Art as Voice: Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners (full issue)

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Art as Voice: Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners

Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice
Special Issue Fall 2017
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Editorial
Arlene Dallalfar, Lesley University

I am pleased to preface the Fall 2017 Special Issue of the Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice (JPPP), titled Art as Voice: Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners, edited by Professors Amanda Claudia Wager, Vivian Maria Poey and Berta Rosa Berriz. This Special Issue is a result of numerous meetings and engaging collaboration, both with members of the JPPP Editorial Board as well as the Special Editors, to focus on a publication that targets the intersection of the arts, literacies and language learning. We have been enthusiastic about specifically using Lesley University’s online journal as a free access peer-reviewed publication to make this issue more accessible to educators, professionals and advocates in a range of environments. The uniqueness of this Special Issue is that the editors and authors contribute to scholarship on arts and multicultural education, and add to this body of knowledge by helping fill three distinct gaps in current scholarship: first to specifically address literacy acquisition with emergent bilinguals, second to examine language and literacy within elementary education and third to focus on pedagogy and practices across grade levels. The Introductory Chapter frames the epistemological lens and frameworks used by the Special Editors, Professors Wager, Poey and Berriz, in examining their approach to teaching and learning through the interdisciplinary domains of arts and learning in multicultural and multilingual settings, as well as literacy acquisition with emergent bilinguals. The nine chapters, divided into three sections, provide local and national examples from scholars and practitioners on pedagogical approaches to describe the range of multimodal literacies and language learning in educational settings. Each article was selected to demonstrate how the arts can be used to build on language learning practices among a variety of constituents, such as educators, community youth workers and those involved in advocacy work. I welcome how the editors and authors encompass a methodology that addresses the interplay of class, gender and ethnic/race identities as it intersects with language and literacy, schooling and educational policy, illustrating a commitment to culturally responsive practices and inclusive communities of practice. The concluding chapter provides a rich archive of resources that can be used to further engage with multilingual educational practices as well as theoretical and pedagogical approaches on using the arts to enhance academic access and success for children, youth and families who are in the process of learning another language.

In this Special Issue we have also included an engaging review, by Frank Daniello, Professor of Elementary Education at Lesley University, of the book Child’s Social and Emotional Well-Being: A Complete Guide for Parents and Those Who Help Them (2016),
authored by Dacey, Fiore and Brion-Meisels. Professor Daniello provides an overview and assessment of how traditional schooling and public education curriculum has not adequately promoted children’s social and emotional learning (SEL). In addition, he examines concrete actions, strategies and exercises proposed by the authors to engage children in SEL. He highlights the value of collaboration between organizations and parents, caregivers and educators in supporting children’s SEL.

We hope JPPP can provide a forum for scholars in the humanities, arts, sciences, education, social sciences and human services to promote cultural criticism and pluralistic approaches to teaching and learning. The Editorial Board also seeks to present a balance of practitioner-research, philosophical and theoretical essays to showcase interdisciplinary lenses as diverse forms of inquiry. In addition, our goal is to increase and enhance access, both within the Lesley academic community, as well as reaching teachers, learners and practitioners across national and international borders. A special thanks to the efforts of Danielle Powell, our eLearning and Instructional Support (eLIS) team member, and more recently Philip Siblo-Landsman, our Research, Instruction and Digital Scholarship Librarian, for technical expertise with layout, formatting and uploading of the Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice to its new home in the DigitalCommons@Lesley within the Sherrill library. We strive to make the JPPP more accessible to a global readership. We hope this issue helps provide new insights and understandings of complex issues facing educators and families living and working in multicultural and multilingual communities at the local and national level. For further information please contact us at jppp@lesley.edu.
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Art as Voice: Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners
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Art as Voice: Summary of Chapters
Amanda Claudia Wager, Vivian Maria Poey & Berta Rosa Berriz, Lesley University

Welcome to Art as Voice! This Special Issue for the Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice focuses on how artistic practices are used to increase literacy and language abilities with multilingual learners. It includes voices from the field that explore how the arts intersect with sociocultural ways of knowing and advocacy, while promoting multilingual practices in schools, community settings, and higher education. Throughout this special issue, we refer to English language learners (ELLs) as “emergent bilingual learners” (EBs) to honor the assets that multilingual students bring to our schools and communities (García, 2009). Since those who speak English as their first language began as, and still are, English language learners, this work benefits all students. Being able to speak, read and write in more than one language is significantly advantageous in our increasingly global society.

This issue builds on artistic practices that integrate language, culture, and pedagogy. It is intended to serve as a resource for educators, community youth workers, activists, arts teachers, researchers and undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in understanding the complexities of arts and language learning as a sociocultural way of knowing. In this spirit, we begin the special issue with the “Introduction to Art as Voice: Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners”, in which we, as editors, explain who we are, how we each came to this work, the “intellectual family” that guides and supports the use of arts as a tool for language learning, while moving this theory into practice through explanation of our experiences using art as voice. In the first section, A Treasure-Trove of Knowledge: Heritage and Identity, the initial chapter brings readers to the landscape and sounds of the Mexican-American border in Cecilia A. Valenzuela’s “Sonic Borderland Literacies and Critical Dissonance: A Re/Mix of Culturally Relevant Education.” She demonstrates how deep critical listening practices are a part of our student’s ways of meaning making. Next, listening to the sounds of parents singing to their children, Sarah Davila and Maura Mendoza explain ways that arts-based language workshops can be entry points for immigrant families in “Creating School Partnerships: Multilingual Family Engagement Through the Arts.” Moving to heritage and community-based language learning, in “Between Two Worlds: Utilizing the Arts to Increase Engagement and Effectiveness in the Spanish for Heritage Learners Classroom,” Kathryn E. Mostow addresses ways to increase positive awareness of high school student’s perspectives on furthering their Spanish heritage language through an arts-integrated curriculum.
We then journey into the community within the next section Weaving Community: Learning with Each Other. Author Won Kim begins this section by building on the use of drama in “‘It Was Like Really Uncomfortable But Kind of Comfortable’: An Ethnographically-Informed Radio Play of Adult ESL Classes with Educational Drama.” Kim creatively reshapes a scripted radio play to describe the lived experiences and potential challenges of integrating multimodal drama-based work into the curriculum of a Canadian-based ESL school for adult international students. Also with adult students in “The Art Museum: A Site for Developing Second Language and Academic Discourse Processes,” Rosalind Horowitz and Kristy Masten investigate how the art museum provides an educational space for emergent bilinguals to develop oral and written academic discourses while thinking critically about the culture of museums. They offer three approaches for incorporating their methodology into undergraduate courses, while recognizing that they are situated in a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). And finally, Amy Gooden shares her analysis of a university-urban school district partnership that supported an innovative middle school summer enrichment academy for EBs in “Reach for the Stars: Restructuring Schooling for Emergent Bilinguals with a Whole-Child, Arts-Infused Curricular Approach.”

Heading into the classroom in our next section, Engaging Pedagogy: Integrating Arts into Schools, “Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds: Promoting Access and Opportunity for Emergent Bilinguals” leads us back to the elementary classroom, where authors James V. Hoffman, Doris Villarreal, Sam DeJulio, Laura Taylor, and Jaran Shin showcase how drama integrated read-alouds promote participation and deep discussions. In a Spanish-dominant middle school community, Joseph Rodriguez, in “Transcribing Arts and Identities: A Case Study on Literacies at Guadalupe Middle School,” explains how his students use their artistic bilititeracies via poetry and image design to increase critical literacy awareness and practice bilingual language development in the English language arts classroom. In “Supporting Teachers in Arts Integration Strategies to Foster Foundational Literacy Skills of Emergent Bilinguals,” Christa Mulker Greenfader, Shelly VanAmburg, and Liane Brouillette counter curricular silos by promoting oral language development through arts-based instruction for elementary emergent bilingual learners. We, Vivian Poey, Berta Berriz, and Amanda Wager, conclude this special issue with “Diverse Experiences and Complex Identities: A Resource Archive of Artists’ and Educators’ Works”, which builds on the ideas developed throughout this issue to provide a range of resources that enrich arts-based work within the field of literacy development with families and communities of emergent bilinguals. The issue includes a glossary of key terms, which are italicized throughout the introduction chapter, and concludes with information about the contributors.

This Special Issue compliments and expands on our forthcoming volume, Art as a Way of Talking for Emergent Bilingual Youth: A Foundation for Literacy in preK-12 Schools (in press). In this Special Issue, we expand beyond schools to focus on family and community engagement, as well as adult learners. The Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism, and Practice has the advantage of being online and open-access, overcoming boundaries of knowledge and communication. We hope that the author’s voices within this Special Issue, as well as those within our book, will continue to:
• provide an alternative arts-based, student-centered and teacher-affirming framework for teaching emergent bilinguals, heritage and community language learners, which honors where they come from and builds on what they already know.

