

**Executive Summary of Pre-Test Data of Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade
YLD Clubs for ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.
Presented to Raul Martinez, President**

**Prepared by
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June, 2006**

Introduction

ASPIRA of Florida, Inc., and Florida Atlantic University established an alliance to evaluate the efficacy of some of ASPIRA's modules. Specifically, the ASPIRA evaluation project consisted of the empirical assessment of the modules "Cultural Awareness," "Self-Esteem," and "Career Awareness."

We believed that the three modules were central to the overall nature of ASPIRA as an intervention designed to reduce school drop-out and other negative factors that may impede the success of Latino and other youth. Additionally, we believed that the three modules were related theoretically to the experiences Aspirantes have.

The original proposal framed the evaluation of the modules' effectiveness via a pre-test/post-test research methodology. The primary research question for the full study is: *Are Aspirantes' measures of Cultural Awareness, Self-Esteem and Career Awareness improved following participation in the modules?* Another way to state the main research question is: *Are the modules effective in increasing cultural awareness, self-esteem, and career awareness?*

En route to answer the principal research question, we will explore the following questions before the project is completed:

- Are there differential effects of the modules for males and females?
- To what extent is nationality and acculturation influential in the modules effectiveness?
- Does income influence cultural awareness, self-efficacy, and career awareness?
- What is the relationship between grade level and academic confidence?
- Is academic confidence predictive of graduation for 12th graders?
- Do the number and nature of the counseling sessions provided predict the level of acculturation, self-efficacy, academic confidence, and career awareness?

This report reflects preliminary information in which the full research project will be based on. Preliminary analyses of data such as this one are customary in order to ascertain basic realities reported by the participants. Hence, here we report the way in which data was collected and some basic preliminary findings, and the rationale for and the definitions of certain factors.

Data Collection

The data we collected in January 2006 constitutes pre-test information for the overall evaluation of the three ASPIRA modules. For this portion of the evaluation, we initiated data collection of all 5 YLD divisions in Palm-Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties.

We surveyed only Latino youth in order to establish a baseline with ASPIRA’s historical constituency, and to determine the effectiveness of the modules with the intended population. In addition, two of the three ASPIRA charter schools participated (ASPIRA North and ASPIRA EMH). We received a total of 268 completed surveys that were used to calculate the pre-test statistics presented below.

We collected information about proximal and distal variables known to influence academic achievement and academic resilience in youth. Specifically, we considered that language use, the marital status of the parents and the composition of the household, and the students’ mobility would influence academic resilience. Similarly, we believed that acculturation options; career awareness, choice, and knowledge; and self-efficacy would predict the academic resilience of all Aspirantes.

Results (Distal Factors)

Distal factors are those indices said to relate to the context in which the students live in. There are many distal factors reported in the professional literature. However, our choice of Language Use, Parents’ Marital Status, and Mobility, is based on research on acculturated and bi-cultural youth, and highlights the unique pressures that they (and their families) face, which impacts the work of ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.

Language Use

Language Spoken at Home		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	English	27	10.1	10.1	10.1
	Spanish	94	35.1	35.2	45.3
	Both	141	52.6	52.8	98.1
	N/A	5	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	267	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
	Total	268	100.0		

Language Spoken with Friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	English	160	59.7	60.2	60.2
	Spanish	7	2.6	2.6	62.8
	Both	97	36.2	36.5	99.2
	N/A	2	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	266	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.7		
Total		268	100.0		

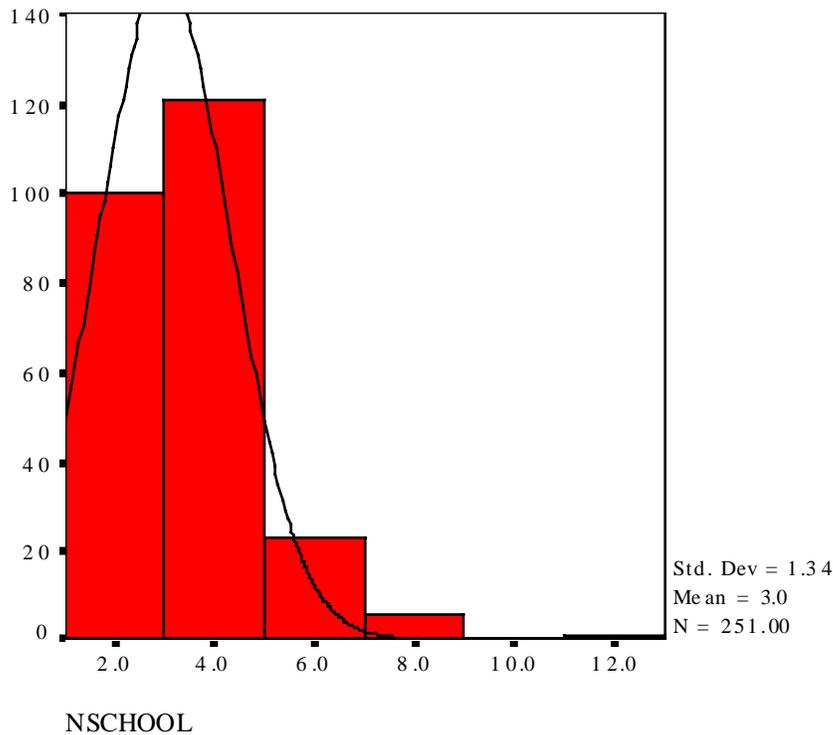
The majority of the sampled students (52.6%) spoke both languages at home. Contrarily, only 10.1% of the students spoke English at home while 35.1% spoke Spanish. A different trend appeared to be true of the social language used by students. That is, 36.5% spoke both languages in interactions with friends, while less than three percent spoke Spanish only to their friends. This clearly represents the fact that these children live in two separate worlds (Anglo and Hispanic) as they navigate their way through the culture.

