

**DREAM CATCHERS: Helping to Meet 60X30TX Goals**

*Video opens with footage from 2017 Dream Catcher Summer Institute in Austin.*

ALEGRA VIARREAL

“My name is Alegria Viarreal and I teach at Austin Community College and we’re here doing a training for Catch the Next for teachers to implement the Catch the Next program.”

DR. MARIA CHAVEZ BRUMMEL

“Catch the Next is a college readiness and completion non-profit organization. Many of the students in community colleges tend to not graduate and complete their associates degree.”

**NARRATION:**

**Catch the Next’s Dream Catcher program addresses the objective of the Texas 60x30 Higher Education Strategic plan which is to increase to 60 % the number of Texans, ages 25 to 34, who complete a certificate or degree by the year 2030. The Dream Catcher framework is made up of five components...an accelerated reading and writing course, counseling, mentoring, professional development, and activities on campus and off.**

DR. MARGARITA BISCHOFF

“We try in any shape or form to help these students. And a lot of these students are actually first generation students, students who have not yet gained their confidence and self esteem to be right away successful in college.”

DR. MARIA CHAVEZ BRUMMEL

“The advantage of being in our program is that you will accelerate the time that you would invest in courses—what they call “gate keeper” courses.”

ALEGRA VIARREAL

“Here, we’re first-come, first-served. We have students from all different backgrounds, and the program is implemented in Houston, in Dallas, in Austin, in the Valley and El Paso.”

**NARRATION:**

**And the goal is to bring the Dream Catcher program to colleges and universities all across Texas. Its first essential component is an accelerated reading and writing course.**

**BISCHOFF**

“The program combines an integrated reading writing class, which is a developmental class, with a college success class that students can take for credit and that they do in the fall semester and then in the spring semester, automatically with the same teacher, they sign up for the academic English class.”

**DR. MARIA CHAVEZ BRUMMEL**

“We have the same teacher for both classes, so that they have that continuity and learn and stick with them and the like. And that has proven to be extremely successful.”

“We teach writing as a process, not a product. You know, often times when you enter English class, you are told, read this book, write a thesis statement, give me a paper. We do not do it that way. When we begin, we get you to write about your neighborhood, your parents, your favorite picture, your favorite song. We have you go interview your neighbor, you relative. We have you write about what you know.”

**STUDENT:**

“You have a better understanding of what you are writing about and what you’re reading about. It’s just like building up your skills so you can build up a better education.”

**LYDIA FRENCH**

I teach in Houston which is one of the most diverse cities in the world. It’s something like 143 languages spoken there. I’ve taught student from across the world...every corner of the world. I don’t have to make assumptions about where my students are coming from because I have, for instance, organized my class around the theme of education which is something that I know they all have something to talk about. They all have something to say about education, so I can begin with their experiences of education, whatever those may be, and then complement them with others from Frederick Douglas to Paolo Friere to Della Hook to Jimmy Baca have said about their own educational experiences...Malala Yousefzai... to talk about what education looks like for different cultures, what education looks like for different socio economic levels., who has access to education

and then who doesn't, who fights for education and who doesn't and why, and because all of those come to bear on their experiences, and we start with their experiences, the classroom becomes automatically culturally relevant.

#### ALEGRA VIARREAL

"It's a yearlong program, so the first semester we call it 'the mirror' so that's where students see themselves reflected in what they are reading and what they are doing. The second semester is 'the window' and that's where we take them into the more rigorous academic writing and sort of multiple perspectives and that kind of thing."

#### LYDIA FRENCH

"A lot of the research shows that students who have maybe never read a book cover to cover, if they see themselves represented, especially early on in their college careers, educational careers, that they become engaged in ways that they wouldn't, if they were right off the bat given Shakespeare or something like that.

What they learn is the joy of reading, the joy of exploring language in innovative and creative ways and the extent to which language really creates a world."

#### ALEGRA

"We want them to think critically about the pieces, to dig deep within their own and then to see the perspectives of other people, because everyone reads in a different way, everyone responds in a different way, and I think it is important for students, especially at the beginning of a semester, at the beginning of college to recognize that their voices and interpretations are also valid, that there isn't just one way to read, there's not just one way to interpret a text."

