

I. Early Education

Equity Spotlight Vodcast Series

Mila González, Student - University of Arizona

Dr. Taucia González, MAP Center Equity Fellow - Wisconsin

TRANSCRIPTION

Taucia: Mila, I know you grew up in the Phoenix area and you attended Phoenix schools. This was before you moved to the Midwest. So I imagine that starting off your educational experience was pretty different from your eighth grade year. Can you start by just sharing a little bit about what your early educational experience was like at your school?

Mila: Yeah, I went to a dual language school. I went there for seven years, and it was predominantly Latinos. I went to that school (sneezes).

Taucia: Bless you.

Mila: Thank you. Most of the teachers were teachers of Color. There was a few that weren't. Most of the students were native Spanish speakers and some weren't.

Taucia: I imagine you walk into the school, you hear English and Spanish. That's pretty much the norm?

Mila: Yeah, at the time, I didn't speak Spanish. I never really learned when I was growing up. But at that school, I was able to pick up a few things. Being able to connect to my culture was nice. Another thing about this school was connection and community. So not only the connection between the teacher and student, but the teacher and parents were big thing at that school. So you would always see one of the family members of the students at the school helping out and supporting our school. So since the parents were always at the school, we really got to know each other. I not only knew my peers in the classroom, but I knew

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their brothers, their sisters, their cousins, and their whole family basically. Yeah, and that was nice to have that feeling of...

Taucia: How did that affect you just academically? Did you like school? Did you do well in school?

Mila: I loved school when I was younger. I never really liked learning, but I liked the environment of the school. School was mixed emotions for me because I loved the community we had at that school, but the learning aspect was pretty boring to me at such a young age because Arizona schools were based on test scores. So I remember having to take the standardized tests and having to...

Taucia: Prepare for it?

Mila: Yeah.

Taucia: So a lot of test drilling?

Mila: And that's what threw me off. I just didn't like that part. But with having that community at our school, it pushed me to keep going.

Taucia: It sounds like the community really sustained you and kept you interested in school, but you weren't crazy about all the skill and drill and test prep. Was the curriculum the problem?

Mila: Now that I look back on it, we never learned anything about our culture. Even though that school was filled with our culture, I feel like. What we learned on was

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based on European culture and how Columbus found America, or how everything was nice in America. It was just... censored, I guess, yeah.

Taucia: It sounds like, overall, you had a good K through seven experience, but you recognize some of the limitations of it?

Mila: Mm-hmm (affirmative)