when educational scholars and researchers are focusing on Latine populations. LatCrit is "supplementary, complementary to critical race theory" (Valdes, 1997, p. 26) but specifically "focuses on the positions Latinas/os/x hold within multiple systems of inequality based on their intersectional identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, age, ability status, and citizenship" (Gutiérrez & Lechuga-Peña, 2022, p. 606). Other issues traditionally omitted in CRT, such as immigration status, language, accent, and phenotype, among others, (Valdes, 1997; Delgado Bernal, 2002) are also central in LatCrit. LatCrit "is conceived as anti-subordination and anti-essentialist project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community" (LatCrit Primer, 2000). Additionally, it provides a "lens for educational research that acknowledges and supports systems of knowing and understanding that counter the dominant Eurocentric epistemology" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 121). LatCrit allows for Latine students and their experiences to be the focal points of analysis while interrogating and challenging the educational systems that continue to create inequities and subordination. Like

CRT, LatCrit has been found to be an effective lens in carrying out educational research. As is highlighted by Villalpando (2004), "CRT and LatCrit can help higher education practitioners develop more responsive and comprehensive approaches that enhance the educational experiences of Latino college students" (p. 48).

As previously mentioned, LatCrit and CRT in education share the five tenets that outline their guiding principles. Solorzano and Yosso (2001) name and describe them:

1. *The centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination.* Race and racism are central, permanent, and 'normal' within U.S. society. Their intersectionality with other forms of subordination are also taken into account. It is at this intersection that "some answers can be found to the theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical questions" (p. 472) related to Latine graduate school experiences.
2. *The challenge to dominant ideology.* This tenet "challenges the traditional claims the educational system and its institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity" (p. 472).
3. *Commitment to social justice.* Education is a tool to obtain social justice, equity, and the empowerment of marginalized students.
4. *The centrality of experiential knowledge.* The experiential knowledge that Latine students hold is valued and recognized as "legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education" (p. 473). This knowledge is centered and can be transmitted through *testimonios*, *cuentos*, narratives, family history, and various other methods. Counter-storytelling can be a methodological tool, but counterstories are also "a way to ground

the real-life experiences of marginalized peoples within educational theory, policy, and praxis" (Villalpando, 2003, p. 625).

5. *The interdisciplinary perspective.* LatCrit values transdisciplinary methods and approaches and demands that race and racism are placed in a historical and contemporary context (Delgado, 1984; Garcia, 1995; Harris, 1994; Olivas, 1990).

Implementing LatCrit helped provide a holistic description and explanation of a program meant to address Latine student identities and contexts. This framework was used to interrogate how the OBMSW has situated Latine students, their circumstances, experiences, strengths and needs within its program design and structure. While traditional educational research approaches have been focused on Latine low academic attainment or achievement and educational failures (Fernández, 2002), this study sought to understand the approaches implemented by an educational institution. The goal was to understand if and how this program has changed the educational pathway for Latine social work students or if it has merely provided yet another, albeit bilingual, route to facilitate the navigation and coping of the inequities, racism, invalidations, racial and social hierarchical structures that are customary in social work education (Gutiérrez & Lechuga Peña, 2022).

Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model is an anti-deficit framework that emerged "In response to Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural capital as assets that wealthy individuals possess to reproduce their positions of power in society and by using critical race theory as a theoretical foundation" (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2021, p. 2). Yosso's (2005) CCW directly challenges deficit notions that racialized students do not possess cultural wealth and knowledge which directly impacts their levels of success within education. CCW "is an array of

cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). The model identifies and highlights the following six forms of cultural capital: aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). Yosso clarifies that the model identifies at least six forms of capital that are not mutually exclusive or static; instead, they are "dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth" (p. 77). Yosso (2005) provides a description of the six forms of capital:

1. Aspiration capital refers to the capacity of marginalized students to maintain their hopes and dreams despite the perceived challenges and barriers.
2. Linguistic capital acknowledges and values the intellectual and social skills gained through communicating in multiple languages and/or styles. This includes highlighting cultural traditions such as storytelling.
3. Familial capital refers "to those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition (p. 79).
4. Social capital includes the network of people and resources of the community that provide key support for racialized students.
5. Navigational capital refers to the ability and skills necessary to navigate through institutions that were not created for racialized students.
6. Resistant capital refers to the skills and knowledges nurtured through the challenging of inequalities.

Through the combination of these six forms of capital, the CCW model highlights and values the strengths of racialized and marginalized students while acknowledging their cultural and institutional contexts (Cuellar et al., 2018).

This study argues that OBMSW students should not have to utilize the CCW model as a protective factor as is typically highlighted in scholarship. Instead, the current study examined if the OBMSW has CCW embedded *within* to serve as protective factors *for* students. CCW within an educational program allows for students to recognize it, utilize it, and build upon it.

With the aid of LatCrit and CCW, this study sought to shift the interrogations of Latine and racialized students at an individual level and, instead, shifted the interrogating lens toward the ways in which institutions are failing Latine students and/or are succeeding in supporting and valuing them. If we only rely on the dominant discourse about Latine students, we will not obtain a holistic picture of their experience (Fernández, 2002*).* This study, hopefully, allowed for the complication of the experiences of Latine students (Garriott, 2020), in order to move on to better understand how educational institutions can meet the circumstances and strengths of Latine students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This case study focused on the OBMSW program, a social work education program that is offering a pathway for Latine students to obtain their MSW. The OBMSW was conceived with the goal of directly addressing the barriers and challenges traditionally confronted by Latine students in higher education. An examination of the program was needed to understand if it is providing an innovative educational opportunity for Latine MSW students.

This study sought to provide an in-depth description and critical analysis of the program's distinctive characteristics that are promoted to be in service of Latine students. Although the case study cannot provide generalizable data, it can inform the creation and modification of environments seeking to properly address the strengths, needs, and intricacies of Latine social work students. To understand more of the OBMSW's offering to Latine students, the study focused on the main research question: How is Loyola University Chicago's Online Bilingual MSW Program providing an innovative educational pathway for Latine students? Two questions that aided in answering the main, broader question were: What aspects of CCW are embedded and fostered within the OBMSW? What tenets of LatCrit are present in the program?

Research Methodology and Design

The nature of this study required qualitative methods of inquiry. Merriam (1998) defines qualitative research as "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural

setting as possible" (p. 5). Qualitative methods aided in obtaining the pertinent data to answer the study's qualitative research questions that intended to understand the construction and implementation of the note-worthy educational program. Additionally, qualitative methods were optimal given that this study sought to explore and describe the OBMSW.

Qualitative inquiry was also appropriate given the use of the analytical frameworks of CCW and LatCrit to obtain a greater and critical understanding of the OBMSW structure and practices. This case study assumed that:

> (a) Research fundamentally involves issues of power; (b) the research report is not transparent but, rather, is authored by a raced, gendered, classes, and politically oriented individual; (c) race, class, and gender "among other social identities" are crucial for understanding experience; and (d) historic, traditional research has silenced members of oppressed and marginalized groups. (Rossman and Rallis, 1998, p. 66).

Since the study focused on an educational program that claims it was created to challenge the underrepresentation of Latine students within social work education, it was fitting to examine the program through critical qualitative inquiry.

Case studies are defined as "an exploration of a 'bounded system' of a case or multiple cases over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). In this study, the OBMSW program was the bounded case explored from the time of its proposal through the Spring of 2023. The rich sources were the OBMSW staff and faculty interviewed as well as the OBMSW documents that were examined. According to Yin (2018), questions that ask "how" a program functions (or does not function), such as the primary question of this study, would also point researchers towards a case study.

Case study methodology is known for being a pragmatic and flexible research approach (Harrison et al., 2017; Sibbald et al., 2021). This flexibility is one that is not typically available

in other qualitative approaches (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). This flexibility was fitting given that the study utilized general qualitative research techniques with the techniques of Yin, Stake, and Merriam, three of the most well-known case study methodologists (Yazan, 2015). Due to Yin's post-positivist epistemological stance and Merriam and Stake's shared constructivism stance (Boblin et al., 2013; Yazan, 2015; Sibbald et al., 2021), this study mostly applied a combination of the tools offered by Merriam and Stake.

The specific interest in gaining a full(er) and comprehensive understanding of the novel OBMSW matches with Stake's (2003) reasoning to undertake an intrinsic case study: to obtain a better understanding of a particular case. In an intrinsic case study, "The researcher should define the uniqueness of the phenomenon, which distinguishes it from all others" (Crowe et al., 2011). The intrinsic case study facilitated a greater understanding regarding the unique case of the OBMSW.

Research Sample and Sources of Data

Case study requires two levels of sampling (Merriam, 1998). The first selection involves the case to be investigated. In this study, the OBMSW was purposely selected as the intrinsic case to be studied. Secondly, a sample collection within the case was required (Merriam, 1998). The "second level sampling" utilized for this study was nonprobability, purposive sampling given that the "the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Purposive sampling was utilized in the selection of the interview participants, as well as in the selection of the OBMSW documents.

The primary data sources consisted of seven key OBMSW stakeholders who were interviewed. Although there are various stakeholders within the program, the specific

interviewees were chosen due to their current and/or former administrative roles within the OBMSW. It was determined that no other stakeholder had their perspective, knowledge, and experience with the program. The seven stakeholders form part of the essential group who envisioned, designed, and/or are implementing the OBMSW. Due to the participants' emic or insider perspective (Merriam, 1998), they were uniquely positioned to describe and provide a greater understanding regarding the program's rationale, policies, initial design, motivation, evolution, challenges, and strengths. The stakeholders clarified and supplemented what the researcher was unable to obtain from the document analysis. Additionally, the informants have decades of experience as administrators and professors within higher and social work education, which granted more perspective on the uniqueness of the OBMSW program. And, significantly, all interview participants are racialized or minoritized faculty and staff within social work providing them experiential knowledge that informed their approaches and perspectives.

Originally, the study set out to interview five participants including the current OBMSW program director; the original OBMSW program director and current LUC-SSW interim associate dean for academics; an OBMSW program professor and implementation and design team member; the OBMSW assistant director of internships; and the OBMSW program founder and LUC-SSW dean at the time of the OBMSW program launch. Two additional stakeholders, the OBMSW instructional designer and the OBMSW academic advisor, were included as study participants after all the original interviewees expressed the essential roles of the instructional designer and the academic advisor.

Although seven interview participants might appear to be a small number, Merriam & Tisdell (2015) clarify there is no clear answer regarding how many people to interview in qualitative research. Instead, Merriam & Tisdell (2015) suggest "an adequate number of

participants…to answer the question posed at the beginning of the study" (p. 101). The seven participants provided ample and unique information that informed the study.

The secondary data, or the OBMSW documents, assisted in obtaining a greater and more in-depth understanding about the OBMSW. The documents included internal OBMSW program documents as well as OBMSW documents that were publicly available. The documents consisted of the OBMSW internal evaluation, OBMSW committee meeting minutes, OBMSW syllabi, the OBMSW program proposal, the OBMSW mission statement, OBMSW demographic data, OBMSW flyers, websites, and the great majority of the OBMSW syllabi.

Data Collection

Before the study commenced, the requirements of Loyola University Chicago's Institutional Review Board (IRB) were fulfilled and the proposed case study was determined to be exempt (see Appendix A). The LUC-SSW and the OBMSW offered and provided their full support for this study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

All of those invited to partake in the case study agreed to participate. An email with an explanation of the study goals and an invitation to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher via Zoom was sent to each potential participant. The interview consent form was attached in the invitation email. Six of the seven participants consented to a recorded interview. Interview notes were taken during the interview and follow-up interview with the participant that chose to not be recorded. This participant then received the interview notes via email and added clarifications and confirmed the data within the notes.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the key informants. Additionally, follow up interviews were also conducted with four participants. Each interview

was one hour to an hour and a half in length. In addition to the benefit of an interview providing in-depth information and description regarding a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2013), interviews are essential when there is an interest in historical information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The case study's objective of gaining insight regarding the program's development necessitated data from those who conceived and designed and are implementing the OBMSW.

Although all participants were asked some questions in common, semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix B) were developed for each participant to facilitate information gathering from the participant's particular perspective, history, and position within the OBMSW. The semi-structured interview instrument provided flexibility by allowing the interview to delve into areas that the researcher had not included in the guide (Padgett, 2017).

Interviews were conducted by the researcher and were conducted mostly in English with instances of Spanish and Spanglish woven in.

Document Review

Documents from the OBMSW program were utilized as a source of data for this case study. Yin (2018) states, "Because of its overall value, documentation can play a prominent role in any data collection in doing case study research" (p. 115). In this case, a document review had a central role in helping understand how and why the OBMSW was created, how it has evolved, and what type of curricular content is centers. Document review aided in revealing the "behind-the-scenes" processes and essential perspectives involved in the design and implementation phase of the OBMSW program. Hatch (2002) indicates that "Documents are powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions" (p. 117). Documents were key in answering the research questions.

Data Analysis

This case study utilized manual thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, a method of "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6), is typically utilized in qualitative research due to its flexibility (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic coding and analysis was chosen for this study given that a description of the OBMSW and the identification of key and distinctive factors within the program were sought. A deductive coding approach was applied since the study utilized LatCrit and CCW as analytical frameworks. The five LatCrit tenets and the six forms of CCW were applied as preestablished codes. Inductive coding, or codes and themes that are linked to the data (Patton, 1990), was utilized since the experiences and perspectives of the study participants and documents were being explored in order to learn more about the particularities of the OBMSW. Therefore, the information gathered from the data participants and documents themselves also guided the coding approach. Codes were categorized and themes were ultimately identified.

Data analysis of the interviews commenced simultaneously along with data collection (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Notes taken during the interviews with OBMSW participants began the process of data analysis. After interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and cleaned by the researcher. Once the transcriptions were completed, initial coding began in order for the researcher to recall the interview and refamiliarize herself with the data, to make annotations, and start assigning codes. The initial coding was followed by line-by-line coding to refine and help with categorization as well as to assign additional codes. Codes and subcodes based on CCW and LatCrit along with various other codes emerged after an extremely iterative coding process. Once codes were semi-defined, the breakdown of the coded excerpts were transferred from Microsoft Word to Microsoft Excel. The excerpts, codes assigned, and notes

from the researcher were placed in Excel, and the coding process continued; codes were continually reassigned and redefined. Finally, codes were categorized leading to the emergence of the final themes and subthemes.

A document analysis was completed on the OBMSW documents. This process was similar to analyzing the interview transcripts as it involved skimming the documents, reading through the documents, and interpreting the data to elicit understanding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Bowen, 2009). The document analysis aided in producing the description and greater understanding of the program, its origins, and its practices. A form of content analysis was applied to the review of the OBMSW syllabi. Given that the goal of the syllabi review was to describe its content through LatCrit and linguistic capital lenses, there was a need to identify, quantify and categorize codes, which made content analysis appropriate (Merriam, 1998; Bowen, 2009). Coded excerpts from OBMSW documents were also transferred to Excel where they were included with the other codes and themes.

It should be noted that all but one of the OBMSW syllabi were reviewed and analyzed. The syllabus not reviewed was unavailable as it was going to be developed for the OBMSW at a later date. The researcher also read and reviewed the abstracts of the required readings of one module in each of the reviewed syllabi. This was done to assess consistency between module descriptions, learning objectives, and the required readings of those modules as part of the document review.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought approval from LUC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting the case study research. The researcher complied with all IRB regulations as well as followed the NASW Code of Ethics (2021).

Merriam (1998) raises concerns that need to be considered and addressed during qualitative research. Merriam (1998) indicates that most ethical dilemmas emerge during data collection and dissemination of the findings and involve the researcher-participant relationship. Along with IRB protocols (e.g.., informed consent, confidentiality, informant ability to stop their participation at any point) the researcher was clear with all interview participants regarding the purpose of the research study. Additionally, all the informants were aware of the researcher's experience and role with LUC-SSW and the OBMSW program. All the questions and topics brought up during the semi-structured interviews covered the OBMSW design, procedures, and evolution. The interviews did not delve into participant privacy, nor did the interviews inquire about confidential student and/or staff and faculty information. Informant confidentiality was maintained.

Merriam (1998) indicates documents pose less of a concern. All the documents requested and utilized in the case study concerned the OBMSW design, its policies, its structure, and pedagogical material. All the documents are available upon request for the OBMSW students and stakeholders to access. No personal records were requested.

Trustworthiness

Quantitative and qualitative research go about trustworthiness, or how valid and reliable study findings are, in different ways. Merriam (1998) asserts, "If, as in the case of qualitative research, *understanding* is the primary rationale for the investigation, the criteria for trusting the study are going to be different than if discovery or a law or testing a hypothesis is the study's objective" (p. 200). This case study sought to understand the OBMSW program through qualitative research and sought to address trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truth or congruence of the study findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Stahl & King, 2020;). In order to address the criteria of credibility, this study implemented the following Lincoln and Guba (1985) techniques: triangulation of sources, peer debriefing, and member-checking. The multiple sources of data and the two methods of data collection addressed the triangulation of sources. It should be noted that since study participants were selected due to their unique perspective within the OBMSW, it was not expected or required for the multiple sources of data to confirm or reinforce data in order to achieve credibility. Peer debriefing was conducted through meetings and discussions with a colleague experienced in qualitative research. These meetings and discussions allowed for questions and critiquing of research activities and field notes. Member-checking took place when the researcher shared the interview notes with an interview participant and when the researcher followed up with the study participants to obtain clarity.