• present integrated arts approaches to teaching that engage emergent bilinguals, as well as all students, as agents of change through a critical analysis of their potential to excel and make their own mark in improving the world.

• provide a forum for innovative educators in the field of teaching literacy through the arts to increase access to arts education for all students, especially those in low-income schools where the arts have proven to be most powerful and where art programs are often lacking.

• challenge the current prescriptions for teaching English that focus solely on standardized, ‘teacher proof’ curriculum, pacing guides and testing.

Wishing you an enriching read and further collaborative and creative learning experiences with emergent bilingual learners, communities, and families.

with much appreciation,

Amanda, Vivian, & Berta
Lesley University
December 2017

Reference
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by Jessica Sabogal http://www.jessicasabogal.com
Introduction to Art as Voice: 
Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners

Introduction

Amanda Claudia Wager, Vivian Maria Poey & Berta Rosa Berriz, Lesley University

Abstract

In this introductory chapter, we share our positionalities in the hope of providing readers with the knowledge as to why this special issue is so close our hearts. We then share current demographic information regarding emergent bilingual learners to further explain the importance of this work today. After contextualizing these realities, we touch upon theories that drive this work, specifically relating to the arts, literacies, and language acquisition, and demonstrate how we have put these theories into practice by providing rich examples of using the arts as voice with emergent bilingual students, families, and communities. Finally, we conclude with an invitation to read onwards, to review the final chapter that includes multiple resources for those working with EB learners, and to develop and share your own bank of resources.

Keywords: emergent bilingual learners, multiliteracies, arts, family and community engagement, sociocultural ways of knowing, heritage language as a resource, funds of knowledge, access, representation

Bienvenido a Team 212, our 2nd/3rd bilingual Spanish/English classroom! It’s January 2004 in Chicago. It’s cold out. There is snow on the ground, but we are warm inside our neighborhood school, in the midst of practicing a reader’s theatre script of “Chato’s Kitchen” by Gary Soto and Susan Guevara. It’s an exciting book! Chato, the coolest cat in East L.A., has brand-new neighbors who are the plumpest, juiciest, and tastiest looking family of mice. Chato and his best friend, Novio Boy, invite the new neighbors from the barrio over for dinner and cook a huge feast. What the mice don’t know is that they are the main dish! What the cats don’t know is that the mice are bringing a surprise guest of their own, one who may be more than any cool cat can handle, a big old dog. In our Language Arts block every day we practice reading the script and do writing-and-acting-in-role activities to bring depth to each character and understand their different perspectives.

The picture above is but one example of how we, the three editors, and the many inspirational
authors within this issue and our forthcoming edited volume, *Art as a Way of Talking* (in press), have connected to student’s *funds of knowledge* while utilizing the arts for language-learning with *emergent bilingual* (EB) students (García, 2009), families, and communities (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006). In this introductory chapter, we begin by introducing ourselves, so that you immediately know our positionalities—who we are and the lens we see the world through—and in the hope to provide you with knowledge of why this special issue is so close to our hearts. We then share current demographic information regarding emergent bilingual learners to further explain the importance of this work today. In the current political context, the topic of displaced populations, immigration policies (such as The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals [DACA]), refugees, as well as those who are undocumented is very alive in classrooms and relevant to our students’ lives. Case studies within this issue address the needs of displaced groups in a way that is inclusive and validates their lived experiences, providing a sense of belonging through the arts. After contextualizing these realities, we touch upon theories that drive this work, specifically relating to the arts, literacies, and language acquisition, and demonstrate how we have put these theories into practice by providing rich examples of using the arts as voice with emergent bilingual students, families, and communities. Finally, we conclude with an invitation to read onwards, to review the final chapter that includes multiple resources for those working with EB learners, and to develop and share your own bank of resources.

**Our Journeys: Multilingual Students, Artists, Activists, Teachers, Researchers, and Scholars**

The three of us—Berta, Vivian and Amanda—come from distinct walks of life, with overlaps and similarities. We have been teachers, specializing in one of the three areas of arts, literacies, and language acquisition; however, we view these distinct areas as interwoven within the broader domains related to emergent bilingual learners. We continually seek to further educate ourselves, each other, and reach out to a broader community in these realms. This drive led us to form our collaborative and seek out other voices in the field. In order to understand the lens that we bring to this special issue, we provide our histories and lived experiences as an entry point.

**Berta's story**

Recently, as I searched for documents of our move to the United States, I came across this poem stitching my identity in my passion for dance, the land I left behind, as well as the constant presence of *mi Abuelita*, named America. *Abuelita* is my spirit guide as I move through new contexts, challenges, and landscapes. I wrote this poem as a dancer taking a leap into the world of public education. In my view, artists were the original teachers. We are the ones who observed nature (scientists) and created ritual celebrations (philosophers). Artists documented everyday life experiences in drawings, stories, song and costumes (historians). Storytellers captured traditions, values, advice, humor and passed them on to communities (healers).
a dancer
all that she could
bring to the night
dance
was a dress
she stitched
for time
in preparation
carefully
in again out
with her
Grandmothers’ own needle
she stitched
appliqués
of people
rich red
brown earth
under their feet
their skin
next to sun blue air
working
tending to one another

familia
    hermana
    compadre

on silk she painted
creatures weaving
days and nights

spiders
    humming birds
    star fish
    alacrán

the earth life weave
bonded with the heavens
rivers flowing
marshes sucking moisture
fish flipping
in the nets
gathering

*flechas*
  *lanzas*
  *machetes*

*maracas*
  *marimba*
  *tambor*

renewing in the weapons
her own firmness
reliving the soft song
reworking the tools
massing seeds
pounding the dough

*casabe*

enmeshed
in a thick
knotted border
a tight thread
encircled
still spinning
flaring
to meet the night dance

I still have my Abuelita’s needles.

I moved to this country from Cuba at the age of eight. As a third grader I was compelled to give up my country, my language and my name. In many ways, I am my students; I have felt their confusion, embarrassment and anger firsthand. I understand how the imposition of a new language and culture can profoundly affect the process of identity-formation, self-esteem and the capacity of learning for a young child. My immigration story motivates my *activism* as an artist and educator. My journey as a bilingual teacher has included dual language and native language literacy settings including African American students and also exclusively Latinx students in
transitional bilingual and special education programs in severely segregated public-school contexts. Critical awareness of socio-structural impositions and limitations placed on my students required that I discard standardized curriculum in favor of engaging my learning community in a critical analysis of their own potential to excel and make their mark in a changing world. My teaching experience necessitated a deeper look at the relationship between my students’ identities and their academic progress.

Stepping out of my classroom into the world of research at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, I searched for answers regarding the persistent racial and ethnic disparities among third-grade student academic achievement (BPS Office of Research, Assessment and Evaluation, 2003). I was both held and led by pioneers in the anthropology of education, George Spindler and Carola Suárez-Orozco, who focus on the psycho-social impact of immigration on those called ‘other’ in school. Children’s drawings centered interviews exploring the relationship between the cultural identity and academic performance of these emergent bilingual youth. Voices from my qualitative ethnographic study at Harvard stay with me. Families are the foundation of a sense of belonging for my students that define their engagement with mainstream society. As Pedro, a third grader in my study, put it, “family is part of the heart.” Language is an important part of staying close to family. Toña, another student, visited her grandmother in the Dominican Republic and spoke to her in Spanish, “I love it there.” Pedro describes how he thinks about language, “Yo le hablo en ingles a mis amigos y a los que no saben ingles, yo le hablo en español” I speak English with my friends and I speak Spanish with those who do not speak English. Pedro also gives us insight to the importance of Spanish in his life. “We speak Spanish because in my family, my parents do not speak English. My mom wants me to speak Spanish and it feels good to speak Spanish” (Berriz, 2005).

Keeping this history close to heart my hope for Art as Voice is to empower teachers, families, and communities with a guide for subverting the limit situations. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), Paolo Freire characterizes limit situations as barriers imposed on the oppressed that prevent them from being humanized. They can be effectively eliminated by educating those who are oppressed by these limit situations using the problem posing method of education. It is our intention that Art as Voice broadens possibilities for young scholars of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
Vivian: An artist’s journey through her family history.

As Berta describes above, history matters a great deal to who we are today. Every generation as far as I can trace in my father’s family has spent time abroad—mostly in exile—due to political upheaval. This image represents my grandfather’s trajectory. He was born in Tampa in 1900 while my great grandfather was in exile during the Cuban War of Independence (known in the United States as the Spanish American War). The faint pencil lines show his trajectory from his birth in Tampa to Havana followed by his exile in Mexico City and finally Miami, Florida, where he settled until his death. I have included this as part of my own history by layering an image of my feet in the ocean at Varadero, Cuba - a place described in family stories as a paradise where “la arena es como el azúcar y el agua tan transparente que puedes ver hasta la mugre de las uñas” the sand is like sugar and the water so clear that you can see the dirt under your nails.