Parents' Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Divorced	36	13.4	13.6	13.6
	Married	141	52.6	53.2	66.8
	Separated	26	9.7	9.8	76.6
	Single	24	9.0	9.1	85.7
	Widow	3	1.1	1.1	86.8
	D/K or N/A	35	13.1	13.2	100.0
Total		265	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.1		
Total		268	100.0		

The majority of students' parents were married (52.6%). However, it appeared that there's was good number of students who originated from single parent households. Specifically, 13.4% of the students originated from divorced families, 9.7% from homes in which the parents were separated, and 9% from homes headed by a single parent.

Mobility



Mobility is a measure of stability that is correlated highly with academic achievement indices. As the graph shows, the sampled students were highly mobile, with close to 50% moving to three or more schools by the time they reached middle school.

Results (Proximal Factors)

Factor 1 - Cultural Awareness/Acculturation

The module Latino Pride was intended to encourage Aspirantes' examination of their cultural group. Also, the module aimed to develop Aspirantes' respect for their culture and ethnicity.

Acculturation has been defined as a process of culture learning and behavioral adaptation that takes place as exposure to a non-native culture occurs (Berry, 1980; Padilla, 1980; Miranda & Matheny, 2000). Acculturation influences individual and familial dynamics. For example, as Latino adolescents acculturate and embrace what are culturally incongruous cognitions, affects, and behaviors to those of the parents, rules and values that guide the functioning of the family are violated. These violations of familial norms increase discord within families and tax adolescents' and parents' psychological well-being.

More importantly, unresolved issues of acculturation can lead an adolescent to isolation, despair, decrease academic performance, and severe forms of psychological distress. For immigrants, like the majority of the Aspirantes who participated in this project,

acculturation is an important factor that relates to personal orientation, the development of a perspective toward a dynamic cultural identity, and psychological well-being. That is, for immigrants, cultural identity is linked to the process of acculturation and to psychological health.

Our examination of acculturation as a construct led to the identification of four distinct acculturation options. These options are congruent with significant research reflected in the professional literature. The following tables include the items that, via a factor analysis, form the four acculturation options. The alpha level indicates the reliability of the factors. In addition to the items for each acculturation option, we offer a definition of the factor.

Separation (6 items, alpha = .69)

36.	It is important that I learn equally about Latino and American values and customs.
37.	It is important that I learn more about Latino values and customs than American ones.
40.	It is important that I maintain my Latino heritage.
42.	I participate in a lot of activities that can be identified as Latino in nature (example: celebrating holidays in a Latino way).
44.	I am very proud of my culture and its traditions. I think it is very important to keep them alive and respect the ways of Latinos. The only way to do this is to have as little contact as possible with non-Latinos. I think Latinos should stick to ourselves and have little interaction with Anglo-American society.
47.	I am very proud of the Latino culture and traditions. I think it is very important to keep them alive and respect the way of Latino people. However, I feel it is equally important to maintain good relations with non-Latino peoples. I believe that we have much to offer each other. It is important to me to preserve my own cultural heritage while actively participating in Anglo-American society.

Separation refers to the option of accepting the culture of origin while rejecting the new culture. In the literature, Separation is referred to as low-acculturation. Customarily, low acculturation or separated persons retain the practices of the culture of origin and resist inclusion or identification with the host culture. Sometimes, Separation, as an acculturation option, may reflect high ethnic pride.

Marginalization (10 items, $\alpha = .76$)

21.	Because of my Latino background, I have to work harder than most Americans.
27.	I have had disagreements with other Latinos (e.g., friends and family) for liking American customs or ways of doing things.
28.	I have had disagreements with Americans for liking Latino customs or ways of doing things.
29.	I feel that my particular cultural practices (Latino or American) have caused conflict in my relationships.
30.	I have been treated rudely or unfairly because of my Latino background.
31.	I have felt discriminated against by Americans because of my Latino background.
32.	I feel that people very often interpret my behavior based on their stereotypes of what Latinos are like.
33.	I feel that there are not enough Latino people in my living environment.
34.	When I am in a place or room where I am the only Latino person, I often feel different or isolated.
35.	I feel that the environment where I live is not multicultural enough, it doesn't have enough cultural richness.