Dependability

Dependability refers to being able to demonstrate that study findings are consistent and stable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Stahl & King, 2020). This was achieved through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) technique of inquiry auditing. An external researcher examined the study's processes and findings to help evaluate if the assertions made by the researcher were supported by the data. This included the external auditor reviewing the researcher's audit trail (Guba, 1981). The audit trail consisted of documentation, such as notes from the interviews and the researcher's journal documenting all research procedures and reflections.

Confirmability

Confirmability denotes to making sure that the study findings are framed by the data sources and not researcher bias or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2015; Shahl & King, 2020). Confirmability was achieved by Lincoln & Guba's (1985) techniques of external audit, triangulation of sources, and reflexivity. Reflexivity was fostered by the development of a reflexive journal that included regular entries throughout the research process. Triangulation of sources was met through the different data sources. An external audit by a colleague helped evaluate whether the preliminary findings and conclusions are supported by the data.

Transferability

Transferability refers to being able to demonstrate that the research study findings have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability or generalizability was addressed through thick description. The OBMSW program was described in detail so that readers can have enough information to determine if the findings and conclusions drawn from the study might be able to transfer to other contexts. Yet, it should be noted that the purpose or goal of this study was not transferability. This study is an intrinsic case study that specifically sought to explore the OBMSW due to its uniqueness and therefore the purpose of the research was "particularization, not generalization" (Stake, 1995, p. 8).

Limitations

As is typical with qualitative research, one of the limitations of this case study was the researcher's potential bias and choices regarding the research design and analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). This proved to be particularly difficult for the researcher given that the analytical

framework of CCW has been used in research focusing on individuals and has not been typically applied to programs or organizations.

Another clear limitation involved the researcher's own biases regarding the OBMSW program, and the stakeholders interviewed. This dissertation's focus is directly tied to the researcher's own educational experience within a primarily white MSW and doctoral program and her strong desire for underrepresented students to have their own educational space. Additionally, the researcher has known and collaborated with the study participants previously and admires and respects them and their work. This called for the researcher to be keenly aware of her potential bias while collecting and analyzing the study data.

A third limitation of the case study is the lack of observation as a data collection method. Due to time restraints this was not possible, and it limited the study to interviews and document review. Classroom observations could have helped inform and been complementary of the syllabi review that was utilized to analyze OBMSW program content. Some study findings were based off of the syllabi review, but they do not present the full story due to the lack of observation in the study.

Significantly and finally, this study only sought to obtain the perspectives and voices of OBMSW program faculty and staff and of institutional documents. The voices of the most important stakeholders, the students, was absent. The intent of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the program through the interrogation of those who designed and implement the OBMSW environment and program. This was done purposefully so that the onus of educational preparedness is centered on the educational program and not the Latine students. Yet, this does not erase the fact that the student voice, perspective and experience are the most important perspectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the educational space the Online Bilingual MSW Program of Loyola University Chicago is providing for Latine students. It was essential to explore and interrogate the OBMSW to have a greater understanding of if and how the program provides a reimaged educational pathway option for Latine students. The findings of this study emerged from the interviews with seven study participants and from the review of OBMSW organizational documents.

The current chapter commences with a brief review of the research design and research questions, and is followed by a short history and overview of the OBMSW. The findings are then presented by emergent themes. Additional findings follow and the chapter concludes with a brief summary.

The aim of this case study was to explore LUC's OBMSW program to obtain a greater understanding of the claimed educational alterative it is offering Latine students. Therefore, an intrinsic case was conducted to explore the only online, bilingual (Spanish-English) MSW program in mainland U.S. The main research question for the study was: How is the OBMSW program providing an innovative educational pathway for Latine students? The two sub-questions that helped answer the main question were: What aspects of CCW are embedded and fostered within the OBMSW? What tenets of LatCrit are present in the program? LatCrit and CCW analytical frameworks were applied in the study. Three primary themes emerged from the

data: OBMSW's specific program purpose, structure, and content; OBMSW's valuing of Latine-centered environments; and the OBMSW's supportive approaches and practices. Additional themes revolving around the challenges faced by the program also emerged.

The Online Bilingual MSW Program

The following briefly describes the circumstances behind the creation of OBMSW. Then, the program proposal, a key document to understanding the program's foundation, is described. A current description of the OBMSW program also follows.

Proposing a Bilingual, Online Program

The program's founder explained that his idea for an online, bilingual program in Spanish and English started 10-15 years before he became the LUC-SSW dean in 2017. Through his work in various states, including Texas and Nevada, he had observed that social workers were needed in Latine communities yet there was a lack of bilingual professionals and school systems providing those services. When the program founder arrived at LUC-SSW, he realized that the SSW had three bilingual, bicultural faculty members and a couple of bilingual staff members which could be the foundation for an online and bilingual MSW program.

It should be noted that the OBMSW would not have been possible without the LUC-SSW's already established focus on migration. The OBMSW proposal built upon the years of professors' work and development of international and Jesuit partnerships, a migration studies track within its curriculum, and additional programmatic options, such as study abroad trips and international internships centered around migration. The original migration studies program and classes reflected and integrated the Jesuit education principle of social justice. It recognized and emphasized to its students that immigrant rights are frequently violated and/or unacknowledged, highlighted immigrant peoples' multiple strengths, and explored the numerous roles of social

work with the phenomena of migration. Although the program provided a global perspective of migration, it had and still has a unique emphasis on Latin American migrants and most of its programmatic options took place in Mexico.

The proposal for the OBMSW program was submitted by the School of Social Work in January of 2018. The proposal highlighted and centered the following as rationale for the program: the growing number of youthful Latines in the U.S.; the relatively low number of foreign born and U.S. born Latines in higher education; the unmet integrated mental health needs for Latine and immigrant and refugee populations; and the proposed program's strengths and uniqueness in addressing the aforementioned. The proposal stated that some of the barriers to recruitment and retention of Latine students in higher education were "prohibitive cost, limited eligibility for financial aid based on immigration status (undocumented, international, non-LPR or citizen), lack of outreach and college advising, unsupportive institutional contexts, and cultural and linguistic differences." It made note of the growing number of foreign-born Latines in the U.S., the rising number of Latines that speak Spanish at home, and of the underrepresentation of Latines in social work programs. Some of the barriers for accessing integrated mental health needs for Latine and immigrant populations noted were the regional variation in availability and services, and the lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate services, among others. The proposal centered a social justice perspective by stating, "For us at the School, it is a justice issue when children are predominantly used by service providing agencies to mediate between their families and the professionals, robbing them of their childhood."

The proposal emphasized the need for social work programs to address the underrepresentation of Latine students. It propositioned a reformatting of LUC-SSW's MSW

Health and Mental Health Specialization and Migration Studies Sub-Specialization Health and online format. The proposal also delineated how the OBMSW would support the university and school strategic plans. The program was to stimulate student access and retention of U.S. born and immigrant Latines through the program's linguistic and culturally responsive approach and curriculum, its delivery format, and program cost. Additionally, the proposal highlighted that "The program will use distance education technologies to provide cost-effective education and support service for this underrepresented population, that otherwise may not have the opportunity for graduate education." Faculty development, programs for societal needs, and local and global partnerships would also be touched upon by the OBMSW, according to the proposal.

The proposal also stated the admissions requirements for the program, the program outcomes, and the Jesuit education would not change in comparison to the already running MSW program. But there would be a Spanish language assessment cost for students and instructors. The program's length was outlined as, "This is a year round program with courses offered Fall/Spring/Summer. Four (4) continuous semesters for Advance Standing students (Those that already have the BSW degree) and Eight (8) continuous semesters for Regular students."

The program's curriculum was to utilize a split carousel model to support nontraditional students with their responsibilities and not overwhelm them with too many classes at once. The carousel model "splits the courses into some being 7.5 weeks and some being 15 weeks, but at any time, students will be actively engaged in only two courses at a time." The majority of the classes were assigned to be taught in Spanish, two courses were assigned to be taught in English, and three classes would be taught in Spanish and English. Advanced standing students would need to complete 34 credits and "regular" program students would complete 60 credits. As for the advising plan for the program, the proposal stated, "We have budgeted for new lines to be

added exponentially as the program grows. All of the advising will be conducted using video-conferencing/telephone as and when needed." The proposal stated there were no interdisciplinary contributions to the curriculum. A self-assessment and an instrument to evaluate performance in internships would be utilized to assess 10 competency standards identified by CSWE, just as was done in the on-ground existing MSW program. Additionally, there would be an assessment of bilingual competency for OBMSW students. This would include a pre-test and post-test design to assess improvement and competence.

The design and implementation team of the OBMSW would go on to meet with Loyola's Graduate and Professional Admission department to discuss channels, targets and marketing. The program was proposed to commence the course development and conversion from the on-ground existing MSW curriculum in mid-Spring 2018. The recruitment of bilingual tenure track and nontenure track faculty and staff for the program was to begin in late Spring 2018. And, finally, the program's first cohort was to begin in Fall 2018 with U.S.-based students and Fall 2019 was to include Latin American students.

Overview of the Current OBMSW Program

The OBMSW is an online and bilingual (Spanish-English) MSW program currently embedded within the larger Loyola University Chicago's CSWE-accredited School of Social Work. The LUC-SSW also currently implements an in-person MSW program and an MSW online program, both of which are only in the English language. At the time of this study, 89 students divided into four cohorts were enrolled in the OBMSW (F. Lozornio, personal communication, February 3, 2023). Of the 89 students, 79 identified as Latine, 2 identified as African American, and 8 as white (F. Lozornio, personal communication, February 3, 2023). The program has a mix of Latine students including first-generation immigrant students and heritage

speaker students. Immigrants from Latin America are the largest numerical group in the program and children of Latin American immigrants represent the second largest group of students.

The program follows a course of study in advanced clinical specialization and migration studies. These two concentrations recognize and address the underserved mental health service needs of immigrant and refugees and Latine communities. Since the program is online, the program can be completed from the student's home community. The program's website states that the OBMSW curriculum "is a well-thought-out sequence of courses that prepares you to practice as a professional social worker in your communities" (Loyola University Chicago, n.d.). The OBMSW curriculum expands the LUC-SSW's social justice policy courses, interprofessional practice, migration studies, and micro and macro practice interventions. All classes take place in the evenings and the format includes weekly synchronous classes and weekly asynchronous learning modules.

The OBMSW is a part-time program. Those students who qualify can enter the advanced standing program. The part time program usually takes 2.5 years to complete in eight consecutive semesters (i.e., Years 1 and 2: Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, Year 3: Fall and Spring semesters) and requires 49 credit hours. The advanced standing degree requires 23 credit hours to be completed in four continuous semesters or two years (i.e., Year 1: Spring and Summer semesters, Year 2: Fall and Spring semesters).

All courses within the program are taught in a bilingual format by bilingual and bicultural Latine instructors. Students have the option of submitting their assignments in the language of their choice.

The internship aspect of the program can be completed in the student's home community. All students begin their internship placements during their second year. The program requires

two internships totaling 1000 hours. The advanced standing students complete one internship totaling 600 hours. Given that OBMSW students can be located all over the country and that LUC is located in Chicago, many internship sites are identified and "developed" by the OBMSW students. That is, the student identifies possible internship placements local to them and they then collaborate with the OBMSW internship coordinator to understand if the agency or the organization might be one where the student can complete their internship hours. Those students living in areas or cities where LUC-SSW has already established relationships with agencies and organizations can access those resources. An option that was implemented in Fall 2022 was the placement of employment option. Students can apply to complete their internship at their workplace. A portion of their work hours can count toward their internship hours.

There have been some big programmatic changes to the program since its proposal and since its launch. Firstly, the program is currently only being offered to students living in mainland U.S. Second, after multiple student cohorts voiced difficulties balancing school and personal responsibilities along with the lack of breaks between semesters, the program moved away from the split carousel model that was in place during the launch of the program. The program currently offers cohorts two classes per semester and follows the greater LUC-SSW academic calendar that includes breaks between semesters. Finally, because of students voicing their perspective, the program has moved from a Spanish-dominant bilingual program to one where there is more of a balance of Spanish and English in each course. That is, the program originally started with about 90% of it being conducted in Spanish and included specific classes taught only in Spanish. The current program director has modified this imbalance and has communicated to OBMSW instructors that all classes should have some sort of bilingual format, including the readings.

Themes

Specific Program Purpose, Structure, and Content

The OBMSW program recognizes that Latine students require and warrant an educational pathway that is tailored to their assets, contexts, histories, identities, challenges, nuances, and aspirations. The program's proposal stated, "…Latino enrollment in social work programs cannot be fully realized without deliberative and intentional efforts."

Since its inception, the program intentionally shifted its paradigm to attempt to meet Latine students resulting in the construction of an educational structure with Latine students and Latine populations as the programmatic focal points.

Program purpose. According to study interviews, the program's purpose, or the reason for its creation and existence, is to provide educational access to Latine students and, consequently, provide culturally and linguistically appropriate social work services to Latine communities in the U.S.

The OBMSW Program Mission Statement from 2022 stipulates that the OBMSW,

> …[provides] accessible option for graduate education in a program of study that directly addresses the unmet service needs of immigrant and refugee communities through the preparation of social work integrated health professionals that have relevant linguistic, cultural, and migration focused knowledge and skills. The OBMSW program *also* [emphasis added] increases options for Latino Spanish-speaking students *and* [emphasis added] helps the School of Social Work to become more diverse, equitable and inclusive in its student population.

It also identifies one of its goals is to "Prepare students for practice with Latino/Bilingual immigrant and refugee communities." The mission statement and LUC website center the program's purpose and mission around providing Latine communities with social work services. Yet, all interview participants undoubtedly expressed that the purpose of the program was to increase Latine participation in social work education and, eventually, the profession. This

seemingly negligible incongruency will be discussed further in chapter five. Ultimately, the program's purpose is centered around Latine populations.

Notably, the program founder shared that the program was designed to be online to keep students in their own communities. He expanded,

> For me the place becomes important because pulling a kid from any of these communities into a major city or into a unique program defeats the purpose. You know, down the road we will be flush with bilingual social workers in Chicagoland, but nowhere else in Illinois, right…they [students] need to be the anchors in their community. We are providing them training into this profession so that they can stay in the community and be the leaders in the community. So that has always been my philosophy on online education in terms of its access, but at the same time, it's purposely grounding these kids in their community. And I think that has more value than anything else. Otherwise, we will be doing a disservice with disproportionate programming of kids coming in from different places.

Grounding Latine students in their own communities provides the opportunity for students to become social workers and local leaders while helping meet the needs of underserved populations in their area (LatCrit tenet 3, social and familial capital). This allows for student assets, strengths, and community wealth to be maintained, developed, and shared locally as opposed to being exported (resistant capital).

The program exists to try and provide access to an MSW degree to students who, if not for the option provided by the OBMSW, would not have enrolled in a social work education or any graduate degree (LatCrit tenet 3). The first program director highlighted her and the program's commitment to educational justice by sharing, "We wanted to increase accessibility to students who might want to have a degree like this, and maybe their primary language is Spanish and maybe they haven't felt comfortable seeking a postgraduate degree in English." The program is a direct and hopeful response to some of the barriers and inequities that obstruct Latine students from accessing a social work program.

Educational structure built for Latine students. If the program wanted to have an opportunity to achieve its purpose, the program was aware it had to move away from the typical social work education models that pose barriers and challenges for underrepresented students. The program founder shared that his objective in launching the OBMSW was to offer Latine students an educational environment built for them. He spoke to the lack of Latine students in social work education:

> We do not have graduate-level participation in social work from this very unique population to the numbers that we need, right. I mean they are around, but they are hesitant to sign up for a master's in social work. For a variety of reasons—it could be language, it could be the lack of seeing people like themselves in the classroom to teach them, the examples that we teach are sometimes alien to them.

To him, it was obvious that low numbers of Latine social work students are due to a variety of reasons linked to the prevailing unaccommodating and unwelcoming educational environment in higher education and social work.

Therefore, the program's structure was built to provide a supportive, accessible, and flexible learning environment for students. The program's tuition, online format, its course design, the all Latine faculty and staff, the program's class schedule, its cohort model and the bilingual structure all support students navigating and maneuvering through their MSW degree. The program's professor interviewed shared,

> …using best practices in online learning, but also making it more accessible to students. Like all the classes look [the same way] and the layout would be structured in a way that would be easy to follow for a student...So that was all part of the access and equity. And then the other thing was the bilingual piece…it would be accessible in terms of language for students whose primary language was Spanish. And then it would help students who are heritage speakers.

The structure of the program was intentionally designed to provide Latine students access and equity to a higher education system that historically and currently presents barriers and

challenges (LatCrit tenet 3) and was intentionally designed to facilitate and foster students' navigational capital.

Program tuition. The OBMSW knew that if the program was to meet its purpose, it had to address the financial barriers prohibiting many marginalized students from accessing higher education. Although still high, when compared to Loyola's other MSW programs, the OBMSW students pay a discounted rate (LatCrit tenet 1, 2, 3, 5 and navigational capital). Of the program's rate, the program's current director commented, "Data tells us that there's a huge dropout rate among Latino students in graduate programs and finances is a part of it. So, I think that's addressing some of the inequity."

The program's online aspect was also envisioned as "providing cost -effective education and support services for this underrepresented population that may otherwise not have the opportunity for graduate education," as is stated in the program proposal. The academic advisor shared that, "for our students who are working and sometimes have to reduce their workload due to their internships, I think it really helps."