I was fourteen and entering 9th grade when I moved to the United States. Before moving to Miami, I had lived in three different countries, sang three national anthems, and learned three different versions of history with varying historical figures and geographic regions. Everything I knew seemed irrelevant to my education in the United States. It was not until I took a photography class in community college that I began to understand that my own experience was
relevant, and that I could explore and share it through my art work. While looking at contemporary photographers I began to feel connected. I was inspired by the work of Latin American artists, such as Graciela Iturbide and Manuel Alvarez Bravo, to look deeper into my own experiences and further my learning — not just about photography but about everything. Photography provided both a thirst and a language to make meaning of the world. I began to connect with the work of other artists too, such as Fred Wilson, who created an alternate historical narrative by reorganizing and re-presenting the collection of the Maryland Historical Museum; Mary Beth Meehan, who photographed the bedrooms of immigrants, bringing an intimate view of a silent community (Meehan & Nora, in press); and to poets like Gustavo Perez Firmat whose bilingual poetry says more than even two languages can speak.

Through my work I have been investigating my family history and its place in the larger history of Cuba, tracking my father’s family history and creating a visual biography of past generations, leading up to my daughter who is a trace, a document, of Cuban, Haitian and American history (https://www.lesley.edu/stories/vivian-poey). This work led me to do historical research, to read news archives and to unearth family stories. Trying to connect to and represent places that are far away and stories that happened long ago, I researched maps during the time of my ancestors. I went back as far as the 1700s when my great great great grandfather moved from France to Cuba. Creating these photographs forced me to connect to the details of my ancestor’s lives. The times and places became real and alive, and the stories I learned made visible how those who came before me shaped my present context. These stories, both extraordinary and in some ways shameful, create a personal connection across time and space that resonate in ways that are still relevant today.

**Amanda: Playing with languages and places.**
Connecting to Vivian’s use of maps to tell her history, my “Life Map” collage (above) is the accumulation of the many different places I have lived; reflecting the space of displacement—of neither being here nor there, from this place or that place—that I often feel. My family history, through our various moves and displaced moments in time, has made me able to adapt to new locations and languages quickly. Being a White, cisgender able-bodied English-speaking woman from the middle class, I come to this space of displacement with a great deal of privilege.

My name is Amanda Claudia Wager. My late father is Peter Polland Wager of Chicago and my mother is Marilyn Dee Pincus of Los Angeles. Both sides of my biological family stem from Jewish Ashkenazi ancestry. In the beginning of the 20th Century, my great-grandparents came to the United States from Poland/Russia—the borders were constantly shifting—fleeing the Jewish genocide of the Russian Red Army that massacred the rest of our family. My grandparents spoke English and Yiddish at home and we spoke English and eventually Dutch in our house. My stepfather Paul Logchies, from Amsterdam in the Netherlands, raised me from age twelve onwards. Growing up in Amsterdam, a small global city surrounded by countries that speak many other languages, we learned and heard languages everywhere. We played with languages by moving in and out of one on to another. Language learning was an art form in itself and has led me to where I am now, with a passion for teaching languages and literacies via the arts.

Growing up in Los Angeles, the Spanish language was everywhere, and I learned it through school and everyday urban living, as well as through later experiences of living in Spain and Peru. When I was five years old my family moved to London for a year, where I was told my first day of school to “Queue up for the loo!” and was the only child who stayed sitting on the rug with no idea that I was supposed to line up for the bathroom. This is only a tiny taste of how emergent bilingual learners feel much of the time. During my formative years growing up in Amsterdam, where I was still learning the Dutch language, I gained the values of humility and a deep respect for humanity, nature, and myself, which guided me through my life as an educator, student, researcher, director, friend, sister, partner, and now, a mother.

In seventh grade, I watched a drama performance about two people stranded on a desert island. They spoke different languages and at first were petrified of each other. Eventually they were able to communicate without words and survive together. This was the beginning of my interest in using drama in education in order to communicate across differences. From my experiences as a student and educator, drama can be used across cultures, languages, and perspectives (Schroeter & Wager, 2016; Wager, Belliveau, Beck, & Lea, 2009). In high school, I began to tutor children, and spent much time with a Pakistani family, while also working as the high school theatre stage manager. I often used role-play with the family to communicate. These experiences led to my decision to become an ESL and bilingual elementary educator in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Peru, Chicago, and Vancouver.

As an educator, I draw from critical and feminist pedagogies (Ellsworth, 1989, 1997; hooks, 1994, 2010) where collectivity, reciprocity, and reflexivity guide my teaching; that I may
learn as much from others as they might learn from me through revealing who we are in relation to our histories and the contexts within which we work. Working through the arts, valuing and building off of the languages and literacies of those we work with, are key to the success of bi/multilingual individuals. This is my hope for *Art as Voice*, that readers will recognize the importance of supporting bi/multilingual learning through the arts, and become activists in promoting these efforts in their own work spaces. Creative, culturally responsive and community-based ways of knowing within formal and informal education are essential to support all students, families, and communities, and the arts provide vital pathways to achieve this.

**The Educational Realities of Teaching Emergent Bilingual Learners, Families, and Communities in the United States and Canada**

Now that you have a better idea of who we are and why this subject matter is important to us, we expand on these ideas in this next section by providing current data that further support the need for the arts, literacies, and language learning to be prominent in classrooms and communities today. As history shows, the United States and Canada have always been multicultural and multilingual countries. Bilingualism has existed in North America since the 17th century European invasion (Wright, 2015). Facilitated by the imposition of European cultural domination, the original colonizers seized the land and lives of native peoples, which resulted in the silencing of native voices and the erasure of indigenous languages (Crawford, 1995; Wright, 2015). The enduring legacy of these policies is most evident in the longstanding resistance to language and cultural diversity, particularly in education. And yet, cultural and linguistic diversity continues to grow in our schools and communities today.

Demographic trends of emergent bilinguals below further this call for authentic ways of meaning making to be shared, collaborated, and communicated by educators today:

- Emergent bilinguals have increased as a distinct group in all but 11 states in the US between the years of 2003 and 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

- In 2012-2013, on average, emergent bilinguals in urbanized areas were 14 percent of total public school enrollment and 8.5 percent in large suburban areas, with as many as 10% to 25% of students being emergent bilinguals in California, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Texas, and the District of Columbia (Immigration Policy Institute Fact Sheet, 2015).

- Segregation by socioeconomic status, residential location, and language has increased since the 1970’s. The Civil Rights Project (http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/) notes that on average, Latinx emergent bilinguals attend schools where 60% of students are of Latinx descent.

- The number of refugee children, as a percentage of all refugees resettling to the US, has increased over the past decade. For example, in 1998, only 13% of all refugees resettled by the US were children, but in 2008, 37% were children. [http://www.brycs.org/publications/schools-toolkit.cfm](http://www.brycs.org/publications/schools-toolkit.cfm)
In California, Latinx students constitute more than half of all K-12 students (California Department of Education https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp)

In the US 77% of the emergent bilinguals in grades K-5 and 56% in grades 6-12 were born in the United States and are simultaneous bilinguals, who learn two languages at once before the age of five.

In Boston, Massachusetts, 35% of students are African American, 42% are Latinx, 30% first language is not English while 62% of their teachers are White (2016-2017 demographic student data https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/238).

As a result of language subordination and marginalization of indigenous communities in Canada, speakers of Indigenous languages are in alarming decline (Moseley, 2010).

Native American languages are distinct in political status and history, and are the object of school- and community-based reclamation and retention efforts aligned with the Native American Languages Act of 1990 (NALA) (Commission on Language Learning, 2017, p. ix).


The United States lags behind most nations of the world, including European nations and China, in the percentage of its citizens who have some knowledge of a second language (Commission on Language Learning, 2017, p. viii).

One of the biggest obstacles to improved language learning is a national shortage of qualified teachers. Forty-four states and Washington, D.C., report that they cannot find enough qualified teachers to meet current needs (Commission on Language Learning, 2017, p. ix).

This dramatic change in the faces and cultures of our students suggest that teachers, teacher educators and community workers must develop new epistemological frameworks broadening the scope and depth of research supporting innovative literacy practices. Particularly relevant are the stories of effective practitioners using the arts to create new linguistic pathways to learning for all students, families, and communities, especially the most marginalized.

Weaving the Disciplines: Interdisciplinary Critical Pedagogy & Integrated Arts

So, how does art serve as voice to these populations of emergent bilingual learners above? Borrowing a metaphor from Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) director Emily Style (1996), art is an expressive form that is simultaneously a “window and mirror.” Dialogue, which may include storytelling and art making, is essential to language learning. It is through art that we are able to access and honor authentic stories, lived experiences, and
knowledge of diverse peoples. For students who are in process of learning a new language in a new land, while still holding on to their native language, the ability to investigate, reflect and share this knowledge through rich multimodal literacies (i.e. through textual, gestural, visual, spatial, audio, and digital ways) that are not oral language dependent, is crucial (Franks, 2008). Applying a critical lens through the arts engages students through a wide range of literacies as they make meanings dependent on social, cultural and historical contexts (Ajayi, 2015; Schroeter & Wager, 2016).