Marginalization refers to the inability or unwillingness to identify either with the culture of origin or the host culture. Marginalized persons customarily feel excluded from either cultural group. Marginalization is the acculturation option that is tied frequently to numerous indices of poor coping, diminished mental health, increased substance abuse, and family conflict. Also relevant to this project is the fact that marginalized adolescents are more likely to drop out of school, join gangs, and not feel confidence in their abilities to meet the exigencies of a healthy and productive life.

Assimilation (3 items, $\alpha = .79$)

24.	It's hard for me to perform well at work because of my English skills.
25.	I often feel misunderstood or limited in daily situations because of my English skills.
26.	It bothers me that I have an accent.
46.	I am very proud of my culture and its traditions. But I think that Latinos do themselves great harm by trying to keep the Latino traditions along and hang onto traditional ways. In order to be accepted and move ahead in today's world it is necessary for us to establish good relations with non-Latino peoples by adopting the attitudes and behaviors of other people. Only by rejecting our past and actively participating in Anglo-American society will we be able to fit in and survive as equals in America.

Assimilation refers to fully accepting the practices of the host culture while abandoning those of the culture of origin. Frequently, assimilated persons do not maintain the native culture's cultural identity, but refuse it. Contrarily, assimilated persons "transform" by

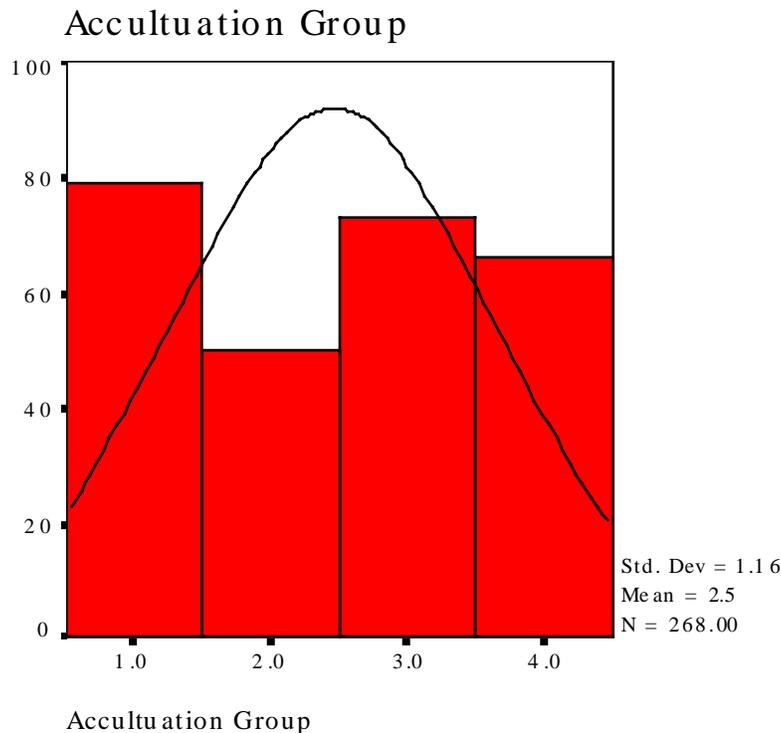
taking on the practices and custom of the host culture and leaving the practices and customs of the culture of origin.

Integration (5 items, alpha = .63)

38.	I don't really care about what values and customs I learn.
39.	It is more important to me that I learn more about American values and customs than Latino ones.
41.	Maintaining my Latino heritage is not really important to me because I live in America and not in a Latin country.
43.	Most of my activities cannot be identified as Latino, they are better described as American.
45.	I do not really understand the Latino culture and traditions. Because of this, I do not feel that I fit into the Latino community. Also, I don't feel comfortable with the Anglo-American community. They make me feel different, like an outsider. I just don't feel I belong anywhere.

Integration refers to bi-culturality. Customarily, persons who are bi-cultural mix the culture of origin with the host culture. Integration is the healthiest and the most adaptive of all acculturation options. Research has linked integration to positive indices of mental health, and personal and familial functioning.

Once we established the reliability of the acculturation options, we examined the fit of the sampled Aspirantes within the acculturation groups.



Acculturation Group by Acculturation Option

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Separate	79	29.5	29.5	29.5
Marginalized	50	18.7	18.7	48.1
Assimilated	73	27.2	27.2	75.4
Integrated	66	24.6	24.6	100.0
Total	268	100.0	100.0	

Nearly a quarter of the sampled Aspirantes (24.6%) were classified as bicultural (Integration option). Almost an equal number of Aspirantes were either separated (29.5%) or assimilated (27.2%). Assimilation and Separation are opposite poles in an acculturation option continuum.

Separated persons retain the practices of the culture of origin and resist inclusion or identification with the host culture. Sometimes, Separation, as an acculturation option, may reflect high ethnic pride. This is the case with the sample students given the survey questions.

