



# Greater Expectations: Teaching Academic Literacy to Underrepresented Students

*Robin Turner*

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While the population of Hispanic/Latino and African American students in the United States continues to grow, the rate at which they attend college remains alarmingly small. These students, who are often defined as "educationally underrepresented," are a bellwether of a shortcoming in our nation's educational system that has serious implications for the future. In *Greater Expectations*, Robin Turner, a high school English teacher from Anaheim, California, offers pragmatic, proven methods for better preparing underrepresented students for higher education.

The book is grounded in Robin's experience as a leader in the Puente Project, a college preparation program started in California high schools over twenty years ago. Since 1981, Puente has proven highly effective in producing positive change by improving academic performance, standardized test scores, and college admission rates for underrepresented students.

Forming the book's foundations are the ideas of *familia* and *cariño*, or family and caring. The first, *familia*, asserts the importance of establishing a sense of community among adolescents and tapping into student culture—ethnicity, music, sports, neighborhood and so on in the language arts classroom. The second concept, a pedagogy of *cariño*, contends that too often, underrepresented students possess attributes that are overlooked and are viewed with a deficit-model paradigm. Building on this foundation, *Greater Expectations* shows how to effectively teach different modes of academic discourse—literary analysis, autobiographical/biographical, persuasive research, and community-based writing. Offering a combination of personal narrative, how-to lesson plans, and student samples, Robin Turner challenges readers to approach their underrepresented students with greater expectations and be equipped with specific lesson plans to enable their classes to meet them.

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