However, the program's first director acknowledged that despite this reduction, tuition continues to be a challenge and barrier. OBMSW faculty have worked on grants that would specifically support OBMSW student retention and try to address this financial barrier. Despite the high cost, the discounted tuition rate and the online component providing more of a cost-effective pathway attempt to provide support in accessing an MSW degree, which also underscores the program's commitment to social justice.

Online format. All the program classes are fully online through a synchronous and asynchronous format. The online format of the program allows students to stay in their own

communities while working toward their OBMSW degree (familial & social capital). The academic advisor underscored the benefits of the online aspect:

> I think that opens up a whole new possibility for students who, because of work, because of family, would never be able to go to school…So it's like almost they get the best of both worlds—they're in a [synchronous] classroom, but they're online in the comfort of their own home. So they still get to create that community within the class and participate and be engaged and active but they can do it in a more flexible setting where they might not have to leave work at 3 to be able to make it to class. So that piece is very important.

The advisor acknowledged it would be difficult for many OBMSW students to uproot their lives and move to Chicago to access the bilingual program. There would also be challenges posed to students who live closer to Chicago due to students likely having to commute while juggling various responsibilities and commitments. The online aspect of the program facilitates access (LatCrit tenet 3) and navigation of the program (navigational capital), while students are able to continue contributing and growing within their own local communities (familial and social capital).

Course design. The program's course design was thoughtfully conceptualized. All the interviewees highlighted the instructional designer's abilities and her importance in the program's creation and accomplishment. The instructional designer made it clear that the student is the main concern in course design. She described the OBMSW perspective and focus as, "We want to be student-centered…What is it that benefits students? So, we work around that. When we look at the course design, we're looking from the student's point of view."

The program's goal is to make the online aspect of the program as easy to navigate as possible. The instructional designer pointed out that the program took into account that many people, especially from Latin America, rely upon their smartphones to access the internet. The importance of accessibility was emphasized by the instructional designer:

> That was a big factor on my end. Some course design may look beautiful, but they are not necessarily accessible… So what you see in our course design—how big the font is, what color we use, the style of the font, the separation in between lines—all of that requires accessibility thinking.

Accessibility is also reflected in the utilization of Spanish in anything related to the program's course design. Regarding the program syllabi and electronic platform, Sakai, the instructional designer states, "The title will be in Spanish. The description is in Spanish. The learning objectives are in Spanish...Then, for major assignments, if the assignments are long and require several steps, we provide them in both languages." This helps ensure that students who might be more Spanish dominant have clarity and understand all course and program information (navigational capital, LatCrit tenet 3).

The instructional designer stressed and advised that the program and its instructors design and introduce technology slowly to promote accessibility. The following interview quote reflects the instructional designer's thoughts about the utilization and scaffolding of technology for new students:

> This was a lot of decisions to be made. Because even with the use of technology you have to be careful. You kind of look at your students. There is a lot of technology available for online learning. What technology, the purpose, and the amount… You want to keep it interactive; we don't want to frustrate the students or overwhelm them…A student who is a nontraditional student, an older student like me, may approach this and say, "this is too much technology, I will not be able to navigate that." Then they start the program, they find that the technology is overwhelming, and they may leave the program. When, in reality, this is something that is completely doable.

The program is cognizant that technology can be daunting and has taken steps to ensure that the technological aspect of the program is manageable (navigational capital). The instructional designer clarified that once in their second semester, students appear to feel more comfortable with assignments requiring technology use.

Consistency and structure are other aspects of the course design that add to accessibility, and support students navigating the classes and Sakai. Although each course has its own Sakai page with course-specific content, all the OBMSW Sakai pages are structured in the same manner so that students do not have to relearn how to navigate each new course page (navigational capital). The instructional designer expanded,

> …One thing for sure we didn't want is for students to stress out every time they open a site because they didn't know where they were. So now, even though the course content is completely different from one course to another, the students know where the rubrics are, they know where the grades are, and if they need the phone number for the accessibility center, they know where that information is…so the student gets to focus on the social work content.

This reflects programmatic measures that promote students' concentration on learning instead of spending time and energy deciphering how to maneuver through the program and its online components.

Class schedule. The program provides all its classes in the evening in order to accommodate the schedules of OBMSW students who typically work full-time and have multiple personal responsibilities. Additionally, the program is part-time which means that students take two classes per semester. All of this embeds navigational capital within the program with the goal of aiding OBMSW students during the program.

Cohort model. The cohort model utilized by the program can address the "need for community and connection within OBP," as was shared by the internship coordinator. Most interviewees brought up the cohort model directly influencing community building amongst students due to cohort members taking the same classes throughout the program. The academic advisor shared,

> The other piece that's important is the cohort model…that's where students have built a sense of community for themselves. Because now they're in a program where they

> realize, 'Wait, I'm not the only student that is trying to work and get my master's degree and do this and do that. And they're going through the program together. So, they create this support system throughout the entire program.

The cohort model creates and facilitates a peer support system (social and navigational capital) since, "they're working together in projects, they're having dialogue, they're all in the same classes, they have WhatsApp chats for the different cohort groups," as was expressed by the program professor. This connection does not only emerge within cohort members, but also across cohorts, as was mentioned by the internship coordinator.

Bilingual mode of instruction. The program was always envisioned as a bilingual program. From the outset, the OBMSW recognized multilingual Latine students as assets and made the intentional choice to build a program and educational environment around their linguistic capital.

The program professor expanded on the program's view of bilingual Latine students:

> Well, I think, it's saying being bilingual is an asset, that it should be cultivated. I think that's pretty big. And that whatever language skill you have…maybe it's just like home Spanish, that's still viewed as an asset and something that you should cultivate. I think having an immigrant experience, like one's experience that's valued, right? So I think there was a lot of an unarticulated assumptions. I mean, that is an assumption—that being bilingual is good, and it's something that we should reinforce and dedicate a program to... I mean the other attitude could have been, "Well, you should all learn English." Or we could have had programs that help students—a class on how to work with interpreters and things like that.

The conviction regarding the assets of bilingual students and the opportunities of fomenting the linguistic skills of those students through a bilingual mode of instruction is clear.

The bilingual format of the OBMSW evidences the program's assets-based perspective about multilingual minoritized students (LatCrit tenet 2). Additionally, the translation of the Sakai manual from English to Spanish for OBMSW students was shared with the university for

institution-wide use. This benefited *all* LUC students, and faculty and staff who preferred or needed Spanish language material.

Language flexibility. Language flexibility is another aspect of the OBMSW's structure that helps students navigate the program. As previously mentioned, the program's course design integrates Spanish in the syllabi and Sakai sites. Additionally, students can turn in their coursework in English or Spanish. This is imperative as a survey of OBMSW students in 2020 revealed that 70% of enrolled students identified as native Spanish speakers and 18% identified as heritage speakers. Moreover, 33% of students stated it was easier for them to write assignments in English and 41% responded both Spanish and English were equally easy. 44% responded it was easier to read in Spanish and 18% indicated both languages were equally easy to read. This exemplifies the nuances and spectrums of bilingualism of the OBMSW students, which highlights the importance of the linguistic flexibility of the program. The OBMSW program founder shared,

> I'm more comfortable thinking in my mother tongue and translating in my head, and then speaking in English. So just imagine doing that in the classroom right? Why are you adding that extra stress on these students if you can offer a very clear way for them? So admissions, I mean, they [prospective students] can write the essay in English or in Spanish. They [OBMSW students] can turn in assignments either in English or what they are comfortable with. So we need to respond to what the students' needs are and not put our needs first in terms of how we measure and things like that. The Latinx population in general becomes central.

The program made an intentional decision of integrating language flexibility into the courses. By providing students the option to choose which language they use for assignments, the program can meet the needs of students who are more English dominant *and* meet the needs of students who are more Spanish dominant (linguistic capital).

Alternatively, the program could have kept its original approach of assigning each course to be taught in a specific language and could have opted to require students to submit assignments in a specific language. Such a programmatic decision could have complicated and hindered the experience for students. The program's founder clearly stated that the Latine students are the focus (LatCrit tenet 1) and the program should do everything in its control to clear a pathway toward their MSW degree (navigational capital).

Linguistic growth. The program is aware of the need to produce opportunities within the program for students to continue growing their language skills and abilities for their individual benefit and to benefit their current and future social work collaborations. Various study participants voiced that internship placements provide an opportunity for students to improve their language abilities in Spanish and English (linguistic capital). However, placements initially and typically require some English language proficiency to communicate with co-workers and supervisors, as well as to complete internship documentation. This has proven to be a challenge for some students, as was commented by multiple interviewees. The program founder shared thoughts about the intentionality of supporting and preparing Spanish dominant students. He stated,

> We will do a disservice to the students if the entire thing was in Spanish, and they had no clue how to function in the office world with professional English as the go between… But we wanted to make sure that it was coming to them in phases. So, a student who may not be very proficient in English still needed to be comfortable applying for the program in Spanish, get into the program, and as they get socialized into the profession with their peers, with their faculty, they will pick up the other language as and when they need it. As in when they are comfortable that they will use it—whether it's in field or wherever that is. I think that was intentional.

In contrast to Spanish dominant or Latin American-born students, heritage speakers who are more English dominant are offered the opportunity to improve their Spanish language

proficiency. This can occur through their exposure to the Spanish language in an academic setting, something that they might not have ever experienced. Furthermore, the OBMSW internships are situated in agencies and organization that provide services to Latine and/or immigrant populations, which also provides opportunities for heritage or English-dominant students to improve their Spanish language skills.

The program has invested in Latine students and the linguistic skills they carry (LatCrit tenet 4), while aiming to continue developing their bilingualism (linguistic capital) in an educational environment that meets them where they are at (LatCrit tenets 2 & 3) on their linguistic journey.

Program content. Program content specifically curated for the OBMSW was an important element for the program implementation and design team and continues to be an on-going process for the program. The OBMSW attempts to center Latine, immigrant and refugee, and Spanish language content to provide Latine students the appropriate preparation to work with Latine and immigrant and refugee communities.

The OBMSW syllabi were reviewed through a predominantly LatCrit lens. LatCrit was an appropriate framework to analyze the OBMSW course syllabi because it centers Latine populations, challenges educational environments and materials that are steeped in Eurocentric perspectives and recognizes that Latine students and communities are holders and creators of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Additionally, due to the program's bilingual nature, the syllabi were also reviewed through a linguistic capital lens.

All the course syllabi that comprise the OBMSW curriculum were formatted in a similar manner. Most syllabi present the general course policies and information, instructor information, grading information, SSW mission and identity statement, learning objectives and EPAS

(Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards) related competencies, and university resources information in Spanish. Few courses present these sections in English and some do so in both languages. Syllabi present the course content by modules, which reflect the number of weeks associated with the course (e.g., summer course vs. fall/spring semester course). The great majority of syllabi included modules containing a description, objectives, and required and recommended readings/content. Assignment descriptions were included either before the first module or after the last module.

As previously mentioned, the OBMSW course syllabi are developed from a syllabi template from the original English MSW program within LUC-SSW. OBMSW syllabi developers are identified by the program's current director. The current director reviews and approves the OBMSW-specific syllabi before it is included in the curriculum.

In reviewing program syllabi, all tenets of LatCrit were identified. Apart from linguistic capital, forms of CCW were minimally detected and mostly overlapped with some of the LatCrit principles. LatCrit's first tenet, the centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of discrimination, was present in all but one of the program's course syllabi. The commitment to social justice and the challenge to dominant ideology were moderately present, and the historical context and interdisciplinary tenet was minimally present. The centrality of experiential knowledge was the tenet least detected in the syllabi. Although all tenets were detected in the syllabi, there was variation between the courses. Some course syllabi had LatCrit tenets present throughout their modules, while others had the tenets integrated minimally. In other words, the identification of a LatCrit tenet did not indicate its frequency or strength within the syllabus. An 'X' in Table 1 indicates which LatCrit tenet(s) were identified in each course. Examples of each LatCrit tenet and its varied presence within the OBMSW syllabi follow.

Table 1. LatCrit Tenets in OBMSW Syllabi

OBMSW Course	Race, Racism, & Intersectionality	Challenge to Dominant Ideology	Commitment to Social Justice	Experiential Knowledge	Historical Context and Interdisciplinary Perspective
SOWK 500 Lifespan Development, Human Behavior, Trauma and Theory	X	X	X		
SOWK 501: Assessment of Client Concerns in Context	X	X	X		
SOWK 502: Power, oppression, Privilege, and Social Justice	X	X	X	X	
SOWK 503: Practice Skills with Individuals and Families	X	X	X	X	
SOWK 504: Integrated Micro/Mezzo/Macro Theory and Practice	X	X	X		
SOWK 505: Group Practice in Social Work	X	X			X

OBMSW Course	Race, Racism, & Intersectionality	Challenge to Dominant Ideology	Commitment to Social Justice	Experiential Knowledge	Historical Context and Interdisciplinary Perspective
SOWK 506: Research and Evaluation in Social Work Practice	X	X			
SOWK 509: Social Work Policy and Community Interventions	X		X		X
SWFI 530S: Integrative Seminar	X				
SOWK 680: Advanced Micro-Level Practice	X		X	X	X
SOWK 681: Advanced Mezzo & Macro Practice	X		X	X	X
SOWK 730: Migration Dynamics and U.S. Social Policy	X	X	X		X
SOWK 731: Social Work Practice with Refugees & Immigrants	X	X	X	X	X
SOWK 732: Migration, Social Justice, & Human Rights	X	X	X	X	X

OBMSW Course	Race, Racism, & Intersectionality	Challenge to Dominant Ideology	Commitment to Social Justice	Experiential Knowledge	Historical Context and Interdisciplinary Perspective
SOWK 632: Social Work Practice with Older Adults	X		X		X

Race, racism, and intersectionality. CRT and LatCrit place race and racism as the focus of their analysis. LatCrit's first tenet acknowledges that race and racism intersect with multiple forms of subordination including, but not limited to, gender, class, language, or immigration status (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 313). LatCrit's first principle was identified within a great number of the course syllabi. SWFI 632S, or the second integrated internship seminar, was the only syllabus that did not have this or any other tenet present within its content. Most curriculum syllabi included a Latine emphasis and intersectionality content, but the crucial aspects of race and racism were extremely limited. Very few syllabi integrated LatCrit's first tenet throughout its content.

This first tenet was mostly detected in the Latine focus of the syllabi and in the intersections of multiple categories such as gender, age, immigration status, class, and sexual orientation that were present in multiple courses. Yet, there were very few instances where race and racism were detected and were central in syllabi. For example, SOWK 732 (Migration, Social Justice, & Human Rights), SOWK 506 (Research and Evaluation in Social Work Practice), SOWK 680 (Advanced Micro-Level Practice) and SOWK 509 (Social Work Policy and Community Interventions) were the only courses where content on Black immigrants and African Americans were detected. And yet, SOWK 680 was the only course that included one article about Afro-descendants in Latin America. None of the courses had any subject matter about Black Latine immigrants identified. Similarly, SOWK 730 (Migration Dynamics and U.S. Social Policy) and SOWK 732 were the only two courses where content on Indigenous Nations and Indigenous immigrants was identified.

There was a lack of consistency between the module descriptions, module objectives, and module readings in most of the courses. Various course syllabi mentioned intersectionality either

in the module description and/or objectives but not in the readings. For example, one of SOWK 500's (Lifespan Development, Human, Behavior, Trauma and Theory) module 7 objectives stated, "*Evaluar críticamente y desde la perspectiva de la cultura Latina y de las minorías sexuales, los modelos tradicionales de desarrollo que explican la adolescencia*." (Critically evaluate and from the perspective of Latino culture and sexual minorities, the traditional models of development that explain adolescence.) However, there were no article titles or abstracts within that module that appeared to address these important perspectives. SOWK 505 (Group Practice in Social Work) provided another example of this lack of consistency. Module 9A presented a description of group work in specific places that are noteworthy for Latine immigrants and refugees in the U.S., such as schools, immigration detention centers, and prisons. Yet, none of the abstracts of the required readings appeared to address those populations in those settings. Additionally, most of the readings from said module were from Spain and not about Latine immigrants and refugees in the U.S.

Importantly, SOWK 502 entitled, "Power, Oppression, Privilege, and Social Justice," is a course where race, racism, and intersectionality ought to be central and ought to be examined. One of the course assignments took on this important task. The assignment description stated,

> *El diario de autoconciencia incluye dos entradas claves que te animan a examinar tus sentimientos, pensamientos, acciones y prejuicios en relación con el privilegio, el poder, la opresión y la diversidad. Las entradas requieren que pienses críticamente sobre tus experiencias pasadas y presentes, así como sobre tu propia identidad.* (The self-awareness journal includes two key entries that encourage you to examine your feelings, thoughts, actions, and prejudices in relation to privilege, power, oppression, and diversity. Entries require you to think critically about your past and present experiences, as well as your own identity.)

This type of assignment is key because it gives the Latine-majority students the

opportunity to reflect on their privileges and power while delving into the diversities, identities, and intersectionalities of Latine communities.

Nonetheless, only 3 modules of the 13 within the SOWK 502 syllabus were about Latine populations. The program director stated that the "Power, Oppression, Privilege, and Social Justice" class was "completely different from the regular MSW program's 502. We included the Latino perspective; we included discrimination, racism within the Latino community. So all that is built in there." This was not confirmed through this study's review of the course syllabus.