Assimilated persons, contrarily, fully accept the practices of the host culture while abandoning those of the culture of origin. Usually, assimilated persons are encouraged by others or the environment to abandon the original culture's practices in favor of the host country main culture's practices. It would not be surprising that the sample students opted

to assimilate for such acculturation option may be a reflection of peer pressure, or pressure exercised by significant persons in an effort for the child to fit in and to belong.

The most worrisome group is that which includes Aspirantes who feel marginalized. Marginalization, as an acculturation option, has been linked to poor coping, diminished mental health, increased substance abuse, and family conflict. Also relevant to this project is the fact that marginalized adolescents are more likely to drop out of school, join gangs, or experience negative mental health.

Factor 2 - Career Knowledge

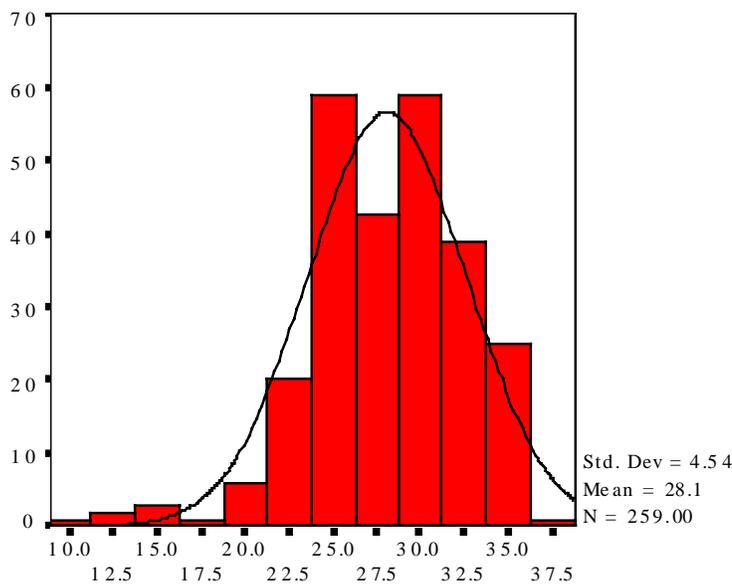
The module Career Awareness aimed to expose Aspirantes to the world of work and to enhance Aspirantes' knowledge about career/educational options. For example, it appeared that the Career Awareness module targeted the enhancement of knowledge about the link between educational pursuits and career options. Also, the Career Awareness module aimed to discourage school drop-out by enhancing the Aspirantes' knowledge of career options and by emphasizing the importance of academic pursuits.

We created an instrument to match the need to assess ASPIRA's Career Knowledge module. We used contemporary theory and research to guide this effort, and found three domains that addressed critical areas of career choice and college education. In the next few pages, we will describe each of the three factors, as well as present a graph of the distribution of scores, and the respective survey questions. Again, the alpha level reflects the reliability of the domain.

Career Direction or Choice (9 items, $\alpha = .80$)

1	I know what kind of job/profession I would like to have
2	I am aware of the education and the skills that I need to become a... (profession, career).
3	<u>Somebody in my family</u> has talked to me about jobs, careers, and professions, so I feel prepared to make a good decision about it.
9	Right now I am too young to worry about career/job decisions. (REV)
10.	I am familiar with college choices.
11.	I feel confident about what I may study in college.
12.	I would prefer to work instead of going to college. (REV)
16	What I have been told about career choices has been helpful..
20	I believe that I will be a competent professional

Career Direction or Choice

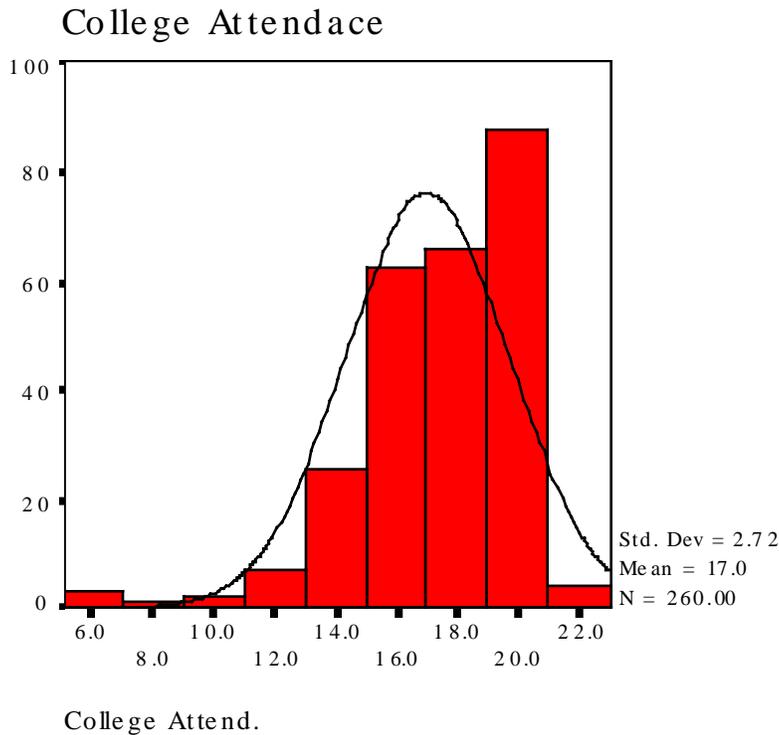


Career Direction/Choice

Career Direction or Choice refers to the students perceptions of their possible future career, and how a college education plays a role in this. This is a critical part of ASPIRA of Florida’s overall mission that these students have the opportunity to see their dreams realized and their potential fulfilled. It is evident from the percentage of higher scores that Aspirantes feel positive about their career aspirations. Nonetheless, the apparent optimism must be interpreted with caution for we have not examined indices of academic achievement that may set students up for future academic endeavors, and may guide their occupational aspirations.