The arts, therefore, not only provide multiple entry points demanding complex problem-solving skills, but also provide tangible scaffolding for language learning and academic success. No test-driven, scripted curricula, pacing guide, or English-only-inspired set of standards can provide the rich relationships necessary for the learning process. The arts and dialogue create fertile ground for inspiring a sense of belonging in school, cognitive growth and communication. The arts also call on students to draw from and contribute their cultural knowledge and linguistic background as they enhance their communication skills. Art as Voice is a call from fellow artists, educators, community organizers and practitioners to co-construct learning using critical multimodal literacy tools through the arts.

Untangling the Disciplines

In this next section we hope to expand on the foundations of the arts, literacies, and language acquisition by untangling the disciplines and providing a theoretical background to support this call. We elaborate on each of these foundations by providing practical examples of our individual experiences.

Why the arts?

The arts are an integral part of our lives that represent our values, connect us with one another, provide avenues for research and learning, stimulate our imagination, provide us with a sense or agency, and the power to create positive impact in our communities and the larger world. In addition to the richness of the process, a final product/performance also plays an important role in community building. Communities, families, staff and teachers gather for exhibitions and performances, providing an opportunity not only to celebrate the community members’ artful accomplishments but also to engage all participants in teaching and sharing their knowledge and culture in both schools and wider community settings.

The arts are more than an added benefit in any educational context, they are foundational literacies that engage participants in the process of observing, connecting, finding solutions, making meaning and communicating/expressing (Kennedy Arts Center, 2015). For individuals who rarely see themselves or their experiences represented in schools or the media, the arts provide a way to make these hidden narratives and perspectives visible. When we are invited to ‘play’ in art, we build on the complex and important work of translation through code switching, which in the arts can be represented not only through oral and written language (as in poetry and music) but also in images, gesture, tone, movement, etc. In a world fraught with challenges it is
helpful to have art to help us understand, translate and transform both our place in the world and our vision of a better future (Greene, 1995).

In spite of the obvious benefits that the arts bring to schools and communities, arts funding in- and out-of-school settings are always at risk (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/arts/nea-neh-endowments-trump.html). Fewer students get access to arts education now than before No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The disappearance of arts from public school curricula is listed first among the four areas of concern reported by the National Latinx Education Research and Policy Project Council (http://opencuny.org/nlerap4ne/casa/) (Valenzuela, 2016). Ironically, access to the arts has declined for students in the least privileged schools, where both randomized and longitudinal research points to this being the greatest benefit for these communities (Bowen, Green, & Kisida, 2014; Caterall, Dumais & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). Strengthening access to the arts is particularly crucial in this context. Whether as its own subject, integrated into the general curriculum, in afterschool programs or integrated into community practices, the arts are a powerful pathway for creative educators committed to tapping into their students’ funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006), while opening doors to a sense of agency in their communities and their own lives, imagining new possibilities and developing academic excellence.

**Vivian: Museums as storytelling.**

My work as an artist has always been bigger than the product. For me, its power comes from the process of creating/transforming and the conversations that follow when sharing the artwork. It was this passion for sharing with others, particularly young people who also felt dislocated, that drove me to teaching. First, I shared my experience, work and expertise as a photography mentor with teens, then as an artist teacher with young kids, and finally as a professor with teachers in a graduate program. As a teacher, I bring both my artwork and the voice of other living artists into my classroom. Before we visit a historical museum, I share the work of Fred Wilson from his installation *Mining the Museum* (http://beautifultrouble.org/case/mining-the-museum/), where he re-presents historical narratives making silences visible, such as in a piece that confronts visitors with three busts, on white pedestals, representing historical figures rarely connected to the history of Maryland: Henry Clay, Napoleon Bonaparte and Andrew Jackson on one side, and three empty black pedestals with the names of key historical (African American) figures in Maryland: Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and Benjamin Banneker, on the other.

*Mining the Museum* also represents objects and photographs by and about Native Americans, providing alternative stories that we are not used to viewing in a museum. As we look at the work, we discuss absences and misrepresentations. We talk about curating as creating narratives: museums tell stories. We consider who gets to tell the story and to whom, who is left out and how the narratives connect with our own experience and the experience of others in our communities (Hetland, 2013). I ask students to think about how they curate their curriculum, what readings do they assign? What images do they share? Whose voices are included? This
work has proved fertile and its power is evident not only in the conversations but also in the work my students do with their students.

One of my former students, who taught in a school with a majority Mexican population, visited his town’s museum whose literature stated, “We hope you will enjoy learning about the people who have lived in this region from the Ice Age to the present.” He was surprised to see that there was no representation of the Mexican population, which comprised half the region, and whom had also contributed greatly to the agricultural industry. For his project, “Giving Voice to the Other 50%,” he developed a plan to revitalize this representation by using his ties to the business community and the museum. He proposed a permanent educational exhibition guided by his students’ gathering of stories and photographs of their communities. After multiple conversations with the museum, he was unable to get the project off the ground, but believes that the “seeds were planted”. I contacted him years later and he responded, “After a few years spent overseas I returned to visit the museum and found they had completed a nearly identical program.”

He wrote that this project was particularly beneficial for his emergent bilingual learners because, “I see this as a means for gaining ownership over their artwork and confidence in public speaking. Many of the English Language Learners don’t often get the opportunity to do this. It isn’t just about sharing our story, it is about visually framing that story with this rich art project.” Students began to co-curate the curriculum with their own images. By photographing and curating cultural narratives through images, students used images as a way of speaking and used English to translate and re-tell others’ stories. This work made visible the stories of all students and empowered them to tell their stories, sharing valuable information teachers may not have been familiar with, and making their student’s knowledge relevant within the curriculum.

Eclectic approaches to literacies: Multiliteracies, new literacies, & multimodality

Vivian provides an important foundation of the importance of the arts and brings to life powerful examples of how the arts engage folks in creative critical thinking and expressing silenced stories—solid ground for deepening literary understanding. Moving on to the foundations of literacies, many of our first thoughts probably turn to reading and writing. Jewitt (2008) and others, expand on these traditional forms of literacies by highlighting that:

Multiple literacies projects build stories based on and arising from young people’s lives and experiences and cultural forms of representation to engage with and gain access to student agency, cultural memory, and home and school learning within local contexts... This makes it increasingly important for schools to attend to the literacy practices of students and diverse ways of making meaning, in particular, the multilingual, the multimodal, and the digital. In short, there is a need for further investigation of literacy practices as an intertextual web of contexts and media rather than isolated sets of skills and competences. (p. 255)

As in Mining the Museum, literacy as a sociocultural practice encompasses the myriad of different spaces of student lives; homes, schools, playgrounds and similar public and private
spaces. As well, literacies include the diverse representations that students use to interpret and represent their daily lives, such as through the modes of visual arts, song, dance, and drama. Informed by social semiotic theories that emphasize how the relationship between form and meaning is socially constructed with texts (Halliday, 1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996), these concepts have recently been explained through the pedagogical theories of *multiliteracies* (New London Group, 1996, 2000), *new literacies studies* (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Street, 2003) and *multimodality* (Jewitt & Kress, 2008; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Kress, & Jewitt, 2008; Rowsell, 2013), which are a direct response to our growing multilingual and multimodal world with respect to technology, globalization and the many English language variations spoken today (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013; Luke & Carrington, 2002).

The pedagogy of *multiliteracies* recognizes that we are ‘designers’ of our meaning making processes. In schools, this begins and continues with immersion into rich learning environments that may include a diverse multilingual and multicultural classroom library, multilingual word walls, student multilingual and *multimodal* work, interactive teacher-student responses posted and digital representations within blogs and wikis. This pedagogy focuses on a student *situated practice* based on learning that is grounded in students’ own life experiences that include their *funds of knowledge* (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006), a *critical framing* that supports students in questioning common assumptions, *overt instruction* where the teacher supports the student in learning information by building off of what the student already knows, and a *transformed practice* where students recreate and recontextualize meaning according to the lifeworld of the learners (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; New London Group, 1996, 2000). Our contributors recognize that these four factors interact to engage emergent bilinguals in rich learning environments that foreground what they already know and care about.

Multimodality brings these ideas together to consider how each element, or mode that we use to ‘read the world’ (Freire & Macedo, 2005) is situated historically, culturally, and socially, and contributes to the entire meaning of the text; the text now being a body, a book, a visual art work, a comic, a song. These meanings are made and mixed through various modes of meaning making, such as gesture, gaze, image, sound, speech, writing, body posture, music, and so on. Multimodality places emphasis on how the many different modes within any given text intersect, interrelate, are interpreted and remade to make up new meanings (Kress, 2000; 2003).