A couple of courses did integrate a race, racism, and intersectionality lens well and throughout the course syllabi. For example, even though SOWK 680 is a clinical course, it did include some racial components and a fair amount of intersectionality content. For example, module 9 introduced trauma from a racialized perspective. The module description stated, "*En este módulo daremos continuidad a la complejidad del trauma, pero desde el lente de la violencia y práctica anti-opresiva,*" (In this module we will give continuity to the complexity of trauma, but from the lens of violence and anti-oppressive practice) was followed by the objective of, "*Reconocer y evaluar el estrés y el trauma racial,*" (Recognize and evaluate the stress and racial trauma) and included a reading entitled, "*Las heridas del racismo: Efectos psicosociales de la discriminación racial en las personas afrodescendientes en América Latina.*" (Recognize and assess racial stress and trauma, and included a reading titled, The Wounds of Racism: Psychosocial effects of racial discrimination on people of African Descent in Latin America.) This same course dedicated one module to family theory and the following module to family therapy within diverse contexts. SOWK 681 and SOWK 504 (Integrated Micro/Mezzo/Macro Theory and Practice) included content mentioning intercultural collaborations, and they appeared to be the only courses to do so in all syllabi. SOWK 503's (Practice Skills with Individuals and

Families) syllabus had a Latine lens throughout. It is evident that it was developed with OBMSW students and client populations in mind as most of the modules adapt theories or models to Latine populations. For instance, module 11's description stated, "*Este módulo inicia a los estudiantes a la teoría cognitive-conductual y teorías relacionadas, así como su aplicación al plan de tratamiento y al trabajo con comunidades marginadas.*" (This module introduces students to cognitive-behavioral theory and related theories, as well as their application to treatment plan and work with marginalized communities.) The module's objective listed, "*Examinar la adaptación óptima de la teoría cognitive-conductual y el trabajo con las comunidades Latinx u otras minorías*" (Examine the optimal adaptation of cognitive-behavioral theory and work with Latino or other minority communities) and included the reading entitled, "Cultural values integration in cognitive-behavioral therapy for a Latino with depression."

Overall, the race, racism, and intersectionality tenet was the most identified tenet in OBMSW syllabi, but it also had a wide range of prevalence within syllabi.

Challenge to dominant ideology. The challenge to dominant ideology encompasses resisting the typical deficit frameworks utilized to analyze the educational experiences of Latine students as well as challenging "the traditional claims of the educational system to objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 313). LatCrit's second tenet is applicable to most of the program curriculum due to the syllabi presenting a wide and broad lens of social work with Latines and non-dominant populations. Most of the syllabi present the application of models, theories, and interventions with said groups. However, there were scarcely any alternative or non-dominant theories and interventions identified in the syllabi. Nevertheless, a few of the course syllabi presented opportunities to critique or challenge typical social work models and tools.

Social work interventions, theories, and policies relating to diverse groups were presented within many of the syllabi. For example, there were readings about transgender rights and politics, the cultural adaptation of evidence-based interventions, older adults within the LGBTQ+ communities, trauma applications with immigrant and refugee populations, and community building with youth, among others. The program professor stated,

> …some of the literature that we tried to use comes from the Latino community...I don't think it takes like a pathological view, you know, towards immigrants and mental health at all. I think that it´s trying to use like a culturally informed model that looks at assets and builds on those, right, like a non-pathologizing...

The review confirmed that, generally, the program curriculum did include what appeared to be culturally informed social work interventions that seemed to present non-pathologizing views.

Non-dominant theories or perspectives in social work were rarely present within the syllabi reviewed. Critical race theory in SOWK 502, Indigenous-based research ethics in SOWK 506, the use of testimonio in SOWK 732, and a feminist approach to clinical social work in SOWK 680 were some of the occasional instances of non-dominant social work perspectives detected in modules.

On the other hand, there were some examples where the reinforcement of dominant ideology was clearly present. For example, SOWK 502's syllabi stated, "*Se presentan características genéricas (es decir, monoculturales eurocéntricas) de la consejería (es decir, inglés estándar, comunicación verbal centrada en el individuo, cumplimiento de horarios, familia nuclear, distinción clara entre bienestar físico y mental, etc.)*" (Generic [i.e., Eurocentric monocultural] features of counseling [i.e., standard English, individual-centered verbal communication, scheduling, nuclear family, clear distinction between physical and mental well-being, etc.] are presented.) While the module description went on to state Asian, Latine, U.S.

Indigenous, and African American perspectives were to be discussed, it reinforced Eurocentricity by adding the description of "*características genéricas*." Within that same syllabus, older adults and people with disabilities were presented and discussed in one module. By pairing these two groups together, it could reinforce the stereotype that only older adults have disabilities and/or that all older adults have disabilities.

A few syllabi appeared to set up a challenge and critique toward dominant social work interventions. For instance, one of the objectives in SOWK 501's (Assessment of Client Concerns in Context) module 5 stated, "*Criticar la validez del proceso de desarrollo del DSM-5 y la validez de los diagnósticos psiquiátricos.*" (Critique the validity of the DSM-5 development process and the validity of psychiatric diagnoses.) It also included a podcast titled, "Critiques of the DSM-5" as required content. Additionally, SOWK 731 included a module objective that stated, "*Analizar críticamente las teorías utilizadas en el trabajo clínico; su trasfondo y relación con la cultura dominante*." (Critically analyze the theories used in clinical work; its background and relationship with the dominant culture.) And SOWK 505 included objectives that stated, "*Evaluar críticamente el modelo de 5-etapas de desarrollo de grupos propuesto por Lynda Schiller y su aplicabilidad a grupos de inmigrantes Latinx en la etapa de poder y control*" (Critically evaluate the 5-stage model of group development proposed by Lynda Schiller and its applicability to Latinx immigrant groups at the power and control stage) and "*Evaluar la aplicabilidad de las maneras de investigar/evaluar grupos mencionados por la literatura profesional en inglés, a grupos de inmigrantes y refugiados Latinx.*" (To assess the applicability of ways of researching/evaluating groups mentioned by the professional literature in English, to Latinx immigrant and refugee groups.)

Commitment to social justice. The commitment to social justice is encapsulated by "(a) the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty and (b) the empowering of underrepresented minority groups" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 313). This includes the various forms of resistance that are implemented to confront oppression and discrimination (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). A social justice lens is present in numerous syllabi. It was found through the social justice-oriented language integrated in the modules' descriptions and objectives. The language on marginalized groups, systemic inequities, and advocacy along with the numerous culturally responsive interventions evidenced the linkage to the social justice tenet. The examination of strategies to combat poverty, interdisciplinary collaborations to address injustices, culturally responsive interventions with Latine substance users, and the consequences of migration policies and structural inequities are some examples of social justice-oriented themes presented in the OBMSW syllabi.

The courses focused on populations or phenomena, such as the immigration-focused and older adults' courses, have social justice integrated throughout most of their content. Of note is SOWK 732 which is a course focused on social justice, human rights, and migration. In addition to these courses, SOWK 681, 680, and 504 all had social justice language and content threaded throughout most of their module descriptions, objectives, and readings.

Experiential knowledge. Regarding LatCrit's fourth theme, the centrality of experiential knowledge, Solorzano & Delgado Bernal (2001) state that "A CRT and LatCrit framework recognizes that the experiential knowledge of Students of Color are legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination" (p. 314). Minimal examples of experiential knowledge were identified with the OBMSW syllabi. In the few occasions they were, it was via the course assignments. Self-evaluations requiring reflection and

storytelling through TedTalk and StoryCorps are examples of how experiential knowledge was utilized. Moreover, the SOWK 680 syllabi included the following statement, "At the beginning of the course, faculty will evaluate students' mastery of the core foundation content in all the competencies, so as to assist those who need more integration of foundation content." This was the only course that directly stated that the students' prior knowledge would be considered. Along with experiential knowledge, this specific statement in the SOWK 680 syllabus overlaps with navigational capital.

There was a remarkable example of experiential knowledge within SOWK 731. The module 12 description stated,

> *En este módulo exploraremos ideas relacionadas a la experiencia de ser inmigrante y formarse en trabajo social o psicoterapia en un país extranjero….Ejercer psicoterapia habiendo emigrado de otro país trae consigo una serie de experiencias internas que pueden ejercer cierta influencia en (1) los clientes que tu prefieres ver, (2) los clientes que prefieren buscar tu ayuda y (3) cómo te acercas a estos en tu trabajo clínico. La lectura 'Ethnocultural transference and countertransference in the therapeutic dyad' reflexiona sobre la experiencia interna que repercute en tu trabajo con personas similares o distintas a ti en cuanto a tu trasfondo étnico y cultural. En la sesión sincrónica se invitará a un/a psicoterapeuta inmigrante que pueda exponer su experiencia trabajando con inmigrantes y personas de distintos trasfondos étnicos y culturales.* (In this module we will explore ideas related to the experience of being an immigrant and training in social work or psychotherapy in a foreign country. Practicing psychotherapy having emigrated from another country brings with it a series of internal experiences that can exert some influence on (1) the clients you prefer to see, (2) the clients who prefer to seek your help, and (3) how you approach them in your clinical work. The reading 'Ethnocultural transference and countertransference in the therapeutic dyad' reflects on the inner experience that affects your work with people similar or different from you in terms of your ethnic and cultural background. In the synchronous session, an immigrant psychotherapist will be invited who can present his/her experience working with immigrants and people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.)

The objectives of the module included, "*Reflexionar sobre los procesos de contratransferencia o la experiencia personal como inmigrante y cómo esto impacta el trabajo clínico con l@s clientes…Discutir los retos únicos que l@s psicoterapeutas inmigrantes enfrentan en la práctica*

del trabajo social clínico." (Reflect on countertransference processes or personal experience as an immigrant and how this impacts clinical work with clients... Discuss the unique challenges that immigrant psychotherapists face in clinical social work practice.) And the module reading titles and abstracts reflected the description and objectives. The module takes into account the implications of migration, ethnic and cultural similarities or differences that the clinician might have with clients (LatCrit tenet 1). Additionally, the module also included a guest speaker who is a foreign-born social worker. This module appears to have been created intentionally for OBMSW students as most of the students are born in Latin America and are in the process of obtaining their MSW degree in a foreign country.

Historical and contemporary context and interdisciplinary perspective. The interdisciplinary perspective is LatCrit and CRT's fifth tenet. This tenet refers to challenging the typical analysis that uses an ahistorical and undiscipline perspective and insists on, instead, analyzing race and racism with interdisciplinary tools and through a historical and contemporary context (Delgado 1984, 1992; Garcia, 1995; Harris, 1994; Olivas, 1990; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Few of the curriculum syllabi included LatCrit's fifth tenet. When it was identified, it was through the broadening of the social work perspective to include an international or global perspective, and interdisciplinary theories. For example, SOWK 730 discussed migration from a globalization lens, and SOWK 681 included content on social work in Latin America. SOWK 632 (Social Work Practice with Older Adults) included a module that touched upon spirituality, which was unique to the OBMSW syllabi. SOWK 732 included social justice theories from various disciplines such as philosophy, multiple religious traditions, human rights and legal perspectives, and economics, among others. Finally, SOWK 731 also included the discussion of theories from disciplines outside of social work.

Linguistic capital. The syllabi were also reviewed with a linguistic capital lens due to the bilingual format of the program. Table 2 presents the language breakdown of the readings included in each course syllabi. This breakdown provides an idea of the balance of languages students currently encounter in each course according to the required reading content.

Given that it is a bilingual program, it could be assumed that all of the modules within all of the syllabi include readings in both languages. Yet, the great majority of syllabi had multiple modules with readings that were all in English or all in Spanish. SOWK 681 and SOWK 731 were the only courses that had readings in both Spanish and English included in all their modules. There were other courses that had a general balance of both languages. For example, SOWK 632 had one module with all English readings and the rest included both languages; SOWK 505 had one module with all English readings and one module with all Spanish readings, and the remainder of the modules included Spanish and English readings; and SOWK 503, 732 and 730 each had two modules with all English required content while the rest of their modules included bilingual readings. On the other side of the spectrum, SOWK 502 included only one module with Spanish and English readings; the rest of the modules included all English readings. The SOWK 504 syllabi and both internship seminars contained only English language readings.

While there could be a reason(s) for syllabi to be dominant in one language over the other, it was uncorroborated through the data obtained in this study. For example, it could be possible that the clinical courses or modules are more Spanish dominant given that OBMSW students are being prepared to provide mental health services to a population that has limited access to Spanish language services. SOWK 503, for instance, contains an English dominant module about case planning. It could be that this was intentional due to case planning at

internships and places of employment likely to be in English. It is also plausible that the research class and policy classes could be intentionally more English-oriented due to their subject matters.

Linguistic capital was defined and found through the balance of languages presented in the syllabi modules, as well as in small clarifications included in syllabi, and in the purposeful language designation of an assignment. Some sort of balance in the readings aids students who are dominant in either language to have a clearer comprehension of the program's content (navigational capital), while also providing opportunities to improve their reading and comprehension skills in their non-dominant language (linguistic capital).

Two syllabi incorporated language clarifications through translation. SOWK 502 included, "*Describir como el estigma, el sesgo* (bias)…" and SOWK 503 stated, "*Haz una investigación de información sobre el tema de la contratación inicial con los clientes (en inglés*: engagement)." The first translation clarified a word that may not be as commonly known and the second named the concept in English to provide clarification. Both instances facilitate and expand language skills for heritage speakers. Additionally, SOWK 632 included a note regarding a case planning assignment that indicated, "Directive for this assignment intentionally in English." Even though students can complete the assignment in either language, the directive could prompt them to complete the assignment in English, which is the language case planning will likely be completed in real-life social work scenarios.

Table 2. OBMSW Syllabi Spanish and English Distribution

OBMSW Course	Language Distribution of Readings
SOWK 500: Lifespan Development, Human Behavior, Trauma and Theory	Four modules with all Spanish readings.
SOWK 501: Assessment of Client Concerns in Context	Two modules with all Spanish readings. Two modules with all English readings.
SOWK 502: Power, oppression, Privilege, and Social Justice	Fourteen of the fifteen modules with all English readings.
SOWK 503: Practice Skills with Individuals and Families	Two modules with all English readings.
SOWK 504: Integrated Micro/Mezzo/Macro Theory and Practice	All module descriptions are in Spanish, but all readings are in English.
SOWK 505: Group Practice in Social Work	One module with all English readings. One module with all Spanish readings.
SOWK 506: Research and Evaluation in Social Work Practice	Four modules with all English content.
SOWK 509: Social Work Policy and Community Interventions	Modules 1-4 with all Spanish readings. Modules 5-12 with all English readings.
SWFI 530S: Integrative Seminar	All syllabus content and all readings in English.
SOWK 680: Advanced Micro-Level Practice	All modules include readings in English and Spanish.
SOWK 681: Advanced Mezzo & Macro Practice	One module with all Spanish readings. Three modules with all English readings.
SOWK 730: Migration Dynamics and U.S. Social Policy	Two modules with all English readings but they include Spanish PowerPoints.
SOWK 731: Social Work Practice with Refugees & Immigrants	All modules include material in both English and Spanish.

OBMSW Course	Language Distribution of Module Readings
SOWK 732: Migration, Social Justice, & Human Rights	Two modules with all English content.
SWFI 632S: Integrative Seminar	All syllabus content and all readings in English.
SOWK 632: Social Work Practice with Older Adults	One module with all English readings.

Fostering and Valuing Latine-Centered Environments

The OBMSW has created a uniquely Latine-centered environment that values and builds upon Latine student assets. This is demonstrated through the program's targeting of Latine students; the Latine faculty and staff; the development of local internship sites with and for students; the OBMSW graduation ceremonies; and the migration-focused study abroad trip.

Latine students. The program specifically seeks out Latine students because of their personal experiences and cultural assets. The program professor interviewed shared why the program seeks out Latine students:

> I think that´s saying something in the sense of confidence that they're [Latine students] better situated or positioned to attend to their community. You know what I mean? That that's an asset. You come with that cultural information, that experience that's shared — that's viewed as an asset in terms of the students coming in. And I guess with the faculty, too, that's something that you can engage in and use in the classroom.

Here, the interviewee underscored the experiential and cultural knowledge (LatCrit tenet 4) of Latine students that is essential in working with Latine communities.

Non-traditional, Spanish-dominant students. The first program director expanded on what non-traditional, Spanish-dominant students bring to the program:

> Yeah, by far Latinx, the majority are primary Spanish speakers, which is awesome…I mean, they get the complexities of the immigrant experience because they've been immigrants themselves, and they understand the needs of the communities...it is a more knowing community of students. So, it's exciting that they already come in with high qualities, and now they'll go get their MSW and go with those high qualities into the work with Latinx communities. That part is so energizing for me, I can't even tell you.

The non-traditional Latine students' social work and personal experiences are seen as strengths that can be utilized within a social work context and in connecting with immigrant populations (LatCrit tenet 4). This contradicts typical belief that posits immigrant students as unprepared for higher education contexts (LatCrit tenet 2). The first program director remarked,

> By making it bilingual, bicultural, we knew we might be able to reach more people who would probably be a different community of students if they are working full-time and all that. More mature, and that part ended up being true. We did get a very high-quality type of students who were already working in the field and knew quite a lot about practice.

The quality that accompanies the experience of non-traditional students adds to the program and learning environment for students and faculty. The program specifically seeking out non-traditional studies because of their experience, again, challenges dominant thought.

The current program director commented on the opportunity the program's bilingual aspect provides Spanish-dominant students:

> I would say that most, the majority of our students the benefit for them is that they are able to engage in Spanish, in the language that they're strong. They're able to write in Spanish and able to engage in Spanish really well.