Career 2: College Attendance (5 items, alpha = .76)

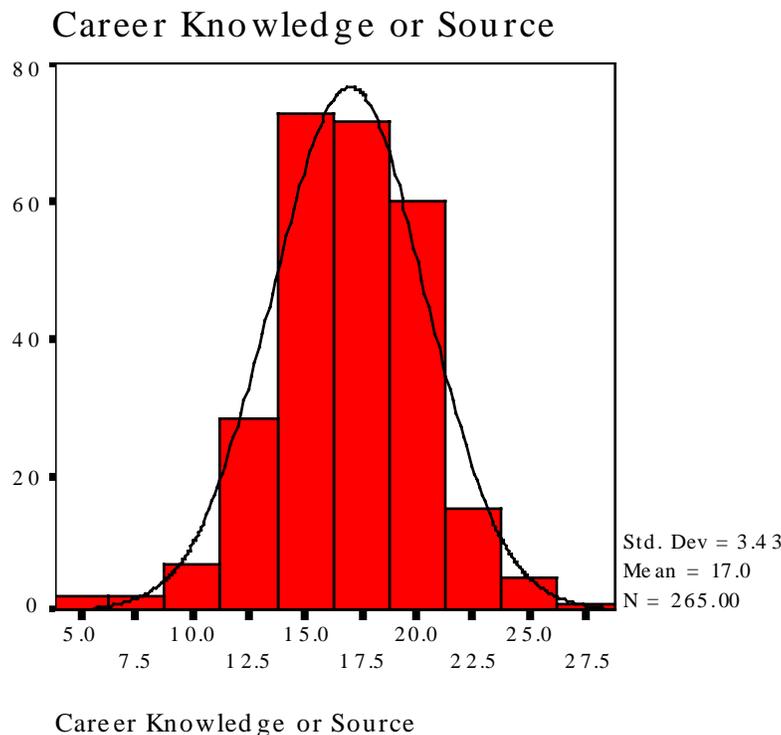
8.	Going to college is a possibility for me.
12	I would prefer to work instead of going to college. (REV)
13.	I don't think my family can afford to help me go to college, so I don't think it is a possibility for me. (REV)
14.	I am sure that I will go to college.
18.	School is important to me.



College Attendance refers to the Aspirantes' beliefs about the possibility of attending college. Again, this is a critical part of ASPIRA of Florida's overall mission that these students have the opportunity to see their dreams realized and their potential fulfilled. It is evident from the percentage of higher scores that Aspirantes feel confident about their ability to attend college.

Career 3: Career Knowledge or Source (6 items, alpha = .72)

2.	I am aware of the education and the skills that I need to become a... (profession, career).
3	<u>Somebody in my family</u> has talked to me about jobs, careers, and professions, so I feel prepared to make a good decision about it.
4.	<u>My friends</u> have talked to me about jobs, careers, and professions, so I feel prepared to make a good decision about it.
5	<u>My School Counselor</u> has talked to me about jobs, careers, and professions, so I feel prepared to make a good decision about it.
6.	<u>An ASPIRA Counselor</u> has talked to me about jobs, careers, and professions, so I feel prepared to make a good decision about it.
7.	<u>The ASPIRA group</u> that I participate in has talked about jobs, careers, and professions, so I feel prepared to make a good decision about it.



Career Knowledge or Source refers to how Aspirantes get the information about their career possibilities. It is noteworthy that the ASPIRA groups and the ASPIRA counselor were two important sources of information that the Aspirantes relied on. In addition, Aspirantes also are influenced by their family members and friends. The important issue that is worth further examination is the reliability and usefulness of the information in decision making. Again, this is a critical part of ASPIRA of Florida’s overall mission that these students have the opportunity to see their dreams realized and their potential fulfilled. In the future steps of the research project, we will gather focus group data about the influences on career decision making.

