

Exploring educational experiences from the student perspective:

Building cultural competence among teachers.

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Background

- The project began in partnership with the Glendale Community Learning Center as they wanted to better understand the Glendale to East High student experience. While diversity-focused teacher education programs have been taking place for several years, they have yet to be informed by research based in the experiences of Glendale students.
- I started out as a note-taker as part of a CEL project, then I turned it into a UROP so I could continue working and take on a leadership role



Study Location

- 94% of Glendale students come from low-income families and 87% are students of color (Wood, 2015)
- High school boundaries cause Glendale students to leave their culturally diverse neighborhood to attend school in predominately white areas



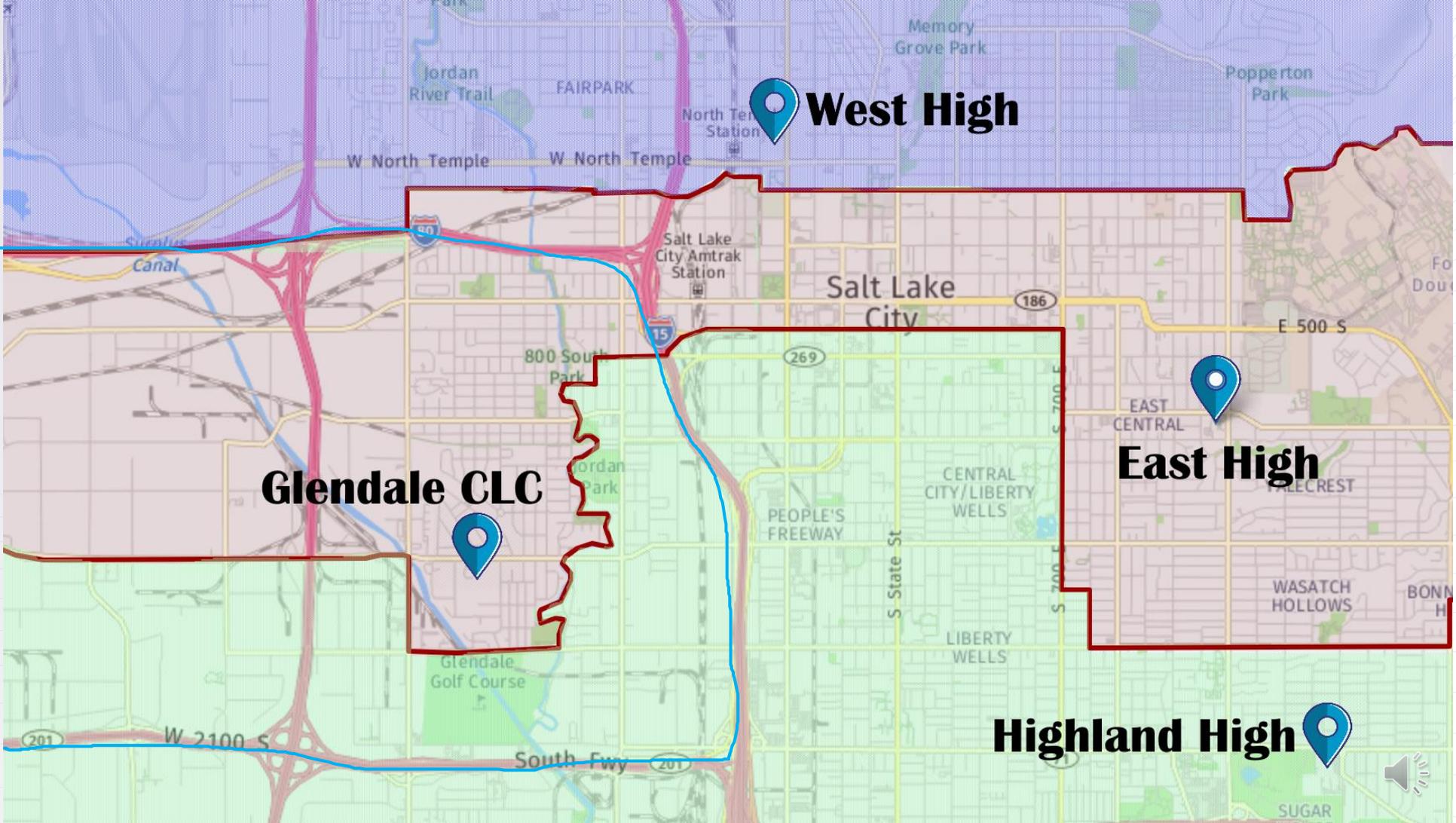
 **West High**

Glendale CLC



 **East High**

Highland High 



Geography, Belonging, and Education

- students of color generally feel like school faculty give more support to white students than students of color (Bottiani et al. 2016)
- feeling a sense of belonging and support has been shown to be linked to a decrease in delinquency and an increase in school participation and performance (Lam et al. 2015)
- breaking down learned behaviors of bias can increase cultural competence (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012)



Study Goals

- The goals of our study are to explore and understand the experience of Glendale students, and to see if what we've found in the literature is happening here.
- We are not trying to say that there is only one Glendale educational experience
- Through collecting and sharing this data, we hope to increase cultural competence



Methodology

- We gathered data through semi-structured focus groups.
- Focus groups were conducted by a paid community liason and participants were given a stipend through CEL funding.
- We would record each interview and transcribe them, as well as note our observations during each session
- A team consisting of myself, Adrienne Cachelin, and students from her Environmental Justice class have been working on analysis and creating a codebook.



Discussion Prompts

- What do you think were the three most impactful events that happened during your schooling experience? How did they impact you and why?
- In what ways do you think your culture/ethnicity/roots in Glendale may have impacted your educational experience?
- What challenges did you face in high school as a student from Glendale going to East?
- Do you feel that any assumptions were made about you? What were they? (as a follow up if appropriate) how might these assumptions be changed?
- If you could give teachers one piece of advice about their approach to working with you, that would have made your experience better, what would it be?





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Adrienne Cachelin



Data Analysis

- Each of us did our first pass of coding individually
- We completed the second pass as a group
- We are not finished yet

“when I first started, the teacher like, students would be working on something else but the teacher would just give me a coloring book. Like to me it’s like, maybe she thinks I’m stupid you know? Like even if I don’t speak English, I can still do like math, so [the teacher] doing that, it really puts you down.



Themes

- The importance of teacher support
- Feeling supported, cared for, or respected by teachers
- Most participants had positive and negative experiences

In high school, my AVID teacher, she's the one who's always supported me and all my wildest dreams, and not just me but also my brother and my family; she not only supports me a student, but also as a person, and she encouraged me to keep pushing and get out there and achieve things.



Themes

- Stereotypes, assumptions, and prejudice
- Most participants had negative experiences with this

"Growing up here, with the stereotypes of this area, it's like "oh it's brown people who don't want to do anything with their lives," and like for me, to be at the U now and being a student, and working hard towards my goal, people still get surprised about my ambition."



Themes

- Sense of belonging
- This one can also be positive or negative
- Feeling out of place or uncomfortable
- Feeling accepted

“taking those classes [Honors and AP], like, it was super shocking like, I don’t belong here, but I need to be here, but I emotionally, physically, mentally felt like I didn’t belong there. It was hard being like, two brown students in an honors math class.”



So What?

- By creating a deeper understanding of the ways this education system has helped and failed students, were hoping to identify ways we can increase cultural competence among teachers and enhance the student experience
- Were hoping data from this study will help inform the cultural conversations program that's been implemented by the Glendale CLC



Works Cited

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Thank you

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