The bilingual mode of instruction strives to ensure that Spanish-dominant students have access to the program and are able to navigate it with clarity.

Given that the program has a Latine and immigrant focus, immigrant students can directly relate to the curriculum content presented (LatCrit tenet 4). The current program director shared, "Most of our students are Latino, bicultural, immigrants. So, they bring that lens into the conversation, right?... they're always making references, '*en mi familia*, in my culture.'" He also shared another example of how the course content and students' identities and experiences produced an opportunity for the emergence of resistant capital:

> …it [diversity] is also part of the *pláticas* that we have. I'll give you an example. I remember students were sharing about their own personal experiences as immigrants in the U.S. and how they had so many challenges. Then, one student who was born in Honduras and I think she now lives in Boston. She's pretty well off. She was pretty well off in Honduras. And her face was like in shock just hearing these stories from the students. And then she spoke up and said, "I want to say thank you all for sharing your experiences. I would have never known what folks go through." And then she said, "I come from privilege, I had a nanny ever since I can remember, I've always had a nanny when I came to this country, I married a white man." And so she talked about her experience and then she actually wanted to talk to me after class, too, because she was still kind of processing all this information. So yes, we have students from different spectrums, from different races, from different privileges and that makes the conversations rich, right? Because then we're able to unpack some of these differences.

Here, the program director explained that the class *pláticas* bring up the opportunity for a range of immigrant experiences to be highlighted (LatCrit tenet 1). Additionally, the student's realization of the difficulties of other immigrant students is an example of transformative resistant capital (Yosso, 2005) that could motivate the student to transform the oppressive structures and barriers faced by many immigrants. Contrasting and challenging typical white-dominant social work educational content and perspectives (LatCrit tenet 2), the program content is culturally relevant to Latine immigrant students and prompts them to use their insider perspective to contribute to the educational setting (LatCrit tenet 4).

Heritage speakers. The current program director stated that the OBMSW program provides a better educational environment for heritage speakers. Regarding this specific population of OBMSW students, he said, "The additional support that students are getting on a weekly from instructors, that engagement, that trust that they have with the instructors, I don't see them getting that in the other English program." The academic advisor echoed those thoughts and detailed,

> There's a lot of students in OBMSW who wouldn't be able to be successful in our traditional MSW program. Not because they don't have the capacity to be successful, it's just the supports aren't there because they would be in a classroom with white students,

> with white instructors, and they would almost feel like a fish out of water in those classrooms. So Online Bilingual Program does offer students a unique opportunity to get their MSW that they wouldn't have anywhere else.

The academic advisor made it clear that the environments typically offered in MSW programs are inadequate for Latine students.

Additionally, the internship coordinator pointed out that the uniquely Latine environment of the OBMSW program motivates students to complete their MSW degree. This motivation is fomented by the fact that they are surrounded by role models and mentors who look like them, are from similar places, understand their culture, and have a sense of respect and sensibility around it. The aspirations of completing an MSW degree are safeguarded from the difficulties or challenges of the typical MSW experience through the purposefully constructed Latine environment.

Overall, as opposed to categorizing or defining as a negative or a hindrance, the program positions Latine Spanish dominant *and* Latine heritage speakers as valuable, desirable, and essential for the social work profession (LatCrit tenets 2 and 4 and linguistic capital). This challenges the typical narrative around non-English dominant speakers and can infuse aspirational capital into the MSW degree attainment for many Latine students.

Latine faculty and staff. The program founder commented that the all Latine staff and faculty within the OBMSW have been an anomaly and have impacted the overall school and university:

> Has it changed the school and the way we hire people? Yeah, that has also changed a lot. We are, I think, one of the most diverse units on campus per capita when you look because of the bilingual program. Because we have a good core group of bilingual faculty and staff which a lot of units don't have. So that way that is a good thing for us to continue to do.

This is an exceptional feat given that only 7.6% of all social work program faculty members were Latine in fall 2021 (CSWE, 2022). The OBMSW challenges the typical social work educational setting and this greatly benefits students. The academic advisor and the founder underscore that even in HSI universities, Latine faculty and staff may not be the majority or may not even present at all. The program professor commented that this Latine majority environment can be one that is "really supportive and reaffirming of your experiences, and maybe the way you see things."

Internship sites. Students located in areas where LUC has yet to develop internship sites are called upon to utilize their social networks and connections to locate possible sites. The former director, founder, and internship coordinator all pointed out that students are the experts in their own communities (LatCrit tenet 4) and, therefore, have a huge part in helping establish and build connections and partnerships all over the country. Students' local communities and networks are highlighted and identified as assets through this process (social capital).

Importantly, the development of OBMSW internship sites in students' local communities opens the door for more access to Spanish language services through the OBMSW students. The internship coordinator shared that there are some student communities that do not have any organizations centered around Latine and/or immigrant and refugee populations. In these cases, the OBMSW internship could be utilized to help those organizations develop programming and services that target Latine and/or immigrant and refugee communities.

The internship coordinator added that possible site identification and development can be seen as an opportunity for students to continue building and expanding their local networks to be called upon in the future. Ultimately, this also helps future OBMSW students in those same locations, which touches upon the mutual aid aspect of social capital (Yosso, 2005).

Graduation reception. The program's graduation reception is a unique and special moment for the whole OBMSW program. The first program director shared,

> …that first graduation was so beautiful, and you had everybody's family. And then X [academic advisor] created a PowerPoint where every student shared pictures of themselves, and then a little message for their family. That was unique because obviously it was community-centered, family-centered values of Latinx communities. And so, it was very meaningful to students to have their families there and now it's even better because now we're doing in person…Celebrating somebody's success is not unique, obviously, but... it was making it in Spanish…Especially that first one, we even had a bilingual priest who was able to both pray and bless and everything in Spanish. It was just, you know, things like that… Keeping in mind that there's a language piece that's meaningful for these students.

Along with the program highlighting students' families and culture in the graduation reception (familial capital, linguistic capital, LatCrit tenet 4), participants commented that OBMSW graduation ceremonies are where students are likely to first meet each other, faculty, and staff in-person. The internship coordinator described the first graduation reception she attended as if "you're at a family party and everyone is just hugging each other." She stated it demonstrated how close-knit everyone becomes, including students' closeness with faculty and staff. This unity, connection and environment of belonging described is exemplative of familial capital embedded and fostered within the OBMSW as it "engages a commitment to community well being and expands the concept of family to include a more broad understanding of kinship" (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).

Migration-focused study abroad. Another example of the program centering and building upon Latine and immigrant assets emerged during the interview with the program professor. She shared that two OBMSW students had recently participated in a migration-focused study abroad trip to the U.S.-Mexico border. This was the first time OBMSW students had been able to participate in a LUC-SSW study abroad trip after a policy change that occurred

via student advocacy (resistant capital). The professor, who also helped lead the trip, commented,

> I know that not all of the [OBMSW] students get the experience of the immersion. But it was really interesting—the two students that we had from the bilingual program that participated—they all live in borderland areas, and they're like, "Oh, my God! I didn't realize this!" And, "Now I understand what my parents experienced"… I think that that created a space for them.

The professor commented on the significance of the cultural and familial ties this migration-focused trip provided to the Latine OBMSW students. This experience drew on their familial capital, helped shed light on their family's experience (LatCrit tenet 4), and centered and informed their migration focused (LatCrit tenet 1) social work educational path. Multiple participants, including the program founder, stated they hope this type of migration-focused trip option can be experienced by as many Latine OBMSW students as possible.

Supportive Approaches and Practices

The study findings show that the OBMSW program has developed and implemented supportive approaches to benefit its Latine students. The support created and built into the OBMSW, the program's faculty and staff, and the program's internship processes are examples of how the program has developed and implemented supportive approaches and practices for Latine students.

Integrated support. Interviewees recognized that OBMSW target students face barriers, as this experience might have be their first encounter with the U.S. higher education system if they are foreign-born. Likewise, they recognized the educational system might also be difficult to manage for first-generation higher education students. The program's former director shared the following reflection on the program's perspective regarding supporting its students:

> But we also needed to provide additional support for these students because for many of them this was their first time studying in the States…They don't know how to navigate the academic setting. We intellectually knew that could happen. But then when we faced it, it's like, "Okay, we need to make sure that we have additional support for these students." Like the advising [academic advisor] did amazing, she did another amazing onboarding Sakai site… She did an amazing job because on-boarding these students is important, socializing them into the school. But it's also a product of being online that you have because it's remote learning, you have to do extra steps.

Recognition that students could benefit from extra support in moving through the program and university was prompted when the program considered the circumstances, history, and context of OBMSW students. This recognition and approach combined LatCrit's tenets of historical context and a commitment to social justice with CCW's navigational capital.

The former director referenced the *seminario de éxito* as an example of the support that was built and integrated into the OBMSW program for students. The academic advisor explained the need for the creation and implementation of the *seminario de éxito* in the following:

> It was so very confusing for students…because maybe they went to school Latin America. They don't understand the difference between like a credit hour, and so having folks in positions that can then explain that to them or kind of do that hand holding from the get-go...So that [*seminario de* éxito] would be a 2-week seminar where students would have like almost an onboarding experience where we're sharing all the information about the program, but in the format of a course...Not only are they getting the content information about the program and the courses, but they're also going through the motions of, you know, doing a little bit of research of submitting an assignment in Sakai, or using the forum in Sakai and getting to meet their classmates as well like through the forums...Because what we noticed was that students would get very nervous about starting the program because they had no idea what to expect. So, what we want is to kind of get all those jitters out before they start classes…The content is going to be different, but the format is the same right...Working with students that first year, students had a really hard time with a number of things. Just like understanding the program, the requirements of the program, the tech they were struggling with as well. And just like a lot of anxiety…That's where I started thinking, "How can we prepare students to start to get them in the mindset of being a student before they start classes?" And being able to address a lot of that anxiety prior to them starting classes. So when they start classes, them opening up zoom it's not the first time, or it's not the first time they're figuring out how to upload an assignment, and that they've done this before…And also, we incorporated like an opportunity for them to get to know each other. So coming into the

> program, they knew, "Okay, this person has this in common with me," or, "this person also has anxiety about this." So, starting to create community for them.

The OBMSW staff and faculty recognized navigational difficulties and anxiety present for students in the first program cohort. The program addressed these challenges by creating a two-week seminar to help students ease into the course of study (navigational capital) by introducing them to their roles and time commitments as online students (LatCrit tenet 3), and by facilitating community building (social capital).

Additionally, workshops and classes were developed to provide support and address gaps in university services and/or the students' former educational preparation. The OBMSW program piloted a psychopathology class created for its advanced-standing students who expressed feeling unprepared for the program's advanced clinical courses. Moreover, university services did not provide adequate support for OBMSW students due to the lack of tutoring and writing services offered in Spanish and due to their schedule incompatibility with OBMSW student availability. In response to this inequity, the current OBMSW director created and implemented internal American Psychological Association (APA) publication-style writing workshops and tutoring services specifically for OBMSW students (LatCrit tenet 3). The current director described the situation faced by students:

> A lot of our students are stronger in Spanish, and they struggle with the writing in English. And APA has been a huge challenge for our students since they're not used to writing in APA format... And those students who tried to receive — and this is from what I've heard from students that told me — students who had tried to receive tutoring with the writing center, they just were having so many challenges in being able to connect with them because these are nontraditional students who are online… Now students are able to receive these services through the program.

The OBMSW program acknowledged and recognized that LUC and/or the advanced-standing students' former educational institutions did not provide accessible or appropriate linguistic

support and chose to develop and incorporate courses that would support students on their educational journeys (navigational and linguistic capital, LatCrit tenets 2 and 3).

Another example of support that was specifically adapted and integrated into the program to address student needs and situations includes some of the policies adopted by the OBMSW. The first program director described the modifications that were needed for the OBMSW program:

> We ended up adding policies to the manual to reflect the experience of OBP students in particular...The internal policies we had to adapt some and have a little more flexibility because it's also a cohort model… Take a policy—if you fail a class or get a D, then you have to take the class no later than the next semester. Yeah, I mean, that was a policy. But that didn't fit with all OBP because they [the student] would have to wait a year for that class to happen again…We had to then be more creative, like maybe an independent study to do this.

The examples of program adaptation to students' circumstances reflect programmatic actions to address a situation that otherwise would leave students to individually navigate an educational space that does not provide the appropriate educational support, services, and options.

Orientations of staff and faculty. The OBMSW program faculty and staff are the foundation of the supportive environment within the program. For faculty and staff, it appears to be essential to provide students support and guidance during their time in the program.

The internship processes mentioned in the following section would be difficult to employ without an internship coordinator who was student-centered. The OBMSW internship coordinator stated she meets with students to "understand student strengths" and gather information regarding their English language abilities. The coordinator sees these as key pieces of information that will help the student and coordinator find appropriate and supportive internship sites. These meetings serve to help students brainstorm and practice asking strategic

questions at potential internship sites. Furthermore, the importance of meeting and supporting students where they are at was stressed. She stated one of her goals was to "reduce barriers that exist due to their location or work status" by constantly searching for possible added supports for students. For example, the coordinator referred to the importance of learning about the personal circumstances of students who are spouses of active military personnel. In those types of cases, the internship coordinator understands that first and second level internships might have to be completed remotely even though the program encourages students to complete at least one internship in-person. In addition to one-on-one meetings with students, the internship coordinator organizes meetings every semester with each OBMSW cohort with the goal of building relationships with the students. There are various aspects of the OBMSW internship, including the coordinator, that assist students in the navigation and completion of internship requirements.

The academic advisor and the internship coordinator shared that students reach out to them to obtain support in navigating the greater university system. They often connect students to the appropriate departments for matters such as health insurance, financial aid, or career services, among others. The internship coordinator highlighted that this type of information should be clearly communicated to students through the university. However, official university information is not communicated in Spanish. The academic advisor is aware that due to factors such as trust and familiarity, OBMSW students are more likely to open emails from someone within the OBMSW program as opposed to the general SSW or LUC listserv. She added that OBMSW students have multiple commitments and responsibilities in their lives and she has found it best to have a "repetitive, accessible, and structured strategy in order to better reach OBMSW students because they have so much going on." The academic advisor detailed her

perspective on supporting students when they may need clarifications regarding the university system or the OBMSW program. She shared,

> Because if we've already sent students all the information and say, "Well, I've already sent you the information. Read through it." But they're calling me, and they're like, "*no entiendo esto*." Every student is going to be different with where they're at and what they're understanding. And so, I think with me, for example, let's say we have a student who's never… this is the first time that they were taking class in the United States. "I could send you all information about like credit hours and this and this." But, to them, it's literally like a foreign language because they don't understand the system. And so, I think just taking the time to explain things to them and having that in mind that, "Okay, they've never experienced this process before." I think it's where it will start creating that rapport with students. It's trying to help them, no matter what questions they are asking…I've noticed with students, "*Oh, es que a X [academic advisor] le mando esto y esto y luego luego me contesta.*" And it's always just trying to redirect them in the right direction. But also, helping them to make sure like, "Hey, did you get the information that you needed?" And so, I think that's where you start creating that rapport—when they realize, "Okay, this person is here to help me." And then, of course, because you call them the first time they're going to start, you know, reaching out to you.

The advisor can empathize with students and is responsive to student needs. Moreover, the academic advisor follows up with students to verify that they have obtained the information or support needed.

The current program director confirmed this "going above and beyond" perspective by OBMSW faculty and staff. The students' context and the lack of accompaniment and supportive systems that students may have encountered previously is considered (LatCrit tenets 3 & 5), and OBMSW staff and faculty attempt to build a foundation of trust that facilitates connection building (social capital), which can assist students as they move through the program and university (navigational capital).

All the interviewees of this study stressed that the current director has excelled in his intentionality of meeting students where they are at, which integrated navigational capital into the program. The former program director stated that the current director "was spending a lot of

time tending to student-facing needs." As a result, the former director shared that, "the students were more satisfied with the program because…He [current program director] had a built-in system where they [students] would drop in, have questions, so they felt more connected, which was very successful." The academic advisor expanded on the current director's connection with OBMSW students:

> So [current program director] speaks a lot to students. He meets with students a lot, and I think that is a resource…And when we've had issues with students, he is kind of like the first line of defense or the first line of support for them. I think that can sometimes to be more effective than sending them or outsourcing the students to like the Wellness Center. Because does the wellness center have people who speak Spanish? I don't know. But then that's every department of the university...That's why he was great at his position because he did take the time to speak with students. Or even if they wanted to meet as a group, he would meet with them if there was issues...

This quote reflects the impact of the current director's support of students. The university itself does not have suitable support systems or resources for OBMSW students, and the current director has apparently served as a meaningful and accessible option for students facing difficulties.

The current program director utilizes a student-centered approach and stated he has an open-door policy, "where students are able to reach out to me and schedule an appointment with me for mentorship, for questions, for raising concerns or problem solving." When he first started in his directorship, he met with individual students and with all program cohorts to receive student feedback about program challenges from the student perspective. He shared that those meetings with students, "helped inform to make the changes necessary to improve the program. Therefore, students continue to reach out to me to just connect or check in for advice or write a recommendation." These interactions with students can lead to important mentorship relationships (social and navigational capital).