Each of these conceptions of literacy acknowledge that students, especially emergent bilinguals, bring a range of resources to meaning making in and outside of the classroom. These multiple forms of literacies challenge traditional forms of schooling that merely spotlight restrictive print and language-based notions of literacy (Gee, 2004; Lam, 2006; Sefton-Green, 2006). A multimodal approach to literacy, as described via the arts and articulated within this special issue, advances the call to deconstruct these restrictive forms of literacy assuring that educational settings connect to, and bring in our students’ *funds of knowledge*— their homes, communities, and languages — to enrich schools and communities.
Amanda: Bringing stories to life.

After returning to the United States with a passion to teach, specifically through arts-based multimodal literacies within a public school setting, I taught elementary and middle school students in a Spanish bilingual school in Pilsen, a vibrant artistic Mexican-American community on the Lower West side of Chicago.

The elementary school had a 99% emergent bilingual population of Mexican American students. Due to NCLB’s focus on assessment and standardized testing, the school had been at risk of closing for over four years, largely due to language differences. As standardized tests were in English-only and culturally biased (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994), only 30 percent of students met the expected Illinois yearly-annual-progress goal. To engage students in English literacy practices and connect to their backgrounds, I used readers’ theatre and role-play throughout my English Language Arts block. According to classroom literacy fluency assessments in English, my elementary grade students increased their literacy levels by one year in a 6-month period, through the daily use of these multimodal literacy tools. This led to a grant that funded an after school and summer literacy program in which students continued practicing readers theatre and created scripted stories based on field trip experiences. This work was so powerful that one of the second graders, Monica, began speaking for the first time in her school life by whispering the lines of the script to her peers. The following year I partnered with the reading specialist to create a school-wide “Family Reading Night”, where families first watched a play together in the auditorium and then were able to choose which readers theater classroom they wanted to participate in based on chosen bilingual children’s literature books, such as Chato’s Kitchen mentioned above. Children created masks of their characters, practiced reading
the scripts, and performed the script for their families. Through the use of multimodal literacies students were engaged, motivated, and were able to share this passion with their families.

My ultimate goal in using reader’s theatre was for students to script their stories bringing in their own funds of knowledge. Our first collaborative scripting experience was directly after a field trip to the zoo, the setting for their play. We all sat on the rug together, while I reiterated how a play often has a problem and a solution. They came up with the problem being that the “lion escaped” and the solution being to “lock the zoo and make the lion run until it is thirsty and tired”. Each student chose an animal to be and then we began the collaborative script writing process, where students developed the scenes as I typed their script on a projected screen. Below is the first page of the script:

During the last weeks of school, the students turned the classroom into a rainforest to perform the reader’s theatre script of the The Great Kapok Tree (1990) for the rest of the school and their families. The Great Kapok Tree, by Lynne Cherry, tells the story of a young boy who walks into the rainforest to begin chopping down the trees. He takes a nap and while he is sleeping different animals come to him, begging him not to destroy their homes. When he rises, he looks around, and then walks out of the rainforest. I read the story to the students and they practiced reader’s theatre during the language arts block while we did a social studies unit on rainforests, and eventually visited the Field Museum to examine a simulated rainforest exhibit. For the last month, whenever the students had a thought that connected to the theme of rainforests, they would take a leaf or flower template and record their thought, connecting to their funds of knowledge, and tape it to the wall. We draped brown yarn around the classroom
and constructed a large, papier-mâché tree in the center of the room, transforming our classroom into a beautiful rainforest. Each child had a part in the reader’s theatre script of *The Great Kapok Tree* and without being pressured, they memorized their lines overnight, embodying their characters for their final performances for friends and families. This example of a multimodal learning environment, where the students are learning about a subject matter via multiple texts, viewing the visuals in the children’s’ and social studies books, reading the script, embodying the characters, participating in an experiential field trip, and writing their own connections to these pieces, all contributed to furthering their literacy and language skills.

**Navigating the institutional borders to language acquisition.**

This next section explains the foundations of language acquisition, and the importance of promoting bilingualism and family/community involvement throughout this process. We have all noted that many young students arrive and seem to be able to learn a new language in just a few months. We marvel at their ability to ‘soak it all in’. But language acquisition is hardly that simple, and theories for how language is acquired have developed over time, from a purely cognitive understanding that sees the brain as a blank slate needing to be filled (Skinner, 1965) to a more transactional perspective that sees language as developing through a social context (Chomsky, 1972). Additionally, there is the notion that there are two systems through which we acquire language: the subconscious process of learning language when we are babies, and language “learned” through more formal instruction, such as grammar, syntax and vocabulary building. Furthermore, Cummins (2008) introduced the idea that there are great differences between language that we use socially (*BICS*) and a more challenging academic language that is vital for academic success (*CALP*). While the former can take as little as 6 months to develop, explaining our perception that kids learn quickly, the latter can take between 5 and 7 years to master.

Language is at the heart of teaching and learning because all classrooms and community settings are language-learning environments for both primary English speakers and emergent bilingual learners. Educators use knowledge of language as communicators, evaluators, educated human beings, and as agents of socialization. Drawing from Krashen’s (1981) theory of *comprehensible input*, we see language acquisition being built and expanded upon input that is already understood at a certain proficiency level—much like Vygotsky’s *Zone of Proximal Development* (1962, 1978, 1987)—and that students acquire language best in a non-threatening and low anxiety environment, as well as through interaction. Engaging pre-existing knowledge encoded in family languages encourages a deep understanding of concepts and factual knowledge for emergent bilinguals. The arts promote this kind of cross-language transfer and give students agency over their learning process while supporting *biliteracy* (Cummins, Baker & Hornberger, 2001).

**Second language teaching methods and approaches today.**

There are various methods and approaches to second language acquisition in schools today. There is content-based instruction, which is a type of communicative language teaching
where a selected content area becomes a meaningful context for authentic communication as learners collaborate to complete carefully designed academic tasks. For example, teachers might use math, social studies, or science as vehicles for language instruction. ESL instruction, both pull-out and push-in, is utilized in schools as a means of specifically teaching the English language to support students to understand the content-area instruction in the mainstream classroom. Sheltered Instruction, which is also called Specially-Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), involves content-area teachers to custom-design their instruction to make it comprehensible for emergent bilinguals, while supporting students’ English language development. Some popular models known today are the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994) and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

There are also numerous models of bilingual education, such as transitional bilingual education, dual language programs, native language literacy programs, and language-immersion programs. A Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program facilitates the transition of emergent bilingual learners into the all-English curriculum. Instruction in the students’ native language ensures that students learn subject matter in the language they understand best. Classes in the native language continue as students acquire English language skills sufficient to function successfully in English-only mainstream classrooms. Transition to the English-only classroom is expected to occur within three years. A Native Language Literacy (NLL) program constitutes a safe space for literacy development of emergent bilinguals who have had limited or no schooling in their home countries. The program is for students between the ages of 9 and 21 and is designed to help students eventually enter and succeed in the TBE program. The focus of the program is on developing native language literacy and ESL skills as well as subject matter knowledge. A Two-way Bilingual (TB) program develops full bilingualism for all participants, regardless of their linguistic background. These programs serve emergent bilingual learners, both English language learners and native English speakers, who are seeking to learn a language other than their first language. All students receive instruction in English and a second language from the outset. Typically, native English-speaking students come from middle-class homes where parents understand the long-term value of investments rendering their children bilingual. And language immersion programs are designed for the learner to be immersed into another language 100% of the time.

Due to the results of the Unz Initiative in the early 2000s, California, Arizona, and Massachusetts restricted the implementation of bilingual education until recently. As a result of this short-sighted and misguided policy, in 2011 the US Department of Education and the US Justice Department found that Massachusetts had failed to adequately prepare teachers and school departments to implement English-only instruction (Berriz, 2006; Vaznis, 2011). Fortunately, California recently voted for the return of bilingual education in November 2016 and in Massachusetts, the bilingual education LOOK Bill passed in November 2017. It also passed a bill that puts the Seal of Biliteracy (https://languageopportunity.org/seal-of-biliteracy/) on graduation diplomas of high school students, in recognition of those who speak, read, and
write proficiently in a language other than English. Progress on recognizing multilingualism as an asset is slowing emerging in the United States.

Out-of-school programs that support families and communities allow educators to break out from many of these rigid structures imposed on school systems. As educators, we all have a responsibility to work with students as human beings regardless of the systems we find ourselves in. The arts humanize these spaces and the work of teachers, administrators, community educators and university professors can support this framework. In this issue we bring together educators who work in a wide array of settings, from classrooms and summer programs, to school districts, adult ESL programs and higher education, making visible the important contributions of teaching across each of these contexts.

