Professor Barajas-López's research examines the realities of teaching and learning mathematics in schools serving predominantly African American, Latina/o, Native American, poor/working-class and immigrant youth. In that work, he pursues several interrelated themes:

- Understanding how research, policies and practices in mathematics education address the realities of youth of color, poor and working class youth, and immigrants.
- How Mexican immigrant youth experience mathematics learning socially and institutionally, including how these youth are socialized to learn and think about mathematics in their own homes and communities.
- How secondary mathematics teachers learn to develop understanding about youths' home and cultural knowledge to develop and enact culturally relevant mathematics learning experiences.
- How children and youth develop racial and ethnic identities in relation to disciplinary identities within the field of mathematics.
- Living Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

Central to Barajas-López’s work is privileging youth experience, family knowledge and cultural knowledge. He takes practical and theoretical insights from student experience and voice on how race, culture, language, gender, class are intimately connected to the ways in which students come to participate in mathematics learning.

He is a recipient of the American Educational Research Association’s Henry T. Trueba Award for Research Leading to the Transformation of the Social Contexts of Education and his work has been published in Urban Education, Journal of Latinos in Education and the Journal of Family Diversity in Education.

Read about Professor Barajas-López’s work to build equity in secondary math education in Research That Matters.

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