A change in the order of courses is an example of the shifts that were implemented due the director seeking student feedback and recommendations. According to the program director, scaffolding the courses "has helped with retention. Now we have more students being able to be prepared for the second semester to learn that content." Yet, the current program director is not alone in his commitment to the OBMSW students. He shared that most faculty members, including adjuncts, are more than willing to meet with students to provide feedback regarding assignments or provide guidance and consultation to students on a range of matters. The disposition of the OBMSW program's staff and faculty is exceptional in creating social and navigational capital for and with Latine students maneuvering through a PWI and a white-dominant profession.

Community building. Faculty and staff play a key role in the community building within the OBMSW program. For example, the program director has "created this space for students to just show up and we'll hang out and we're not going to talk about school…To help build community." He intentionally created and facilitated time and space for students to gather and foment community (social and familial capital).

There is also connection, familial and social capital fomented between staff and faculty members. The program professor shared,

> I think there's been a commitment to trying to build a community among the faculty that teach in the program, even the ones that aren't in residence in Chicago. From like the annual retreats and the meetings… I think initially we were concerned about that—if people were all over the U.S. and we couldn't come together as a faculty, how are we going to offer a coherent program and a coherent identity among the faculty and have students really see themselves as Loyola graduates? And I think that's worked out.

The professor indicated that a connection or sense of community amongst faculty and staff influences the program and the students. The internship coordinator added that the student

cohorts reflect the OBMSW committee in its supportive and familial aspect. It appears that the cohesiveness that exists in each of these two stakeholder groups positively influences the other.

Collaboration with students. Some program faculty and staff members collaborated with students even before they enrolled in the program. The Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work 2019 status report stated,

> We found non-traditional students being very hesitant to apply and enroll due to a lack of confidence in moving forward in higher education. We allocated some faculty/staff time to help mentor these prospects to gain confidence and support the submission of a strong application packet.

Some faculty and staff also engaged with admitted students the summer before they began the program to assist with enrollment and answer questions. This support provided by faculty and staff in guiding potential students in the admissions and enrollment process is significant. Additionally, this allowed for rapport and relationship-building opportunities with students (social capital) to commence early on in their educational pathway.

Various changes and shifts have occurred within the program due to faculty and staff's willingness to seek out students' opinions and feedback. The program founder conceded that the OBMSW has had difficulties but highlighted that students have had a say in its improvement (resistant capital). He stated, "Yes, we always had problems with the design of the program, [and] how we managed it. It was a learning thing, and I think students helped us in getting it strengthened. Getting the feedback from students was important, their frustrations."

As previously stated, all study participants underlined the current director's communication and open-door policy with students, which laid a foundation for collaboration between them. Multiple study participants specifically shared examples of changes toward a more bilingual program and the program shifting from a full-time to a part-time program thanks

to student feedback and recommendations (resistant capital). The current director shared, "Actually the students helped me a lot more than the actual team and administrators…Once I brought the information that the students had shared with me to the table, everybody [on the OBMSW committee] was like, 'yeah, we need to go in that direction'." These types of collaboration that center student experiences and voices demonstrate how the OBMSW faculty and staff value student opinions and perspectives (LatCrit tenet 4) while encouraging and enabling resistant capital.

The OBMSW committee has also integrated a student representative as a voting member on the committee, providing an additional avenue for student perspectives and feedback to be voiced.

In addition to using student perspectives and feedback to make programmatic changes, the current program director created opportunities for students to problem solve and supported students in their advocacy efforts with the university. The director shared an example of students voicing their discontent regarding a change in the course schedule that occurred without student input. The director described his interaction with students:

> And I showed up to the meeting, and they were complaining. I'm like, "Don't complain, I know your concerns, give me a solution. Tell me what you need from me." And they're like looking at me like "What? Really? You're gonna take our advice, and make the changes based on our…?" I'm like, "Yes, I'm with you, tell me what you need." So, they told me, I made the change, and they were so happy.

The director was purposeful and did not provide a solution or option for students. Instead, he challenged students to come up with their own solution to the problem they had identified, and they rose to the occasion (resistant capital).

Another example of the current director facilitating resistant capital was when students were having billing issues with the university. He described his partnership with students and

shared, “I had several meetings with the students. I processed with them some of the things that they needed to do to advocate, and they did it, and they were successful in their advocacy.” Here, the current director helped prepare and organize students in their efforts to oppose an unjust financial fee implemented by the university. Students were able to obtain a payment extension, as well as fight off a late fee that was unfairly being charged to students (resistant capital and LatCrit tenet 3).

OBMSW committee. The OBMSW committee is a space and time where staff and faculty come together and discuss program matters. It is a program component that informs faculty and staff approaches to students. Various study participants mentioned that the committee is a unique space where faculty and staff share their own lens and perspective since everyone works with the OBMSW students in different capacities. These diverse perspectives ultimately produce a more holistic view of programmatic and student issues. The academic advisor commented on the OBMSW committee:

> Everybody speaks Spanish and people are very supportive. So, to me it definitely feels very natural...it feels familiar for me. And folks are always trying to find opportunities for students…Let’s say if students need help with finding an internship you’ll have X, you’ll have X. You have different people say, “Well, let’s have them try this. Let’s have a try that.” Or sometimes, as staff members or administrators, you are doing something, and it’s not until somebody says like, “Hey, that’s actually creating a barrier for students.” So, people are looking at OBMSW with a different lens that sometimes we’re not…I might have a blind side and so there’s always this idea of: how do we eliminate barriers for students? How do we support students and get them through the program?

The OBMSW committee is an essential component of the program that enables faculty and staff to offer students the best support possible as they maneuver the program (navigational capital).

Internship processes. The OBMSW program’s internship processes have evolved to adapt to the circumstances and contexts of its students. An example of this is that the program started to facilitate internship completion at the student’s place of employment in the Fall of

2022. The OBMSW program also acceded that some OBMSW students might need a longer period of time to complete their internship hours due to their multiple responsibilities. Additionally, if the student's internship site does not have access to a supervisor with an MSW or LCSW, the program will support the student with an "offsite MSW educator" to meet with the student and provide the needed MSW perspective required by the social work education accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education. Supportive internship learning agreements are also enacted when difficulties emerge in student internships. The objective of these agreements is to clarify the situation, reset expectations and goals, and create a plan that will meet the needs of the student and the internship site.

Additionally, the program has taken the important initiative of advocating for OBMSW students by requesting that internship sites provide appropriate supports for students. The program's former director explained,

> We started to tweak our expectations of agencies when they take our students… if they agree to certain students, they have to also agree that they're going to provide some supports. Because they would be frustrated that this person doesn't speak that much English, couldn't even write, but they had accepted this student. So, that meant that we had to be also clear on our end to say, "Well, some students have more proficiency, can you take a student that is not so proficient in English? And are you willing to support them in these areas?"

Instead of accepting and allowing for internship sites to pose constraints and/or unsupportive environments for Spanish-dominant students, the OBMSW utilized its commitment to social justice, and navigational, linguistic, and resistant capital to request more from the organizations where students are placed.

Additional Findings

Challenges and Opportunities for Growth

The analytical frameworks of CCW and LatCrit helped reveal numerous challenges for the OBMSW. The critical perspective of LatCrit helped shed light on the difficulties and marginalization a Latine-centered program confronts in a traditionally white institution. Despite the OBMSW program drawing on the cultural wealth capital of Latine students, there are larger institutional constraints that reproduce conditions of marginalization and subordination that impact OBMSW students. Additionally, there are areas where the program appears to present barriers and challenges to its students.

OBMSW as an afterthought. Numerous study participants shared that the OBMSW felt like an afterthought to the SSW and the university. One participant detailed,

> I just feel like the OBMSW program is an afterthought to leadership…One of the biggest challenges…is the school of social work like really championing this program...Like really putting the resources that are necessary to be able to, not only improve the program, but to be able to market the program.

The lack of resources for the OBMSW were also brought up by other participants who highlighted the current lack of university resources in Spanish, including in the financial aid department and career services. A participant expanded on the potential complications of having to speak about financial aid in a language that students might not feel completely comfortable in:

> You kind of fall back with, "Well, if a student in the bilingual program, they should be able to work with someone who speaks English." And in theory, yes, that should be the case. But we all know that we have some students who feel more comfortable or are able to manage speaking in Spanish better. Not that they can't do it in English, but if you're going to be talking about, you know, it creates a barrier for sure and a stress. I think it's also definitely a stress like, "Oh, no! We have to talk to somebody in English that I don't know," and having to figure out already a complex situation like with billing or financial aid, and then having the language piece there.

The lack of linguistic resources within the larger university system can cause unnecessary stress and navigational difficulties for some students.

Another example of this is the lack of tutoring and writing services provided by the university for the OBMSW program. Despite the program faculty and staff having created specific workshops for OBMSW students, this type of service should be institutionalized and offered or facilitated by the university. Instead, the tutoring and writing support offered by the OBMSW is implemented by the current director and his graduate assistant, which is unsustainable and, therefore, creates barriers and challenges for students. If the OBMSW was assigned more resources, this type of support could be embedded and established within the program.

The "OBMSW admissions advisor" was a crucial position and was eliminated. A participant described how the lack investment in the OBMSW through the elimination of this position has impacted the admissions process (and potential retention) for students:

> And what I mean about allocating the resources, we used to have a staff member, who did a great job in admitting students and enrolling students. Pretty much walking with students side by side to get them into the program. That position was eliminated.

Various participants reinforced that the OBMSW admissions advisor was imperative for students and the program. Some challenges in fall 2022 were attributed to the lack of an admissions advisor. OBMSW committee minutes stated, "We had between 45-50 students that were admitted to the OBP program for fall 2022. Out of this number only 27 of those admitted students enrolled. And then 4 withdrew after the first and second week of the semester." Additionally, almost all study participants shared that the university's admissions and marketing program does a subpar job with the program. One participant detailed,

> Marketing doesn't want to change what they do, GPEM doesn't want to change what they do for what they see as a really small program…Our marketing department had never targeted this [Latine] community and they did a bad job of listening to us because people had some really good ideas.

Another participant shared that the admissions department takes too long in getting back to potential students despite the marketing department indicated to OBMSW staff that Latine students require more "touch points" than other students. Despite all the above, the OBMSW position that would review OBMSW program applications and would communicate and begin establishing rapport and relationships with potential students was eliminated. Similarly, various study participant raised concerns around the lone full-time internship staff member for the whole OBMSW program.

An additional instance of the OBMSW being treated as an afterthought is what was described as a lack of effort on behalf of the university and school to foment a sense of belonging amongst OBMSW students. Multiple study participants stressed that students desire to be a part of the larger Loyola University Chicago community. Yet, for example, the university would not produce a university id for students. A participated shared,

> They [OBMSW students] like that they have their own program, but they want to feel they belong to the school of social work at Loyola. So, it's how to navigate that too and how to keep incorporating them into everything. So, they don't feel like they're like the step child, you know, like related, but separate.

A couple of study participants voiced that the university does not take OBMSW students into account. This is evidenced when some university events do not have an option to join virtually. A participant asked, "How do we make opportunities for our students to feel that the university is making an active effort to include them?" Another participant expanded,

> Loyola has a brand recognition. But I don't think that's being extended into the online bilingual program because there's nothing. We don't send them [OBMSW students] anything, we don't even send them a pen that says Loyola. So, having the resources to

> send student things or invite them to different events regionally or there's different things that can be done, but the resources aren't there for that.

The quote stresses the dearth of resources that are being invested into the OBMSW. According to interviewees, students want to be able to foment community or familial and social capital within the greater university, but the PWI makes minimal efforts to do so.

The challenges and barriers mentioned are, partly, a consequence of the OBMSW being a "program option" of the larger school of social work. Afterall, the OBMSW is a program that was added to the main SSW program that was already in place, maintaining the Eurocentric dominance of social work education. It is possible that the OBMSW will always remain in the shadow of the "main" program as long as it is dependent on its accreditation and as long as it is housed within a Eurocentric university environment.

Economic discrimination. More financial assistance for the OBMSW was also discussed by multiple study participants. The following quote from the academic advisor exemplifies the reality of what many OBMSW have to navigate while enrolled in the program:

> I think what we also definitely need is more financial assistance for students because I've noticed a lot of the times that is what is creating a lot of the stress for students. Because a lot of them have full time jobs and a lot of them end up having to reduce their work hours because they're in the [OBMSW] program.

It is clear that finances impact students' educational and personal decisions and could lead to students dropping out of the program.

Despite some resources such as internal scholarship opportunities for all LUC-SSW students, there are program costs that do not apply to all students. The university's website states it requires official language test scores for international students whose native language is not English, as well as a transcript evaluation if a student has non-U.S. educational credentials. Both of these entail costs that are not required for U.S. born and U.S. educated students.

Furthermore, one study participant shared that not all within the SSW were on board with the OBMSW being included in scholarship opportunities. They stated,

> And then there was some discussion about, "Well, shouldn't there be like a certain number of scholarships designated for the OBP program?" And other people felt like it's already heavily discounted so that's not fair. And so there was a back and forth.

This "back and forth" created navigational difficulties for those that were advocating for the OBMSW and, eventually, the students who were in danger of being excluded from the opportunity to apply for scholarships. Like the extra fees charged to international students, this is an example of economic discrimination. The above excerpt demonstrates how oppression and marginalization are engrained and embedded in educational systems and environments, even those that are supposed to be committed to social justice like social work.

Undocumented and DACAmented students. Similarly, there were very little study findings that revolved around the diversity of immigrant students. That is, although the courses do have an obvious focus on immigration and immigrant and refugee populations, there were very little examples of how the program centers its undocumented and DACAmented students. The program professor provided insight into this particular population of the OBMSW students:

> Some students have self-identified as undocumented and some as DACAmented and have asked for information regarding scholarships. They have been given resources to some of the information about external scholarships. They are also given information about the university's Undocumented Student Programs and the Jesuit Undocu Network…I had several students referred to me to see if I had any information for them. Also, a couple of students that had external mentors that knew me sent two students that were DACA when they were applying for the program. I would say it is pretty informal, but the admissions folks at the school now have scholarship information. I don't know how proactive they are.

The program's informal way of addressing this population contradicts the program's social justice view on immigrant and refugee populations. Surprisingly, the OBMSW does not know how many of its students are undocumented or DACAmented since that data is not

provided to the program from the university. All of this impedes the program being able to provide proper, formal, and sustainable support systems for undocumented and DACAmented students while they navigate the OBMSW.

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the findings that emerged from individual interviews with seven study participants and the review of OBMSW institutional documents. The study revealed that the OBMSW program provides Latine students specific program purpose, structure and content; Latine-centered environments; and supportive practices and approaches.

The first theme that emerged was the OBMSW's specific purpose, structure, and content. The program has the specific purpose of providing Latine students access to an MSW degree so that they may then provide Latine and immigrant populations appropriate social work services. To achieve this, the program has built a program structure that attempts to cater to Latine students' circumstances and strengths. A review of the program's syllabi through LatCrit and linguistic capital lenses revealed that OBMSW program content appears to require more uniformity. Overall, the course syllabi provide students a curriculum that is grounded in a social justice lens and challenges dominant ideologies by centering Latine, immigrant and refugee populations. The curriculum is lacking a race and racism perspective and critical lenses that are imperative to highlight the multiple systems that subordinate minoritized populations such as Black and Indigenous Latine immigrants and students. Additionally, there is great variety with Spanish and English language readings distribution within program syllabi.

The second theme that emerged from the data indicated that the OBMSW fosters and values Latine-centered environments. The program centers Latines through its seeking out of Latine, non-traditional and heritage students, their experiences, and assets. Importantly and

impressively, the program also has an all Latine faculty and staff. Additionally, the OBMSW values and relies on the student's own community networks and resources to develop internship sites. The OBMSW graduation ceremonies and the migration-specific study abroad trip also provide special cultural connections and environments for students.

The third study theme revealed that the program provides supportive approaches and practices that seek to aid students as they navigate the OBMSW program. This is evidenced through the student-specific supports that have been integrated into the program, the flexibility provided within the internship process, and the program's fully committed faculty and staff.

The case study also revealed that the OBMSW faces various challenges that can negatively impact its Latine students. There is a need for there to be more of a commitment to the OBMSW on behalf of the School of Social Work and the university. Interview participants and OBMSW documents highlight that the program is frequently treated as an afterthought. Additionally, OBMSW students may face economic challenges and a lack of support.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The Latine population in the U.S. is youthful, diverse, and growing. However, in 2021 only 15% of foreign-born Latines and 24% of U.S.-born Latines had attained a bachelor's degree or more (Mosalimani & Noe-Bustamante, 2023). Similarly, there is an underrepresentation of Latines in social work education with only 14.9% of the students enrolled in master's program in 2021 identifying as Latine (CSWE, 2022). Multiple scholars have voiced the need for more Latine social work student enrollment and retainment through the modification of social work educational environments (Calvo et al., 2018; Chandler et al., 2014; Weng & Gray, 2017; Olcoń et al., 2018). A handful of social work programs have implemented culturally relevant and asset-based programs or specific components within their programs to recruit and retain Latine social work students (Negroni- Rodríguez et al., 2006; Olcoń et al., 2018; Calvo et al., 2018; Cordero & Negroni, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to explore how the OBMSW program is centering and adapting to Latine students' assets, experiences, circumstances, strengths, and challenges to offer an educational pathway that contests dominant social work education programs. This qualitative case study sought to provide a greater understanding of the program's processes in approaching and providing Latine social work students a novel educational option.