**Fostering bilingualism: The hArt of literacy development with emergent bilingual learners.**

Engaging the home language in school as a learning and teaching tool gives emergent bilingual students an academic advantage. This in turn creates access and accelerates both content area and basic literacy skills (Cummins, 2000). Teaching materials inclusive of home language and culture enhance proficiency in both the language of home and that of academic English (Kioko, 2015). This invitation to integrate all that each student has to offer to the learning process inspires a sense of belonging in school and other community settings. Motha (2014) explains that:

> English is increasingly commodified, racialized, and globalized, it is implicated in the persistence of racial inequalities, in cultural and economic domination, in heritage language loss, in the extinction of less-commonly-spoken languages and their inherent epistemologies, and in inequitable distribution of global wealth and resources (p. xxi-xxii).

To the extent that researchers have found a direct correlation between bilingual education and staying in school (Feinberg, 2002), home language is an asset, a valuable treasure worth preserving and enhancing. As teachers and community organizers we are critically positioned as agents of multiliteracies.

In regards to cognitive benefits, the Commission on Language Learning (2017) sites various studies that have found that:

- bilingual children have stronger working memory— the ability to retain and manipulate distinct pieces of information over short periods of time—than do monolingual children (Morales, Calvo, & Bialystok, 2013).

- the Utah Dual Language Immersion program showed that children in the program gained improved memory and attention, problem-solving capabilities, primary-language comprehension, and ability to empathize with other cultures and people (Utah State Office of Education, 2013).
• bilingual children have greater executive functioning— focus, planning, prioritization, multitasking —than monolingual children (Bialystok, 2009).

• “multilingual exposure may promote effective communication by enhancing perspective taking,” a fundamental component of empathy (Fan, Liberman, Keysar, & Kinzler, 2015).

• bilingual patients at a memory clinic presented dementia symptoms four years later, on average, than their monolingual counterparts and that bilingualism delayed the onset of Alzheimer’s disease (Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman, 2007). (p. 13)

The notion of dynamic bilingualism, intermingling of past and present language practice, or the multi-competence of holding two languages at the same time, pushes us to understand the complexity of languaging in an increasingly multilingual global village. Translanguaging includes code-switching but goes beyond, for example, reading in one language and using another language to take notes, discuss, or write (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Translanguaging practices open up the pedagogical space to the imagination, knowledge and linguistic gifts of emergent bilingual students. Since there are a wide range of language variations represented in North America, educators can benefit from pedagogically sound and culturally sensitive methods for helping students learn academic English while honoring home languages and cultures.

Summoning family and community voices.

Tapping families and community as valued sources of cultural knowledge, and rooting learning in the histories and traditions of students’ home communities embeds new knowledge in the fiber of everyday life while supporting rigorous academic standards. Students are engaged in constructing new knowledge from a position of strength — as one of Berta’s third graders described it: “I am a student teaching and a teacher learning” (Giroux, 2011; Valenzuela, 2016).

Teaching and learning in this manner also enhances cross-cultural understanding, particularly since the diversity in most educational contexts includes a variety of languages, nationalities, and family immigration histories. This affirmation of cultural groups and their languages strengthens the transition between home and school (García & Kleifgen, 2010). The arts invite students to bring their histories and culture to express their ideas. Moreover the arts support agency (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). Taking a social justice stance beside families turns the cultural deficit model, which blames students for their own deficits and lack of cultural capital, on its head, establishing a mutual base of support for students, families and teachers (Berriz, 2002; Bourdieu, 1986). This stance, which Cummins (2000) calls Transformative Intercultural Pedagogy, requires educators’ appreciation of family involvement as a mutual border crossing and a shared responsibility (Bartolomé, 2006; Nieto, 2000; Nieto & Bode, 2012). When an educator utilizes and invites home languages and cultural resources, students are not compelled to choose one over the other, rather they experience how education enables them to learn from and contribute to their communities (Moll & González, 2004). We are proposing that the arts provide venues for exploration of ideas, making meaning of challenging concepts and weaving missing cultural knowledge in our curriculum and pedagogy.
**Berta: The family map.**

I remember the first year that I used this world map project. Listening to my students, I discovered that it is easier for some of the third graders to learn their home addresses when they see the relationship of their new neighborhood to their old neighborhood on the world map. The global helped to make sense of the local. The opening of the school year offers the ideal climate for establishing who is in the classroom. This is an opportune time to encourage student relationships between one another and to their own cultural background. Both of these bonds support student learning. The visual and research aspects of this project are expressed in our classroom exhibits. For example, a central welcoming piece at the beginning of the year was a blank world map. This is quickly transformed into a family map featuring where children come from and what they know about the places they have lived (Brice-Heath, & Roach, 1999). For their first social studies assignment, students go home with an enlarged map of their state or country of origin to fill with locations of family stories, celebrations, and memories of the first days of school. The students bring photographs or draw pictures of their families. Family pictures soon framed the large world map. This exhibit visually intertwined the personal with the academic in the classroom community.

This insight influenced me to revisit the way that I taught other subjects. For example, in mathematics, I now teach the whole number before I teach the sum of its parts. I teach the concept of division by having twenty-eight students sit together in their desks. Then I ask them to move the furniture around to make four equal groups, embodying this mathematical function. In science, I teach the concept of matter before getting into its different manifestations of solid, liquid and gas. Responding to my student’s different ways of learning was making my classroom more effective.

The Family Map project opens a yearlong series of family interviews on varied topics, such as: What are the names of rocks and minerals in your country/neighborhood? What is your favorite story that your grandmother or other friend or family member tells you? What advice would you give your child to keep for their future? How does sound travel? The answers to these curricular questions bring responses that illuminate family culture.

For example, José’s father is an engineer. He can tell José that sound travels in waves through matter. José gave us an example from the experience of swimming in the ocean, “You know how you can hear your sister screaming at you even when you are under water at the beach?” Jamar gives us an example from urban life, “You know how you can hear the neighbor’s radio through your wall?” Both of these answers reflect ways of knowing embedded in daily life. In the former, the knowledge of wind and waves from the island-based Caribbean experience; the second response reveals knowledge derived from urban life. All students have heard sound travel in many different kinds of settings. Echoes of their knowledge reverberate around the room. This conversation relates directly to soundscapes and highlights the importance of sounds to our memory, even when this memory of home is found only in our students' imaginary (Suárez-Orozco, 2004; Valenzuela, 2017). Listening, with our ears, eyes, bodies and minds is a first step in discerning a new context and learning to navigate in a new language.
The image of the Family Map becomes part of every subject over time. Keeping its presence alive in the school is at once an affirmation of, and invitation to families. Other examples that arise from this exploration of family cultural knowledge related to landscape-enhanced science learning as well. To introduce a science unit on minerals, I ask children to bring in their favorite rocks. Our eclectic classroom rock collection encouraged learning the names of rocks and minerals from many lands. For example, one girl brought in a crystal from the caves near Utuado in Puerto Rico. Kevonia told the story of the pudding stone from her neighborhood. Kevin and Kaweisi both brought a stone from traditional games of China and Africa. Geological classifications, like sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic seemed easier to learn for students with the personal connection to friends in the class. One of the assignments for the rock unit is a city walk where children find examples and describe in their own words the different types of rock formations. The structure of this unit begins with the prior knowledge of students and families, and it concludes with an application in their neighborhood. The family map creates a place of prominence for the knowledge that students bring into social studies. Through these and other projects linking family knowledge to content knowledge, I legitimize the many languages of my students while raising their critical awareness of the issues relating to language, culture and power.

**In Conclusion: An Invitation**

In this introduction chapter, we have described the context, set the stage and made the case for much needed *activism* to engage the resources of our multilingual communities. The chapters included in this special issue accentuate the power of artful teachers and community organizers as agents of multiliteracies. Read on! You will discover innovative ways to invite students, and all that they represent, to enter the learning experience. We hope that you will find inspiration in the democratic spaces presented here where everyone is able to speak and be heard in the process of understanding how what is taught is connected to their communities and everyday lives. Our final chapter includes a range of resources of diverse artists and arts-based organizations that teachers can draw from as they curate their curriculum to support the learning of all their students.
References


Section I: A Treasure-Trove of Knowledge: Heritage and Identity

Sonic Borderland Literacies and Critical Dissonance: 
A Re/Mix of Culturally Relevant Education

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Abstract

This paper describes the importance of everyday sounds and silences, and it explores how we might use critical listening practices within educational realms. It considers an arts-based approach that introduces a remix of methods grounded in borderland feminisms, cultural sound studies, and visceral literacies. I call this critical dissonance and I illustrate this methodology through dissonant borderland soundtracks that represent multidimensional, multitemporal and embodied ways of knowing. I also introduce conceptual tools and practices that feel and listen to and for marginalized narratives. When thinking about educational contexts, we must recognize that our lived experiences also include sonic and viscerally rich forms of making meaning. Yet, these are often absent or silent from traditional educational systems. Tuning into audible, cultural, and linguistically diverse resources push us to reinvent our dominant understandings and relationships with those whom we do not fully understand and with places we have only imagined.

