

**Title:** Embracing Borderlands Identity: The Significance of Latina Graduate Student Discourse in Academia

**Short Abstract:** Latina students will share personal narratives, academic insights, and research experiences, to dissect how their identities influence their perspectives, research questions, and approaches to scholarship. This dialogue will contribute to deeper understanding of how students can approach the richness of Latinx experiences to challenge and reshape existing academic paradigms.

**Proposal: Roundtable**

Language is an integral part of culture and an essential part of how people identify themselves and others. Spanish as a Heritage Language has an important connection to Latino/Border identities in the United States. Gloria Anzaldúa states, “*Nos quieren poner candados en la boca*”, recognizing the existence of a systematic effort to discourage people from learning their native languages. Recognizing the value of local voices and experiences can enhance the collective academic discourse and pave the way for more equitable and culturally sensitive research and educational practices.

Many Latinas in higher education have had the privilege of engaging and actively participating in environments where linguistic diversity plays a central role in the lives of those involved. The majority of individuals in these settings are children, young adults and elders who are either multilingual or monolingual in a language other than English. Transforming academic institutions to appropriately suit individuals with diverse identities from a cross-culturally competent approach, is imperative to adopt culturally preserving, anti-racist, and decolonial pedagogical practices. The academic journeys of Latina graduate students can be a complex tapestry interwoven with multifaceted layers of identity. Latinas traversing the realms of higher education are uniquely positioned at the intersection of diverse cultural landscapes, grappling with questions of self-identity and community representation. It is navigating the delicate balance between honoring our heritage and forging pathways in predominantly non-Latine academic spaces.

By sharing personal narratives, academic insights, and research experiences, we aim to dissect how our identities influence our perspectives and approaches to scholarship. These dialogues contribute to a deeper understanding of the richness of Latina experiences but also challenge and reshape existing academic paradigms. Recognizing the value of local voices can enhance the collective academic discourse for more equitable and culturally sensitive research and educational practices. Thus, as students in higher education it becomes paramount to initiate conversations that shed light on the ways in which identities of women of color can shape academic trajectories and the broader academic landscape. This roundtable discussion seeks to illuminate the significance of such conversations.

Five Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the cultural realities and experiences of Latino students in higher education
2. Build understanding and challenge stereotypes and prejudices associated with Latino experiences through open dialogues
3. Promote space to discuss the various roles of Latino students and the importance of these roles within their communities
4. Create comfortable and engaging learning environments through SHL pedagogies
5. Foster support spaces of students navigating how to honor their heritage and forging pathways in higher education