#### LYDIA FRENCH

"So often it is easy to say, especially of development students that oh these are the at risk students. This class is going to be such a problem. It is going to take much more time. There are challenges. Um, instead of thinking about it that way, instead of thinking in what is called the deficit approach to our students, thinking about you know one of the things I have noticed about my students is they have a really strong connection to their families. How can I incorporate family into my class. What are the ways in which we can incorporate into our curriculum, materials that grow our students, not only intellectually but also in a sense of themselves."

(Video of CTN Austin Workshop, Summer of 2017)

BRUMMEL

“When you look at the people who are here today being trained in our model, we have people in Math, English, in government.”

ALEGRA

“All the readings have to do with language and identity. That is one of the themes that comes up a lot for our struggling students and our first generation students.”

**NARRATION:**

**To better prepare educators to help those students, teachers in the Dream Catcher program are required to attend professional development workshops three times a year.**

BISCHOFF

“This particular program has strict professional requirements. The faculty have to go through a summer institute, five days long; a fall institute for three days long and a spring institute about three days long.

BRUMMEL

“The subject matter is secondary. The key is how you go about teaching and engaging students in their learning.”

BRUMMEL

“We actually focus on how teachers teach. And we have a strong literacy based approach that is applicable to any subject.”

ALEGRA

“One of the great things about this program is that every activity or lesson we do is very intentional and we are doing multiple things at once. So yes, we are analyzing text, we are looking for tone, we are looking for strong lines, we are looking for these things, how to summarize, but we are also looking at various perspectives on a text.”

BRUMMEL

“We want you to want to write, we want you to want to tell us your story.”

BISCHOFF

“Around this program is a lot of involvement by the family, a lot of advising and counseling and the students form a cohort. So the idea is that the students start to help one another. They understand each other’s problems and it works very well.”

**NARRATION:**

**Social activities outside the classroom are one of the essential components of the Dream Catcher program, such as Family Nights and organized visits to four-year colleges and universities where community college students can transfer to pursue their bachelors degrees.**

BISCHOFF

“Family input is important. The families come. They are very shy in the beginning but then they start to ask questions and they really, really understand finally - this is not a waste of time where money could be made by someone who is going to college. This is something we could all learn from.”

BRUMMEL

“Mentoring is the other component, in that we try to bring to the equation, to provide that network of support to our students.”

**NARRATION:**

**The mentoring component of the Dream Cather program matches students with leading professionals in the community. This can be either one-to-one interactions or presentations by mentors to larger groups.**

BRUMMEL

“What we try to do at least for the first year is to find a mentor, a member of the community, a member of the institution, an one who is willing to give a little bit of time to students.”

**NARRATION:**

**Aside from interactions with mentors, Dream Catcher also utilizes counselors to give students support and guidance when they need it most.**

BISCHOFF

“Counseling is very important, and there’s a little bit of a caveat there because there’s two kinds of counseling. There’s career counseling and transfer counseling and there’s also counseling because of the most horrific events that happened to our students. We try to keep that separate, okay. Because if the student within a class starts to talk too much about that, it takes away from the experience of the others. So, we try to keep our staff counselors involved in those kind of things. They’re also much better in helping our student because they know the supporting agencies there are. So, we try to keep that separate.”

BRUMMEL

“When we started our program in Texas, 13 per cent of the Latino population in this country had a bachelors degree. Now, in 2017, that rate has increased and we now have a 16 percent graduation rate for a bachelors degree, so we have made a lot of progress. In the five years that we have implemented our program, all of our colleges exceeded state averages in reading and writing.”

**NARRATION:**

**Programs like Dream Catchers helps underprepared students through the connections they make to curriculum, to their institutions, and to their communities. These connections are important and remain long after the students complete the program. Data has shown these student progress and graduate at impressive rates when compared to the general population. Currently, the Dream Catchers model is making adjustments to add co-requisite options to meet new legislatively mandated requirements for Texas institutions of higher education. Programs like Dream Catchers will play a key role in helping Texas meet its 60x30TX goals.**

**END**