A total of 7 participants took part in individual interviews for the study. Four of those interviewees also participated in follow-up interviews. A document review of multiple OBMSW

documents were also part of the study. Data from these sources was coded, analyzed, and organized into themes. LatCrit and CCW served as the analytical frameworks. The main research question was: How is the OBMSW providing an innovative educational pathway for Latine students? The two sub questions that helped answer the main research questions were: What aspects of CCW are embedded and fostered within the OBMSW? What tenets of LatCrit are present in the program?

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and the corresponding discussion of the study themes.

Summary of Findings

Three main themes emerged from this study. The themes indicate that the OBMSW is providing a Latine-centering and asset-based educational option for Latine social work students, which is an innovative alternative for underrepresented Latine students.

Specific Program Purpose, Structure, and Content

The first theme that emerged from this case study was the program's Latine-specific purpose, structure, and content. Study data indicated that the program purpose and structure have been built to center and facilitate access for Latine students. Study data also revealed that, although the program syllabi do provide some bilingual, Latine and immigrant focused subject matter that challenges some typical social work educational content, this is an area for improvement for the OBMSW.

Program purpose. All study participants expressed a clear understanding of the program's justice-oriented purpose around Latine students and communities. This purpose of providing educational access to Latine students and appropriate social work access to Latine and immigrant communities is explicit and innovative within social work education.

However, there is incongruency between the interview participants and the program documents and university website. The OBMSW mission statement highlights the meeting of unmet social work needs for Latines and immigrant communities *before* mentioning the program provides educational access for Latine students. Additionally, it mentions the SSW becoming more diverse through the educational option for Latine students. Moreover, the program's website does not list increasing access for Latine students anywhere on its website; instead, it focuses on highlighting the program's support of Latine and immigrant communities.

The LatCrit framework helped expose that the disconnect between the program documentation, the university website, and the interview participants points to the tension created by dominant structures that do not value minoritized perspectives or students. The OBMSW program is situated within an educational setting that is steeped in and centers western perspectives. If the program and university were to explicitly promote the OBMSW as one that centers and provides educational access to underrepresented Latine students, it would be recognizing and admitting that its other programmatic options marginalize Latine students. Instead, the university and the official OBMSW documents disseminate the white saviorism narrative that centers and promotes the program as supporting marginalized Latine and immigrant communities.

It is noteworthy that the program's mission statement includes that the SSW will increase its diversity through the OBMSW. This suggests interest convergence (Bell, 1980) or that this novel program should be justified due to the expected upsurge of Latine students in enrollment numbers. Although the SSW can report that there is more "diversity" in the SSW because of the Latine OBMSW students, these students are not physically present on campus. Therefore, the university and the school benefit by touting the increase in Latine students, while the students are

marginalized due to their online invisibility. This invisibility can be linked to the lack of resource investment for the OBMSW program as was discussed in the additional findings.

Ultimately, although there does seem to be some incongruency between the OBMSW stakeholders interviewed and the OBMSW documents reviewed, it is significant that all participants who were interviewed were so adamant about the program's purpose of providing access to underrepresented Latine students. Yet, this seeming difference in the prioritizing of the program's purpose can and should be addressed.

Educational structure built for Latine students. The OBMSW has a ground-breaking approach toward Latine students and Latine and immigrant communities. Even though the program is a programmatic option of the greater SSW and it is not its own stand-alone program, it does implement Latine-centered strategies to attempt to fulfill its purpose and mission.

Program tuition. The program's attempt to address the financial barriers of Latine access to higher education (Detres et al., 2020; Sanchez Mayers et al., Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2019) is a discounted tuition rate. OBMSW program faculty and staff understand this strategy is not enough for many Latine students. Despite the discount, the high tuition rate could be a significant barrier to prospective Latine students and to the retention of Latine students.

Online format. The online aspect of the program integrates well with the OBMSW's non-traditional students' need for flexibility in navigating an educational program. The online synchronous meetings permit students to participate in a real time classroom environment and the asynchronous aspects allow for students to complete work on their own time. Importantly, the online format allows for students to continue in their local communities, enabling students to keep fostering and sharing their cultural wealth capital locally. Overall, the online format supports students in their ambition and aspiration of obtaining an MSW.

Course design. The OBMSW course design is guided by accessibility. The course design was informed by the instructional designer's unique insider perspective as an Argentinean who is familiar with Latin American technology use patterns. The program's sensitivity toward possible technological-based barriers for students facilitates learning and student navigation through online education.

Class schedule. The class schedule is intentional and takes into account the student population within the program. Instead of expecting students to work around and adjust their multiple responsibilities, the program offers classes later in the day with the hopes of providing access to Latine students. There have been changes to the class and program schedule driven by student perspective and voice signifying that the program is able and willing to adjust to best accommodate its students.

Cohort model. The cohort approach builds in a peer group that accompanies students throughout their MSW pathway. Naturally, there might be conflict between cohort members, but there will also be support, comradery, and community building between members. The cohort approach can create peer relationships and a sense of belonging within the group which can positively influence student retention (Alcocer & Martinez, 2018; Medina & Posadas, 2012).

Bilingual mode of instruction. The bilingual aspect of the program is another main theme that was predominant in the study findings. The fact that the program was conceived as a bilingual program denotes its recognition and commitment to the bilingual assets of Latine students and to the bilingual (Spanish-English) social service needs of Latine and immigrant populations. The bilingual mode of instruction provides access and opportunity for Latine students but also greatly benefits the university and the SSW by the incorporation of more Latine students to its online environment and by the incorporation of Spanish language material.

Although the OBMSW is a bilingual program that is committed to valuing and developing students' linguistic capital, the program does not have a clear consensus around its bilingual language model, nor does it acknowledge or address the dynamic and nuanced process of language and bilingualism. The program professor stated,

> The language aspect was one that we spent a long time on, and I don't think there was ever a really good consensus on this piece… there's never been like a real systematic approach that we've taken towards looking at that issue, it's only been informed anecdotally and by our own assumptions. And just the literature that talks about languages maybe being a barrier to entry.

The professor acknowledged that there was no formal investigation or approach toward the bilingual foundation and/or instruction of the program, which continues to be the case for the program.

The program director shared that despite efforts, the program is still not "completely bilingual" and there is disagreement between OBMSW faculty and staff regarding what it means for the program to be bilingual. The lack of consensus amongst program faculty and staff and the lack of a guiding framework can complicate the navigational and linguistic capital of some students. For example, participants observed that Spanish dominant students who struggle with the English language are particularly exposed to difficulties. Although the program has taken steps to require support from internship placements for Spanish dominant students, some participants allude that the program's lack of uniformity around language can exacerbate challenges for students.

It appears that the program needs to acknowledge and address this complex issue to arrive at a place that truly values and foments the linguistic assets of the wide range of linguistically diverse Latine students within OBMSW. Therefore, this is a key area that necessitates and deserves more interrogation on behalf of the OBMSW so that it may, for

example, integrate linguistic pedagogical practices such as translanguaging. Translanguaging or the "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (Garcia, 2009, p. 45) acknowledges the continual process of languaging (Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2014). This type of pedagogical practice could fit well with the linguistically diverse Latine students within the OBMSW.

The researcher would be remiss to not state the obvious: Spanish is a European language. It, therefore, reinforces Eurocentrism. Study findings demonstrate this is an aspect that is not acknowledged within the OBMSW. It can and should be another topic addressed with the program.

Language flexibility and growth. The program's flexibility seeks to meet the circumstances of English and Spanish dominant students so that they can effectively maneuver and understand the program. This flexibility is assumed to support students' linguistic growth, but this assumption could also be clarified through the investigation of pedagogical approaches for higher education settings. The program has the potential to guide Latine students in an exploration of their bilingualism, identity, culture, and their intersection with their profession.

Program content. All five LatCrit tenets were at least superficially present within the program curriculum. Each tenet varied in their presence within and between syllabi, but all syllabi could include a more thorough integration of the LatCrit tenets that challenge dominant ideologies and center the diversities and experiences of Latine immigrant communities and Latine students. In a program centered around Latine students and Latine and immigrant communities, there is a need for "imagining and re-creating teaching education in ways that are not grounded in and dedicating to perpetuating white supremacy" (Hayes & Juárez, 2011, p. 1).

Race and racism are egregiously absent from interviews and syllabi content. The program professor explained that diversity and intersectionality were not a main element when constructing the OBMSW program. She commented,

> I don't know if there was any intentionality going into the program about that. I don't think in terms of the readings… I guess I can only speak for that one class that I taught in the program. And then also the class that I helped develop. In the migration class, we do talk about settler colonialism. We also talk about the different racial dimensions of migration in the U.S. and U.S. immigration policy. Within the Latino community more specifically—no. In the research class there were readings that focused on indigenous research methods, ways of knowing that drew on a couple of like different indigenous Latin American traditions.

Race, racism, and their intersections with multiple forms of subordination are central to LatCrit, yet are almost nonexistent in the findings of this study. This leaves the door open for racism and discrimination to be reproduced instead of being addressed and challenged.

The findings from the review of the syllabi also exposed that program syllabi varied immensely in their use of bilingual readings. Only two course syllabi contained Spanish and English readings in all their modules. The researcher believes these results do not reflect a well-balanced bilingual curriculum. But, more importantly, it does not appear that the OBMSW stakeholders would have a consensus around what the curriculum of a bilingual program should look like. The program founder stated, "So, we had debates about heritage speakers versus generational folks who are just picking up the [English] language…How do we accommodate for all of these people?" The exploration of possible responses to this question is long overdue.

Overall, the syllabi review suggests that the OBMSW program content could benefit from an exhaustive examination and revision of the syllabi that could result in more uniformity between the courses and could provide more bilingual and Latine and immigrant specific content for students.

Fostering and Valuing Latine-Centered Environments

A main theme that study findings revealed was that the OBMSW values and centers Latine-focused environments. This is proven through the program's ambition of enrolling Latine, non-traditional students and heritage speakers; through the all Latine faculty and staff; through the program valuing and integrating student community resources and networks to establish internship sites; and, via the OBMSW graduation ceremonies and the migration-focused study abroad trip.

Latine students. The OBMSW program counters dominant social work and higher education environments by centering Latine students that range from non-traditional and Spanish-dominant students to heritage speakers. This desire to recruit Latine students reinforces the CCW and LatCrit frameworks. The program holds a belief that Latine students are "holders of knowledge who can transform the world into a more just place" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 108). Not only does the program target the enrollment of Latine students, but it also seeks to create environments that are familiar and culturally relevant, which is consistent with literature that indicates these factors positively impact student retention (Cordero & Negroni, 2013; Calvo et al., 2018). This directly addresses and redesigns the typical university environments where Latine students can feel isolated (Calvo et al., 2018).

Interview participants highlighted how the program's Latine-majority student population and environment allows for the experiential knowledge and perspectives of students to shine and contribute to the implicit and explicit curriculum and the discussions. This aligns with the CRT, LatCrit, and CCW scholarship that recognize the significance of experiential knowledge of students and communities of color in educational environments (Pérez Huber, 2010; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). The OBMSW understands and appreciates the life experiences of its

students and utilizes them to influence and enhance the overall academic setting. These factors provide Latine students navigational capital to maneuver through a familiar and relevant educational setting where they can see and feel their knowledge and experiences are valued and reflected.

Latine faculty and staff. The significance of the program's all Latine faculty and staff was one of the most prevalent themes that emerged from this study. The fact that the program has employed an all Latine team appears to indicate that the program recognizes and values that "the experiential knowledge of Faculty of Color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 598). This extraordinary environment for OBMSW students to access is surely like no other that OBMSW students have experienced with the U.S. educational system.

The study participants often provided insight that the researcher believes can mainly be attributed to the insider status and perspective of Latine and non-native English speakers. Their lenses and perspectives are keenly attuned to the life and educational experiences of non-native English speakers, Latin American students, and heritage speakers. This has had and will continue have a great influence on the OBMSW environment, priorities, practices, and approaches. Furthermore, the Latine faculty and staff open the possibility for Latine students to have access to Latine mentors. Multiple studies have demonstrated the importance of having a mentor of one's own race (Tijerina & Deepak, 2014; Rojas-Schwan et al., 2013; Blake-Beard et al., 2011).

The presence of an all Latine faculty and staff also addresses the isolation and alienation that Latine faculty members often face within academia (Urrieta & Chavez, 2010). Unfortunately, Latine and minoritized faculty members typically face multiple burdens, including additional work due to their minoritized group membership within a dominant

environment (Aspelund & Bernhard, 2015), which can impact their retention. This is an important factor for the SSW to consider. The administrative team of the SSW should take into consideration that the OBMSW only has one full-time faculty and staff member (internship coordinator) that is exclusively dedicated to the program; all other OBMSW faculty and staff have job responsibilities in the other SSW programs.

Internship sites. The social and familial capital of Latine students are integrated into the OBMSW through the internship sites that students help develop in their local communities. The incorporation of the students' cultural wealth capital aids in the students' navigation of the program. It is noteworthy that the social and familial capital that students utilize to develop internship sites supports future OBMSW students. This reinforces how minoritized groups have historically utilized their social capital to support their own communities (Yosso, 2005). The process of developing internship sites within the students' local communities also recognizes those communities as places of learning and support.

Although this process acknowledges and values Latine students' communities, it could also signify more work for some students. It is arguable that the program should utilize its social capital to place all students in internship sites, as it does for students who are in the Chicagoland area and are enrolled in the in-person, English language MSW program. This aspiration is complicated by the program's small staff, especially in the internship area, and the nationwide locations of OBMSW students. It suggests the OBMSW to develop and utilize more of its social capital so that students may be provided with the option, and not the need, to utilize their social and familial capital for their internships.

Graduation reception. The OBMSW graduation reception is another opportunity that the program utilizes to center its Latine students. This reception is specifically for the OBMSW

program and provides a level of intimacy and familiarity through its infusion of cultural and bilingual aspects. One study participant shared that the graduation reception is a community space where students, their families, and OBMSW staff and faculty feel a sense of belonging. The OBMSW reception is organized by OBMSW faculty and staff and is an indication of the OBMSW faculty and staff dedication to the program and students.

Migration-focused study abroad. The migration-focused study abroad trip can and should be a significant part of the OBMSW program. This study abroad trip matches perfectly with the OBMSW's focus, objectives, and student population. It is likely that a migration-focused trip would integrate and be able to build upon most Latine OBMSW students' familial capital and experiential knowledge. This educational experience can add unique and meaningful dimensions to Latine students' histories, relationships, and perspectives that can influence their personal and professional lives.

Not all OBMSW students would be able to participate in such a trip due to barriers around migration status and economic factors, among others. This calls for the OBMSW to reimagine programmatic options that could provide all its Latine students the opportunity to participate in a similar experience.

Supportive Approaches and Practices

The third theme that surfaced from the study was the OBMSW's supportive approaches and practices offered to Latine students. This theme featured some of the methodologies employed by the program that aid OBMSW students on their educational journey. These included the program's integrated support specifically for OBMSW students, the program's faculty and staff, and the flexibility of the internship processes.

Integrated support. The faculty and staff's awareness of the circumstances that students have had to navigate, and the students' current circumstances are meaningful. There is a sensitivity and commitment toward Latine students that is a result of the Latine faculty and staff's ability to relate to the experiences of foreign-born, 1.5 generation students, and/or heritage speaker students.

This commitment and awareness prompts faculty and staff to mobilize and provide tailored support for OBMSW students. The OBMSW team has organized and implemented the *seminario de éxito*, the APA writing workshop, tutoring, and the psychopathology class. These supports should be facilitated and provided by the university. Instead, OBMSW faculty and staff have organized to address the gaps created by dominant educational systems. Unfortunately, these integrated supports are not sustainable given that they are added on to faculty and staff's official job responsibilities and, therefore, are also added onto the program instead of being embedded within the program. The consequences of this have already begun to materialize as the *seminario de éxito* is currently offered to students but is no longer under the purview of a specific staff person to manage it and follow up with students. The academic advisor stated, "I think the *seminario* is a really good onboarding tool, but only if someone is actually managing it and engaging with students. Otherwise, you're giving students a bunch of content that some will review and some will skip through it." To continue supporting Latine students, these strategies and interventions must be institutionalized by the addition of staff and faculty for the OBMSW, as is supported by higher education literature that highlights support for minoritized students (Cech et al., 2011; Singh, 2022; Gildersleeve & Vigil, 2015).

Orientations of staff and faculty. The importance of faculty and staff support for students is identified in the literature (Sanchez Mayers et al., 2020; Mendoza et al., 2019). The

OBMSW staff and faculty's commitment toward the program and students was particularly evident when key informants spoke about the program and its significance to them. There was a common sense of *orgullo* and connection with the program that emanated from study participants. This was verified by the deep sense of understanding that faculty and staff have toward students and their circumstances.

Almost all the study participants stated they would have liked to have been a student within the OBMSW program. Furthermore, participants frequently brought up their own experiences as Latine students within institutions of higher education. This enables faculty and staff to put themselves in students' shoes and appears to stimulate their care for the program. This connection and support are significant as Latine faculty members improve Latine student retention (Ponjuan, 2011; Mendoza et al., 2019; Alcocer & Martinez, 2018).

The "going above and beyond" perspectives and approaches enacted by OBMSW faculty and staff help alleviate navigational challenges that minoritized students typically encounter in higher education. Faculty and staff take on the navigation of the higher education institution so that students do not have to take on that burden as much. The presence, perspectives and approaches of Latine staff and faculty can also lead to the development of mentorship relationships that support retention efforts (Negroni-Rodríguez et al., 2006; Calvo et al., 2018; Marx et al., 2022; Detres et al., 2020).