Keywords: critical dissonance, sound, listening, borderlands, narratives
“Listen to everything all the time and remind yourself when you are not listening”
Pauline Oliveros (2005)

"The US border es una herida abierta [is an open wound] where the third world grates against the first and bleeds" Gloria Anzaldúa (1987)

**Figure 1.** US Pacific Ocean Border Fence, by T. Webster, 2014,

**Introduction**

We experience a world filled with everyday sounds and soundscapes (Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa & Porcello, 2010; Schafer 1994 [1977]). Much like text, sounds are perceived and read. Yet they are also felt. As we move throughout our lives, we sense our environments and social interactions with more than just our ears. Our understandings are continuously shaped through various “bodily-ways-of-being” (Jones & Woglon, 2013). Famous deaf percussionist Evelyn Glennie once said, “The body is like a huge ear. It's as simple as that.” (Shephard & Leonard 2013). By acknowledging the dynamic role our bodies play in listening, we open unique learning opportunities throughout our day to day experiences and within our relationships. Similarly, when education centers sonic ways of being and knowing, such as pursuing sonic lines of inquiry (Gershon, 2011, 2013, 2017), teaching and learning approaches are transformed.

This chapter describes the importance of everyday sounds and silences via sound art perspectives (Ikoniadou, 2014; Kahn, 1999; Kim-Cohen, 2009; LaBelle, 2015) and cultural sound studies (Bull & Back, 2015; Keeling & Kun, 2012; Sterne, 2012; Stoever, 2010; Vargas, 2012). Specifically, it explores alternative listening practices within educational realms and alongside those who live within the margins of difference; particularly in relation to race, class,
gender, sexuality, language, and/or citizenship. The conceptual tools outlined below reimagine critical methodologies within education by listening to and for “sonic imaginations” (Sterne, 2010; Vargas, 2012). For educators who work with emergent bilinguals (Escamilla, 2006a, 2006b; García, 2009), multimodal embodied listening approaches (Ceraso, 2014) deepen “funds of knowledge” (Moll & González, 2004; González, Moll, & Amanti 2006) by taking into account both the sonic and visceral. For communities who face deficit assumptions, linguistic marginalization, and racial adversity (alongside imminent threats of deportation), teachers and educational researchers must take into account life-affirming and self-reflexive methods. These often center the alternative, non-Eurocentric epistemologies (Delgado-Bernal, 1998, 2002).

The following sections map out a critical methodology that expands upon “opportunities provided by thinking with our ears” (Bull & Back, 2003, p.3) and remixes concepts situated within sound art and cultural sound studies, borderland feminisms (Anzaldúa, 2007 [1987]; Elenes, 1997, 2002, 2006; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008), and visceral critical literacies (Ceraso, 2014; Cruz, 2001 & 2011; Dutro, 2013; Dutro & Cartun, 2016; Enriquez, et al., 2016; Jones, 2013; Jones & Woglom 2013; Thiel, 2015). I call this critical dissonance, and I illustrate it through dissonant borderland soundtracks that represent multidimensional, multitemporal, and embodied modes of knowing. Because sonic knowledges are not static (they include visual, spatial, written, and tactile modes), throughout my work I use critical soundtracks to narrate this methodology as an overlapping aural cacophony; an assemblage of sonically saturated written vignettes, sound art compositions, and audible sound clips.

Moreover, critical dissonance and critical visceral listening practices build upon culturally and linguistically relevant and sustaining pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012), and community cultural wealth models (Yosso, 2005) by viscerally tuning into and toward audibly rich forms of meaning making. Yet equally important, the knowledges produced through dissonance creatively reimagine personal and collective terrains; spaces from which we can work to renegotiate and/or resist power and dehumanizing narratives. These counter moves matter within educational contexts, especially because sounds, voices, and soundscapes are sensed and felt. Critical dissonance troubles prevailing ocular-centric approaches and engages sound as haptic communication. It situates ways of knowing through the senses and through understandings that are felt.

Gershon (2013) writes that sonic methods, theories, and practices can serve as “affective vibrations that resonate, and as such, form educational systems of knowledge” (p. 257) and he asserts that they have the potential to “affect[t] our bodies, ideas, and feelings in a literal fashion that text cannot” (p. 261). I agree with Gershon and I approach sound as felt vibrations that articulate a multiplicity of perspectives, and that also hold potential to shift introspective states of being and broaden social awareness. Deeply listening to (Oliveros, 2005; Schultz, 2003), viscerally sensing, and critically reflecting on everyday sounds and soundscapes offer another track (another mode) in understanding social, emotional, and material conditions.
Background & Guiding Questions

Encouraged by prior years of community work, advocating on behalf of Spanish-speaking communities and teaching in PreK-16 settings, sound and listening have become a cornerstone in my thinking and feeling praxis. This is because creative sonic labors have always been a part of my life. Growing up, I immersed myself with children’s audio books and my Abuelita’s [Grandmother’s] storytelling and family recordings. I also played the piano and violin (which I learned by ear). My first teaching experience was working at a preschool where singing and reading stories aloud encouraged listening and oral language development. Later, I worked with emergent bilingual youth and communities while supporting theatre, poetry, and spoken word. Currently, I conduct sound walks and recordings alongside undergraduates (who I also mentor), and I collect audio narratives with community, family, and friends. I draw from these experiences because Chicana feminist epistemologies articulate the need to share one’s own cultural sensibilities, intuitions, and embodied knowledges and these are central themes grounded within this chapter.

My life and work experiences have led me to the following questions:

- How can everyday sounds, voices, and soundscapes shift and complicate narratives?
- How might educational contexts reimagine notions of belonging through critical listening practices?
- How does the México / US border sound?

I have contemplated questions about the México / US border in more general ways over the course of my life; however, centering the sonic within these inquiries demands exploration. So, in response to Ladson-Billing’s (2014) call for a remix of culturally validating and sustaining work, I seek to reimagine notions of belonging, history, and place by revitalizing silenced narratives. Using critical dissonance, I urge us to fully listen with our bodies, and more importantly, to seek to understand that which has created and sustained inaudibility.

Because sound and listening are practices and concepts that can be found across many branches of study, their immense impact within scholarship (from science and technology to the humanities and arts) is wide and far-reaching. I situate my approach specifically within literacy where researchers and practitioners have expressed unique interests in everyday sound. The main areas of study that take up listening, soundscapes, and everyday sound(s) have been in composition and rhetoric studies (Cerauso, 2014; Comstock & Hocks, 2006; Selfe, 2009), and multimodal literacies. Multimodality emphasizes the semiotic, digital, representational, and social affordances of sound, while also affirming its effects on writing and use in designing and fostering new ways and explorations of making meaning (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Dalton, et al., 2015; Jewitt, 2009; Jewitt and Kress 2003; Kress 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001; Phillips & Smith, 2012; Shipka, 2006). Studies in sound, digital, and multimodal literacies are vast and
complex; yet I focus on lines of inquiry that emphasize sound’s vibrational, resonant (Gershon, 2013) and visceral aspects.

This chapter is organized into separate sections that illustrate critical dissonance and build upon literacies and culturally validating work in nuanced ways. The sections include: 1) Critical Soundtracks; 2) Deep Listening; 3) Dissonance; 4) Sonic Reflexivity; 5) Sonic Dimensions; 6) The Sonic Visceral; and 7) Dissonant Educational Borderland Soundtracks. Throughout, I aim to guide those of us interested in anti-oppressive scholarly activist work toward more textured and self-reflexive commitments.

Critical Soundtracks

Dissonant Borderland Soundtracks

In the following sections, I outline a critical dissonant approach through written and audible soundtracks that both metaphorically and concretely represent my visceral and conceptual processes. My understanding of soundtracks differs from other recognizable definitions. For me, “critical soundtracks” include an assemblage of sonically saturated data (tracks) gathered from personal memoirs, audio journals, sound art compositions, media sound bites, and research field notes.

In distinction, critical soundtracks in this chapter are from a research study I conducted on a college campus where I work. Overall, the core of this study aimed to understand how sonic knowledges and sonic pedagogies were shared and understood within an interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies / Education course focused on sound art, literacy, media, and critical cultural sound studies. I developed the curriculum and lead this course with young adults from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. All those who participated in the class were also interested in teaching or other education related careers.

Throughout this chapter, I sonically sketch out the conceptual processes and tools that shape and inform critical dissonance through an explicit set of critical soundtracks – “dissonant borderland soundtracks”. Dissonant borderland soundtracks complicate narratives related to citizenship, belonging, and criminalization and they are drawn from the study mentioned above. I present dissonant borderland soundtracks in an effort to sound out critical dissonance as a visceral, audible, yet liminal methodology; one that specifically listens to and for silenced and marginalized narratives. Accordingly, I map out the unique, overlapping, meaning-making possibilities of critical dissonance through dissonant borderland soundtracks. These critical soundtracks emphasize approaches that tune into and amplify sounds that lie on and outside of spatial, geographical, and psychic margins.

