

Reading Review of Mexican Americans

Coming from a Mexican American culture myself, I have found it easy to connect to many of the articles information and understood why numbers and statistics were as such. The information that mostly related to me on a bigger scale was English Proficiency, Education, and working with Minimum wage. I feel that these three topics are the key foundation for understanding the Latino culture in America today.

I would like to start off with reviewing the continuing struggle of Latino Americans and assimilating into the United States. One of the hardest tasks of doing so would be learning the English language. Chapter 13 in *Latinos and the Economy* discuss this topic throughout the chapter. As it is immediately pointed out, Latino Americans have a difficult time when they first start to learn the English language. This is due to many Latino Americans moving into America past the “critical period”. This is the crucial time during a person’s life when they are young and can learn a new language easily, usually between the ages of 3-9. Many Hispanics tend to immigrate to the US to find jobs that are not available in their homelands. As a result, arriving after that crucial period to begin learning the English language becomes a challenge to many Latino Americans. This is concluded in the same chapter on page 257.

Tying in with the topic of learning English language goes the topic of Education. Continuing on to Chapter 2 of *Latinos and the Economy*, it goes on reminding how difficult it is for older generation Hispanics to get an education. Many immigrated to find jobs and do not finish middle or primary school. However, the growth of Hispanic children has increased

tremendously throughout the US. The numbers jumped from a mere 11% Hispanics attending public schools to 78% in the span of ten years. It became easier for the second generation to be enrolled into schools after being exposed to the English language beforehand.

Since this Education is more available for the second generation of Latino Americans, it will make the process of finding a job easier. However, the first immigrating Hispanics were not as lucky. Having very little to no skill levels, Latinos were a large group of unskilled workers. This is detailed in Chapter 9 of *Latinos and the Economy*. Having no skills lead to many Hispanics having minimum wage jobs, which in the time of 2007, was \$5.15. Many have reported in the US census of barely speaking little to no English, leaving it very difficult to find a high paying job. On page 172, it is pointed out that many of the Hispanics were willing to take low paying jobs that could not be found in their homelands. This disadvantaged the Latino Americans since they had to work through poor conditions, such as long hours and unsafe workplaces. However, it is found that having a low paying job is better than not having one.