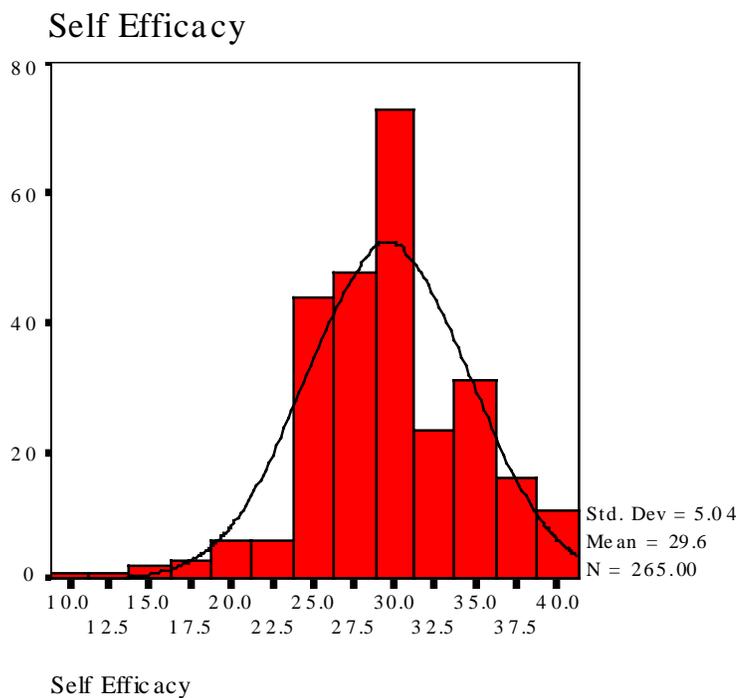
Factor 3 - Self-Efficacy

At its core, the Self-Esteem module intends to develop and protect the self-esteem of the Aspirantes. Self-esteem is elusive construct and is, consequently, difficult to assess and measure. Nonetheless, it appears that healthy self-esteem is associated with high academic achievement, strong interpersonal relationship skills, involvement in sports and positive extracurricular activities, and a strong sense of self and connectedness to others (King, Vidourek, Davis & McClellan, 2002).

Although self-esteem has been widely studied, it appears that it is a by-product of another construct: Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been defined as one's belief in one's capacity. Self-efficacy is about confidence in one's abilities and knowledge. Self-efficacy is the base for healthy self-esteem.

Self Efficacy items

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
If someone opposes me, I can find means and ways to get what I want.
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping skills.
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.
If I am in a bind, I can usually think of something to do.
No matter what comes my way, I'm able to handle it.



The graph above reveals that, overall, Aspirantes feel high levels of self-efficacy. This means that they have the confidence in themselves to set and achieve their goals. Confidence in one's ability is related to positive emotional development, a capacity to handle the challenges of life, and sound behavioral choices. All of these are central to the mission of ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.

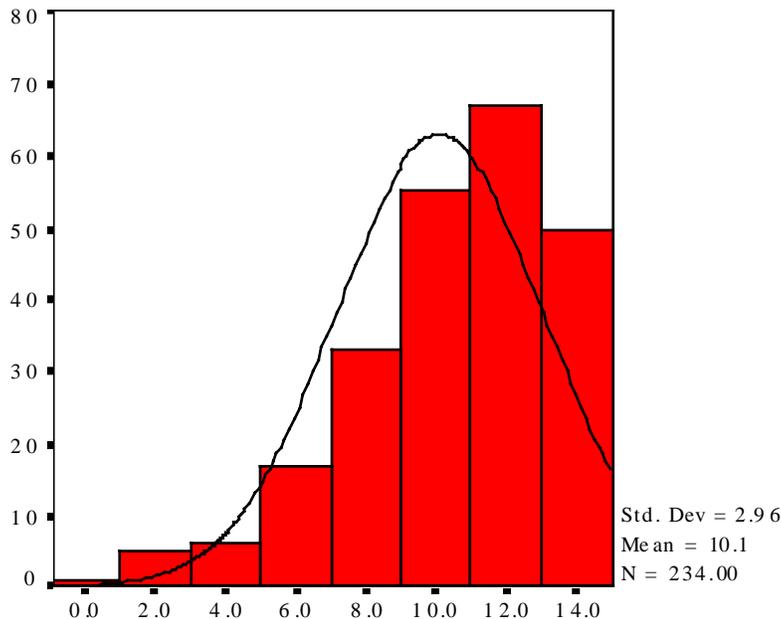
Factor 4 – Academic Confidence

Academic Confidence refers to the degree to which a student believes that s/he believes in her/his abilities to meet the requirements of the academic environment or of academic endeavors.

Academic Confidence Table here (Items and reliability index)

I think I am a very good student.
I am smarter than most students.
I use my time better than most students do.
Most students are smarter than I am.
I plan my work well.
I am one of the first to get my work done.
I turn my school work in on time.
I get things done on time.
I cannot keep my mind on school work.
I do my school work very well.
I get my class work done on time.
I am afraid I will not pass this grade.
I know the answer when my teacher calls on me.
I usually get good grades on my school work.

Academic Self Confidence



Academic Self Confidence

As the above graph shows, most of the Aspirantes sampled believe in their skills to meet the academic exigencies placed on them. Another way to state this finding is that most Aspirantes feel confident that their abilities are sufficient to meet the academic challenges placed on them.

Results (Correlation among Factors)

In research, it is customary to analyze the way in which factors correlate with one another. Correlations are expressed as an index that ranges from 0 to 1.0. A perfect correlation ($r = 1.0$) is rare and discouraged in research, for it reveals a perfect replication of a certain factor. Perfect or high correlation coefficients reveal redundancies that are never welcome in research.