Community building. Faculty and staff recognize the need for community within the OBMSW by taking steps to make space for this important aspect. They are also constantly searching for ways for the OBMSW program to participate in the larger LUC and SSW events. Importantly, there is a sense of community amongst the OBMSW faculty and staff. This

connection and family aspect is fostered by their dedication to the program, their shared cultural backgrounds, and the relatively small number of program staff and faculty.

Collaboration with students. The collaboration with students is wide-ranging and, in many cases, commences before cohorts have begun taking classes within the program. Faculty and staff member's involvement in contacting and communicating with prospective students is not only helpful for students, but helpful for faculty and staff members to gain more perspective regarding the student experience, circumstances, and possible barriers to enrollment. This resembles models that integrate advising Latine students to provide institutional support (Olcoń, et al., 2018; Calvo et al., 2018; Negroni-Rodríguez, 2006).

Student collaboration with faculty and staff has resulted in various programmatic changes, which would indicate that the program values student voice, experience, and perspective. However, it is not fomented within the program. Although significant, student and faculty and staff collaboration is dependent on the faculty and staff members themselves. Many of the programmatic changes implemented as a result of student feedback have occurred under the current director's tenure. All study participants brought up his particular emphasis on communication and collaboration with students, but there are very few examples where student perspective and feedback are sought out by the program itself.

The student representative on the OBMSW committee and student evaluations are the scarce avenues that the program has implanted for student feedback and collaboration. There is a need for the program to create and embed opportunities of feedback and support for students to access. For example, currently, if a student is to have feedback or a complaint about the program director, the student is supposed to seek out the administration members of the School of Social Work. Only one of the current administration members speaks Spanish, which can present a

barrier for OBMSW students. The program would benefit from additional opportunities that seek out student opinions leading to possible student and faculty and staff collaboration in service of continually assessing and improving the OBMSW.

OBMSW committee. The OBMSW committee plays an important role for faculty and staff, as well as for students. Multiple study participants indicated this is a space where faculty and staff feel comfortable, where they can collaborate as a team, and where blind spots about the program and/or students are pointed out and discussed. This committee time and space allows for a more holistic perspective of programmatic and student issues to emerge.

Internship processes. The OBMSW's internship component has proven itself to be flexible and adaptable to the students' circumstances and needs. This strives to ensure that students have positive and fruitful internship placements. The program's consideration of environmental factors is key to Latine student retention (Lee & Choi, 2011; Hernandez & Lopez, 2004) and aligns with LatCrit's fifth tenet.

Additionally, the program's decision to expect more from internship agencies in their support toward OBMSW students underscores the program's advocacy efforts in fomenting an environment where students will grow and build on their current assets. This, importantly, also shifts the expectations solely being on the student toward institutions.

Additional Findings

Challenges and Opportunities for Growth

Although the OBMSW received funding and support from the university and the School of Social Work, it is still embedded within a PWI. That is, the OBMSW is a program built for Latine students, but the university is not built for the OBMSW. The counter-cultural norms (Yosso & Burciada, 2016) the OBMSW program brings to the educational setting are sometimes

met with barriers and challenges. This evidences that social work and social work education continue to be predominantly white dominated (Del-Villar, 2021; BlackDeer & Ocampo, 2022). The university, the LUC-SSW, and the OBMSW program itself are not exempt from the need to actively and intentionally interrogate and combat whiteness, Eurocentrism, and other dominant and oppressive ideologies.

OBMSW as an afterthought. Multiple study participants voiced that the university and school should provide more resources and support for the OBMSW. This call for a deeper commitment to the OBMSW solicits an infusion of CRT and LatCrit perspectives within the dominant university environment. The OBMSW program is attempting to resist dominant educational norms but is still forced to navigate a predominantly white environment that does not allow or seek the prioritization of the OBMSW.

Economic discrimination. Although the OBMSW attempts to remove barriers and challenges for Latine students, the barrier of economic discrimination continues to be present for students. In addition to the high tuition rate, a particular economic barrier or hurdle is present for students who did not receive higher education in the U.S. These barriers need to be addressed and eliminated in order to provide access to underrepresented Latine students. Otherwise, only select Latine students will be able to participate in the educational pathway provided by the OBMSW.

Undocumented and DACAmented students. The OBMSW program does not have any official support systems in place for undocumented and DACAmented students. This is important for any educational space but especially for one that recruits Latine students. Not properly addressing and integrating race, racism, and intersectionality and not having a formal system to provide support for undocumented and DACAmented students can create vulnerable

spaces for these particular students. These are areas that need more awareness and growth from within the OBMSW program.

Implications

The findings of this study provided a greater understanding of the OBMSW, a program that is integrating and providing asset based and Latine-centering methodologies into the educational environment to provide an innovative pathway for Latine social work students. Study findings provide support for the adaptation of holistic social work education programs or models centering minoritized students, as well the importance and potential of providing a bilingual mode of instruction. This study also underscores the necessity of the interrogation of educational institutions and the approaches, strategies, and structural changes they are implementing to meet the strengths of minorized and bilingual/non-English dominant students.

Bilingual Education

Findings of this study emphasize the importance of a bilingual option and the use of a bilingual model for programs targeting and addressing linguistically diverse higher education students. The design and implementation team of the OBMSW recognized the impact that a bilingual program could have on Latine student access from day one. But the scarce consideration around language, bilingualism, and language pedagogies ultimately influences the program syllabi and content, the pedagogical practices of faculty and staff, and Latine students' educational experience.

Language and bilingualism are complex, dynamic, and require flexibility. Therefore, the program, its students, and its instructors would benefit from the exploration and an eventual collective understanding of bilingualism, bilingual education, and a guiding bilingual model within the OBMSW. These could help provide uniformity throughout the program content,

would inform instructors about bilingual pedagogical practices, and could enhance students' social work and personal knowledge.

The OBMSW program is a trailblazer in social work education which also implies that the program's instructors have never taught a Latine majority classroom in a bilingual modality. OBMSW instructors could be receiving professional development and training in this area.

Dominant Ideology

The OBMSW program challenges dominant ideology on many fronts. Even though findings demonstrate that the program centers and values Latines, it does not indicate that the program is not perpetuating white, Eurocentric, and dominant ideologies. Findings show that the program is addressing these issues minimally.

White supremacy and racism are alive and well within Latine populations in Latin America and abroad. This needs to be acknowledged, discussed, and dissected within the program faculty and staff, within the program's curriculum, and with the students. If the OBMSW students are being provided quality education and are being appropriately prepared to work with underserved Latine and immigrant communities, these factors need to be explored and addressed.

In particular, the program necessitates and would benefit from an infusion of an explicit anti-racist approach. The program must do more to approach and combat anti-racism and other forms of subordination within the program and within the greater Latine, immigrant, and refugee communities. The program should ask itself: Which Latine students is the program minoritizing or marginalizing? Which Latines are not being recruited? Which Latine voices and identities are not present in the program content and in the faculty and staff?

Additionally, the program calls for more critical social work perspectives. The syllabi review demonstrated that only a small number of readings in a handful of classes were dedicated to challenging and critiquing dominant social work practices and approaches. A study participant shared that students are questioning and demanding non-dominant social work theories and perspectives through classroom discussions and their assignments. This could and should be thoroughly integrated into the program content.

Feedback and Evaluation

This study highlights the significance of student advocacy and student feedback through the various OBMSW programmatic changes that were influenced and prompted by students. Yet, study findings show that the opportunities for student voices and perspectives to influence the program have been fostered through the relationship of students with faculty and staff. Opportunities for student feedback have been driven by the current program director. Official feedback loops should be built into the program and not be solely reliant on the relationships between students and OBMSW faculty and staff.

Additionally, the OBMSW should conduct another internal evaluation and develop and integrate more assessments within its multiple program areas. The internship coordinator voiced a desire to provide evaluations for students so that she may have a better understanding of what is and is not working for students. Evaluative data could help inform the approaches and strategies utilized with students and cohorts. This type of data could curtail any programmatic choices that negatively impact students.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides an in-depth exploration of a reimagined and innovative online, bilingual social work education program that values and centers Latine students. Although this

case study does not claim to provide generalizable data, the program's key components can inform those who are seeking to articulate educational models centered around minoritized and underrepresented students. Future research could be helpful for the OBMSW and other social work education administrators, student affairs personnel, and educators. It should be noted that the frameworks of LatCrit and CCW (Yosso, 2005) can and should be integrated in all areas of research concerning Latine students.

Research Design

Given that this is an educational model centering Latine students, longitudinal participatory action research design would be an ideal option. This would allow for the main stakeholders of the OBMSW program, such as Latine students, program faculty and staff, and internship sites, to partake, guide, and design the research. The longitudinal aspect would allow for the integration of prospective students and would allow the opportunity to capture their perspectives throughout their tenure within the program and as OBMSW alumni.

Research around the linguistic and bilingual aspects of the program would be an important research concentration. This type of research could take on diverse perspectives such as: language and Latine identity; linguistic pedagogical practices with bilingual students/heritage speakers/dominant speakers; bilingual social worker dilemmas; raciolinguistic perspectives (Rosa & Flores, 2017), among countless others.

Another important area of research would be the program faculty and staff. Being that recruitment and retention of Latine faculty members is an issue in higher education (Ponjuan, 2011) and considering that their presence and mentorship are essential for Latine student recruitment and retention, their personal and professional experiences and motivation within the OBMSW would be essential to explore.

Policy

The OBMSW program requires definition and clarification in multiple areas. These areas include a language/bilingual model(s), program curriculum, long-term goals and strategies, the internship component, admissions, undocumented and DACAmented students, and marketing of the program, among others. More research to influence policy development in these key components of the program is clearly needed. It could stimulate the operationalization of program components to aid in program evaluation and assessment.

Research regarding the policies being utilized within the internship component of the program, such as the place of employment aspect, would be an area of interest for researchers interested in non-traditional students.

Practice

In terms of practice, the OBMSW provides insights regarding Latine social workers who provide clinical services to Latine communities. This, unfortunately, is not a common occurrence due to the underrepresentation of Latine students in the profession. The benefits, approaches, intricacies, and challenges of the Latine social work student-Latine client/community dynamic could be explored. In particular, the OBMSW or one like it could provide greater understanding regarding the preparation and approaches that are helpful and needed when Latine bilingual (Spanish-English) social workers are working with non-Spanish dominant communities, such as Indigenous communities. Other practice insight could emerge through research on Latine social worker approaches with Latine clients of a different race.

Education

With regard to social work education, there are multiple areas that this research study highlights. For example, more research is needed around pedagogical approaches for bilingual

instruction and pedagogical approaches for preparing Latine students to work with Latine communities. This is particularly important as social work and social work education have been shaped by the white social work perspective.

The internship component is another important area of social work education that merits future research. BlackDeer & Gandarilla Ocampo (2022) warn that social work internships can be harmful to marginalized communities who are receiving outsider interns for a limited time. The OBMSW sets up future research around Latine students interning in their own local communities with Latine agencies and clients.

Concluding Comments

This qualitative case study explored the Online, Bilingual MSW program with the aim of shifting the lens from students to educational programs. The study sought to obtain a greater understanding of the social work education pathway the OBMSW is providing Latine students. The case study utilized purposive sampling to identify 7 key informants as individual interview participants. A document review of multiple OBMSW organizational documents was also conducted. Data were analyzed, coded, and organized into themes.

Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) and LatCrit served as analytical lenses for the study. The CCW was chosen to explore if the OBMSW was embedding community capital wealth within its environment and structure to make them available to Latine students. The LatCrit framework was chosen to critically explore the Latine focus of the program and to investigate if the program challenges the dominant ideologies in higher education settings that center and value Eurocentism and marginalize Latine students (Yosso, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Although it has plenty of room for growth, the OBMSW program has started paving a novel educational pathway for Latine students. Findings indicate that various elements of community cultural wealth and LatCrit tenets exist and are embedded within the OBMSW program. The OBMSW's innovative pathway includes specific program purpose, structure, and content; the fomenting and valuing of Latine-centered environments; and supportive approaches and practices for its Latine students. The OBMSW program is indeed a counterstory within social work education.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXCEPTION LETTER

Dear Celeste Sanchez,

On Tuesday, May 2, 2023 the Loyola University Chicago Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application for confirmation of exemption titled "**Abriendo Caminos: A Case Study of the Online Bilingüe (Spanish-English) MSW Degree Program**". Based on the information you provided, the IRB determined that this human subject research project is exempt from the IRB oversight requirements according to 45 CFR 46.101.

If you make changes to the research procedures that could affect the exempt status of this project, your proposal should be reevaluated by the IRB to confirm it is still exempt from the IRB oversight requirements. To modify this proposal, please submit an Amendment/Project Update Application using the online CAP program. Complete details about the application process and your responsibilities can be found on the Office for Research Services web site.

Please notify the IRB of completion of this research and/or departure from the Loyola University Chicago by submitting a Project Closure Application. In all correspondence with the IRB regarding this project, please refer to IRB project number #3678 or IRB application number #8783.

Best wishes for your research,

Loretta Stalans, Ph.D.
Chairperson,
Institutional
Review Board
lstalan@luc.edu

APPENDIX B

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDES

Questions for all interviewees

1. Can you describe your role within the OBMSW program?
2. From your perspective, what does the OBMSW program provide to Latine students that differs from traditional?
3. How do the structure and design of this program specifically address and curb inequities typically faced by Latine students?
    a. What aspects are missing or need improvements?
4. Does the program embrace and enhance Latine student strengths and assets? If so, how?
5. What are some of the program changes that have emerged to support and/or center Latine students?
    a. What was the impetus for those changes?
6. From your perspective, what have been some of the difficult or challenging aspects of the program to implement? Why?
7. What would be your general recommendations for those who might look to replicate a social work education model that centers Latine students or students who have been marginalized and underrepresented in social work education?

Role Specific Questions

A. Academic Advisor:
    1. Can you describe how the academic advisor role functions within the OBMSW program?
    2. What is the overall goal of the OBMSW program?
        a. Has it reached its goal? If not, why not?

3. From your perspective, are the needs of Latine students considered throughout the OBMSW program? Please elaborate and provide examples.
    a. From your perspective, are the strengths and assests of Latine students considered in the OBMSW program? Please elaborate and provide examples.
4. Does the OBMSW program's innovative pathway provide unique support to Latine students?
5. What have been some key take-aways learned in the years since the program has launched?

B. Internship Coordinator:
1. Can you describe how the internship process and aspect of the OBMSW program functions?
2. How would you say this internship process addresses and curbs inequities typically faced by Latine students?
3. How would you say the internship process specifically embraces Latine students?
4. What has worked well in the internship aspect of the program?
5. What has been challenging in the internship aspect of the program?
6. Do you think the overall program, its structure and design are well-prepared to support Latine students? If so, how?

C. Program founder and LUC-SSW dean at the time of program launch:
1. Can you describe the impetus for the OBMSW program idea?
    a. What specific student population(s) were you aiming to attract when designing this program?
2. What are the key and unique aspects of this program?

a. How were those decided upon and who was part of that specific process?

3. Can you provide a rough timeline of how the program developed?
    a. Who were the key stakeholders in the process?
    b. Can you provide insight regarding the planning team and how it was formed?
4. Why did you think LUC-SSW was the appropriate environment to create this and implement this model?
5. From your perspective, why was it necessary to create, design, and implement a separate model instead of integrating it into the traditional in-person program already in place at LUC-SSW?
6. What were the most difficult or challenging aspects of the program design to implement? Why?
7. What would you say is the overall goal(s) of OBMSW?
    a. Has it reached its goal(s)?
8. Is there anything you would do differently when thinking back on the program design and implementation of the program?

D. Original OBMSW director and current interim associate dean for academics:

1. Can you describe your role in the program design?
    a. How were the needs of Latine students considered in this process?
    b. How were the strengths and assets of Latine students considered in this process?
2. Why do you think LUC-SSW was the appropriate place to launch this type of program?

3. Has the program implementation mirrored its design?
    a. What has been challenging? Why?
    b. What has worked well? Why?
4. What have been some key take-aways learned in the years since the program has launched?
5. What would you say is the overall goal(s) of OBMSW?
    a. Has it reached its goal(s)?
6. Is there anything you would do differently when thinking back on the program design and implementation of the program?

E. Program implementation and design team member and program professor:

1. Can you describe your role in the program design?
    a. How were the key and unique aspects of the program decided upon?
    b. How were the needs of Latine students considered in this process?
    c. How were the strengths and assets of Latine students considered in this process?
2. From your perspective, what unique aspects of the program design have been difficult to implement?
    a. What aspects have worked well?
3. Why do you think LUC-SSW was the appropriate place to launch this type of program?
4. What have been some key take-aways learned in the years since the program has launched?

5. Would you describe this program as centering and serving Latine students? If so, how?
6. Is there anything you would do differently when thinking back on the program design and implementation of the program?

F. Current program director:

1. Would you describe this program as centering and serving Latine students? If so, how?
    a. What is missing and/or needs improvement?
2. Can you detail how the program differs from its counterparts within LUC-SSW?
3. Are the program and its structure well-prepared to support Latine students? How?
    a. What is missing and/or needs improvement?
4. What would you say is the overall goal(s) of OBMSW?
    a. Has it reached its goal(s)?
5. Is there anything you would do differently when thinking back on the program design and implementation of the program?

G. Instructional Designer:

1. Can you please describe the online theories and practices implemented within the OBMSW program?
2. How does the online course design in the OBMSW differ in comparison to traditional MSW programs?
3. How does the online aspect benefit Latine students?

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VITA

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