The absence of a correlation, represented by a 0 index, indicates that one factor in no way varies its value according to the variations in another factor. Positive correlations indicate values that move in the same direction. For example, a positive correlation exists between height and weight. That is, the taller a person the more that s/he weights. Negative correlations (indicated by a negative sign in front of the index's value) represents opposite variations between factors. For example, a negative correlation exists between speed while driving and safety. Hence, the logic of the negative correlation is that the faster one drives the lesser the safety one exercises.

The following table indicates that numerous factors correlate with one another. The strength of the correlation is indicated by the alpha coefficient. The direction of the correlation is indicated by either the absence of a sign, as in the case of a positive correlation, or the presence of a negative sign, indicative of a negative correlation. A few correlations are worth noting.

Career Awareness

Within Factor Correlations

Three factors were derived from the Career Awareness Domain: Career Awareness, College Attendance, and Career Knowledge. The correlations indicate that:

1. As the awareness about career increases, so does the knowledge about career choices.
2. As the awareness about career increases, so does the belief that one can attend college.

Between Factor Correlations

No distinct pattern emerged from the correlations among the Career Awareness factors (mentioned above) and the Acculturation factors (Separation, Integration, Assimilation, Marginalization). Nonetheless, there are some important revelations from the correlations

1. The career awareness of Aspirantes increases as they feel pride in their heritage.
2. Career awareness decreases as Aspirantes lose pride in the Latino culture and are either assimilated or integrated.
3. Belief in the possibility of attending college decreases for Aspirantes who feel marginalized, assimilated, or integrated.
4. Only those Aspirantes who feel pride in the Latino culture feel that they know enough about their educational and occupational choices.

Acculturation

Within Factor Correlations

Each of the four Acculturation factors correlate with the other. The most pronounced negative correlations are between the Separation option and both the Integration and Assimilation options. As these are considered to be opposite stances with regards to Acculturation, this is consistent with theory. However, Marginalization did not correlate negatively with Integration and Assimilation options (as predicted by the theory), but positively. This may indicate some level of internal tension within the students as they make efforts to understand and belong in the diverse South Florida culture. This is a finding that will require further exploration.

Between Factor Correlations

Acculturation and College Awareness factors

The Separation acculturation option correlated with the three Career Awareness factors: Career Awareness, College Attendance, and Career Knowledge. The strength and the direction of the correlations indicate that the Latino ethnic pride of the sampled middle school children increases as does their knowledge about careers and college, and their belief that they can attend college.

Interestingly, there was only one statistically significant correlation between the Marginalization acculturation option and College Attendance. This is not surprising given the acculturation literature. As middle school children feel marginalized they are less likely to feel that college is a viable choice for them. This finding is important for it suggest that a significant portion of the sample children feel discouraged about their educational futures, especially about attending college.

A surprising couple of statistically significant correlations were found among the Assimilation acculturation option and Career Awareness and College Attendance. That is, as the assimilation of middle school children increases, they feel less aware about their career choices and the possibility of attending college seems remote. This pattern of correlations was also true for children who opted for the Integrated acculturation option.

It appears, therefore, that as Latino children forgo their connection with the Latino culture, they feel that their academic and occupation options lessen to the degree that they

do not see college as a viable alternative, and they do not perceive that they are capable of making sound occupational choices.

Academic Confidence

From the Acculturation options, only Marginalization related to Academic Confidence. However, the relationships among Academic Confidence and the Career Awareness factors were statistically significant and positive. Therefore, the following patterns emerged:

1. Academic Confidence decreases as Aspirantes feel marginalized.
2. Academic Confidence increases as Career Awareness, Career Knowledge, and College Attendance increase. That is, Academic confidence is accompanied by increased awareness and knowledge about careers, and increased believe that one can attend college.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's skills and abilities, was correlated to numerous acculturation, career awareness, and academic confidences indices. The following pattern emerged from the statistically significant correlations.

1. As Aspirantes feel more pride in their Latino heritage, their self-efficacy increases.
2. Assimilation and Integration, as acculturation options, decrease self-efficacy.
3. Self-efficacy increases as career awareness, career knowledge, and belief about attending college increase.
4. Academic confidence and self-efficacy are synergistic, As one increases so does the other.

Correlations Among the Relevant Factors

	Separate	Marginal	Assimilate	Integrate	Career Awareness	College Attendance	Career Knowledge	Academic Confidence	Self Efficacy
Separation	1								
Marginalization	.169*	1							
Assimilation	-.173**	.406**	1						
Integration	-.221**	.325**	.386**	1					
Career Awareness	.425**	-.098	-.246**	-.214**	1				
College Attendance	.305**	-.250**	-.282**	-.268**	.598**	1			
Career Knowledge	.292**	-.001	-.042	-.019	.578**	.201**	1		
Academic Confidence	.050	-.149*	-.089	.093	.227**	.240**	.220**	1	
Self Efficacy	.331**	.050	-.158*	-.128*	.512**	.278**	.362**	.297**	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation of Preliminary Data and Connection to Overall Project

Reliability and Validity of the Indices

To date, this study has identified three reliable factors to measure aspects of career development. In addition, several subscales related to acculturation have also been identified. These scales are designed to align with the purpose and mission of ASPIRA of Florida, Inc., and will provide methods to accurately track these factors across time.

Distal Factors

It is clear that the sampled children live in two worlds. This is represented by numerous distal factors. For example, the majority of the sampled students (52.6%) spoke both languages or Spanish at home. Only 10.1% of the students spoke English at home. A different reality reflected the social language used by the sampled students. Specifically, 36.5% spoke both languages in interactions with friends and only three percent spoke Spanish to their friends.

The majority of the sampled students lived in intact homes. That is, (52.6%) lived in homes where the parents are married. However, a good number of students originated from single parent households. The sampled students reported that 13.4% originated from divorced families, 9.7% from homes in which the parents were separated, and 9% from homes headed by a single parent.

The sampled students move frequently. Although the sampled students were in middle school, they were highly mobile. Close to 50% had moved to three or more schools by the time they reached middle school.

Proximal Factors

Acculturation

We identified four acculturation options for the sampled students. A minority of the sampled students ($n = 50$) reported feeling marginalized, neither identifying with the Latino or the majority culture. Nearly 30% of the sampled students reported feeling separated. Separation, as an acculturation option, reflected cultural pride given the way in which the survey items clustered in the factor analysis. The opposite end of the spectrum to Separation, Assimilation, indicated that 73 of the sampled students chose to practice and operate from the majority culture's parameters. Other sampled students ($n = 66$) reported valuing the Latino culture and the majority culture thereby being bicultural.

Career Knowledge

Overall, the sampled students reported feeling positive about their knowledge of careers available to them. Knowledge of the world of work may provide Aspirantes with a target to aim toward and may facilitate academic resilience. In other words, Career Knowledge

may increase Aspirantes' feelings of purpose about academic endeavors. Additionally, Aspirantes derive the knowledge about careers from their families, peers, and from the ASPIRA Counselors.

College Attendance

A significant number of Aspirantes believe that they are going to attend college. It appears that this index includes belief in one's academic effectiveness as well as the availability of resources to pursue a college education. Also, it is not uncommon for middle school students to report as the sampled Aspirantes did. The literature reflects that middle school students often are optimistic and positive about pursuing a college education.

Career Direction

A significant number of Aspirantes endorse survey items indicative of an overall belief that they knew what careers or occupations to pursue. This is unusual for middle school students, but indicative, especially given the responses to the College Attendance and Career Knowledge factors, of confidence in this domain.

Self-Efficacy

Given the "career" factors, it is no surprise that the sampled Aspirantes reported a high level of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy or self-confidence precedes self-esteem. As such, self-efficacy is a healthy belief in one's capabilities that is founded in something substantive. Contrarily, at times self-esteem can be a negative factor, as in the case of those who possess high self-esteem but such feelings are unrelated to substantive actions or contributions.

Academic Confidence

Academic Confidence may be interpreted as an extension of the scores reported by the Aspirantes on the Self-Efficacy factor. That is, not only the Aspirantes feel confident in their general abilities, but specifically on their academic capacities.

Correlation Coefficients

Many of the factors studied relate to one another. This indicates that the topics that ASPIRA has chosen to focus on may align in a way to create an overall impact on the lives of Aspirantes. Hence, there may not be one critical factor which determines overall success, but a combination of factors to make up an "ASPIRA effect."

Overall Efficacy of the ASPIRA modules

- Overall, Aspirantes report a high level of Self-Efficacy
- Overall, Aspirantes report a high level of Academic Confidence
- There is a high level of cultural pride and affiliation amongst Aspirantes

Limitations of This Phase of the Study

Some limitations are worth noting:

1. Only Latino middle school students were sampled
2. Self report measures may reveal some biases and exaggerated claims about acculturation, career knowledge, self-efficacy, or academic confidence.
3. The reported data is correlation and descriptive. Therefore, no inferences can be made from the results

Connection to Overall Study and Next Steps

The purpose of this report was to provide a detailed analysis of the data collected in the pre-test phase of the ASPIRA Evaluation Research Project. These findings provide dramatic evidence of the state of mind of Aspirantes related to the modules of self-esteem, career knowledge, and cultural awareness. There is additional data that will be collected which will help complete the picture, and the findings reported here should be seen in this light. The additional data to be collected will be done in the following ways:

- Focus Groups with Graduates
- Post Test of YLD participants

At the present time, this data is being collected. A comprehensive report will be submitted in the next few months.

At the onset, the ASPIRA Evaluation Research Project envisioned a full appraisal of each of the nine modules that comprise the ASPIRA process. At the conclusion of the present work, three of the nine modules will have been investigated. It will be consistent with the purpose of the ASPIRA Evaluation Research Project to replicate the findings of this present work and continue to evaluate additional modules.