I mention margins because I draw heavily from the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (2007 [1987]) and her notion of “borderlands” and because she situates the physical México / US border as a site of material, historical, colonial, and socio-political violence. However, this
physical site is also related to consciousness and agency. For Anzaldúa, borderlands is a metaphor for the experience of living a subaltern life, and it is also a forced physical, nation-state boundary. Because of this, my use of dissonant borderland soundtracks pertains to sonic, multidimensional, multisensorial forms of making meaning. These include liminal states of being that tie directly to specific listening practices. If we seek to use sound in meaningful ways within learning contexts, we must first listen critically - while sensing margins and sounding out silences - and question that which renders difference and re-inscribes marginality.

Deep Listening

Deep Listening, Silence and Classrooms

When voice evaporates, its people begin to fade away, but not in a gradual or even sudden sense. A certain condensation proceeds, as the people’s history and story, narratives of self, get tangled in the air, fused with the overbearing and dominant voices of others, only to suffer a hegemonic mutation muffled in clouds and then lost forever. (Kirkland, 2013, p. 40)

Because sound is autogenic, and naturally occurring, a methodology about everyday sounds and soundscapes must pay attention to everyday silences. Both Kirkland (2013) and Schultz (2003, 2009, 2010) highlight silence in their work with students from diverse backgrounds, and they argue for critical inquiries when student voice and expressions of literacy are silenced, or when they choose silence. Schultz asks teachers to question the ways school routines and practices become acts of silencing. She emphasizes that expressions of silence have multiple meanings for students who experience marginalization, power, and difference across classroom interactions and urges teachers to approach silence through awareness and deep reflexive inquiry. By questioning possible meanings of silence, she motivates educators to reflect on their own attention (or inattention) and “to make spaces for silence and talk” (2010, p. 2846).

Further, she emphasizes listening for silence and exploring how students make use of it. Through a framework she calls “deep listening” (2003) she encourages educators to rework perspectives about power, and to question habitual, common sense interactions and topics such as “participation” and “student voice”. Interestingly, she explores the “rhythms and balance” within classroom spaces and sees the productive use of silence. Since teachers often turn to verbal talk within their classrooms, Schultz recognizes that silence is a making meaning resource. By encouraging deep meaningful inquiries and critical questioning around issues of sound and silence, Schultz provides educators and educational research a way to look at social interactions across everyday sounds and silences.

Deep and Embodied Listening

Similarly, sound art perspectives draw attention to silence and deep listening. Sound art is a fairly new, emerging field spanning across many disciplines and it is often theory-driven. Yet it
is accessible to practitioners and artists who work within educational spaces, digital media, the humanities, technology, music, science, and contemplative realms. Drawing from everyday sounds and soundscapes, sound art articulates articulate multiple perspectives. Sound artists bring awareness to how we (as embodied human beings) relate to space, sensations, relationships, and time as represented through various “acoustical viewpoints” (LaBelle, 2015). As critical educators and scholars continue to engage with anti-oppressive approaches, sound art and sonic perspectives can offer audible pathways to reclaim, uncover, rich, multidimensional, and multi-textured experiences.

Tejana [Texan] sound artist and pioneering composer Pauline Oliveros (2005) created a practice she coined “deep listening” (p. xxiii). She differentiates deep listening from hearing and advocates for its use in pursuing a type of consciousness that expands the dimensions of sound and its various modes of perception by focusing on what she calls “the whole of the space/time continuum” (pp. xxi-xxiii). Because our world is multidimensional, deep listening involves intentional and embodied considerations. It focuses on consciously interpreting our experiences by heightening, expanding, and turning in toward ourselves and our own auditory perceptions. This occurs simultaneously through what Oliveros describes as listening to and “sounding out the margins” (2010, p. title). Ultimately, Oliveros emphasizes that we must pay attention to how we listen, and how the perception of this listening sensation is related to personal habits, reflections, and conditioned tendencies. She maintains that this deepens our “commitment to reconcile and resolve conflicts” (2005, p. xxiv).

This practice is a conscious and intentional level of awareness. It focuses on how to listen to and/or within the margins. As an approach, it follows a deep engagement with self-reflection and beckons us to reorient our normal, day to day, routine practices and dominant perspectives. Below I explain how deep listening, listening “within the margins”, explored alongside dissonant and imaginative concepts, uncovers and reclaims subjugated knowledges and silenced narratives.

**Dissonance**

**Sonic Imaginaries & Dissonance**

Using a spatio-temporal approach, Debra Vargas (2012) charts geographical and metaphorical notions of borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2007 [1987]) and maps the interventions made by 20th century Mexican American women singers. Following these artists “embodied movements” throughout the Latinx diaspora, she draws attention to the “dissonance” their bodies produce within heteronormative, masculine-driven discourses and she archives an alternatively queer narrative about borders and borderlands. Her conceptual tool, a “transfrontera sonic compass”, traces multidimensional, historical “scales” that trouble dominant narratives of nation and homeland, while also following uncharted, inaudible movements and rhythms.

In particular, Vargas introduces the concept of “borderland sonic imaginaries” arguing that dominant cis-heteronormative, white, and patriarchal systems have formed sonic social
worlds that re-inscribe dominance, marginality, and power. This is because, without examining what has rendered certain sounds as inaudible (and specific bodies as invisible), sonic approaches remain contingent upon dominant sensing frameworks. Her analytical discussion raises the importance of forming sonic imaginaries that sonically map dissonance and this disrupts conformist, taken for granted auditory experiences. By extension, she locates (through a transfronteras sonic compass) sounds that are unheard and/or misheard. This type of creative, imaginative cartography critically maps out silenced voices, narratives, and sounds while listening to and for dissonance. Further, she states that knowledge produced through dissonance, “while traveling through sonic imaginaries,” expands alternative narratives that resist and shift, “re-imagined histories, pleasures, and social identities...rework[ing] complex notions of complicity... and negotiation” (p. xiii).

In other words, without dissonance, and without critical forms of imagination, transformation would not be possible. Anzaldúa (2015) writes that “without creativity, other epistemologies - those of the body, dreams, intuitions, and senses other than the five physical senses - would not reach consciousness” (p. 44). Because critical consciousness is rooted in the lived day to day experiences of those who contest, aesthetically resist, and traverse marginalizing and dehumanizing contexts (Freire, 2000 [1968]), educators who seek to engage with anti-oppressive approaches, must also seriously attend to and creatively reflect upon daily embodied encounters.

This is crucial since our bodies develop discerning practices every day and because our perceptions are continuously shaped through various, ongoing visceral encounters (Jones & Woglam, 2013). Likewise, these encounters always-already include socio-aural relationships and acoustical sensations. As Kim-Cohen (2009) writes; “the ear is always open, always supplementing its primary materiality, always multiplying the singularity of perception into the plurality of experience” (p. xx). For these reasons, I argue that critical dissonance is a self-reflexive aesthetic – a visceral analytic. It listens for dissonant sounds and silences, and through self-reflection and imagination, helps us better understand the multidimensional, multisensorial aspects of marginalization. Because alternative, critical, and creative approaches locate sounds and narratives that have been rendered inaudible, dissonance deepens learning, teaching, and inquiry. If we are open to disrupting habitual patterns while inviting in the inaudible and unseen, we commit toward listening within the margins; specifically, toward dissonant ways of knowing. In the following, I illustrate how this sounds and feels within the borderlands.

Sonic Reflexivity

Soundtrack 1: Sonic Memoir - borders & silences

There are many types of silences that speak. Yours is a story resting inside of bone, skin, and memory. The weight of it always traveling with you throughout each space and place. You’re sitting in the sand, listening to ocean waves as they break through the thick and rusted border fence that extends far out into the
ocean. You’re waiting for your mother. She’s standing several yards away from you, touching the immense and towering steel pipes, leaning somewhat toward an individual open space in between solid bar. Within these raw gaps is a past... a home that lingers. A home where a loved one’s slightly bent body (now a shaking silhouette) and the sounds of the ocean rise up and then both fall and crash against an unrelenting, border wall. These all meet here on this somewhat chilly afternoon day. You notice that family histories echo within these fissures and within our shared tears. They are absorbed and held deeply within our bodies and the body of the wall. Here, the weight of space is held by form and contour, and by the muffled noise of weeping. You are transfixed by this notion and know in that moment how boundaries are both viscerally and violently mapped. Here is a space where dreams, movement, and families are ravaged. Yet the sand, salty air, and the sounds of ocean waves remain. (https://soundcloud.com/mariposavisions /soundtrack1)

I begin with a sonic memoir (Valenzuela, 2017) that focuses on sound, place, and silence. It traces the contours of my pedagogy to family, history, and community and in particular, to borderland feminist ways of knowing and imagining (Anzaldúa, 1987; Elenes, 1997, 2002, 2006; Saavedra & Nymark 2008). I grew up close to the San Diego / Tijuana border and was born in El Paso, Texas (also a border town), as daughter and granddaughter of activist Mexicana immigrant women. Throughout my early years, I constantly felt and heard violent assaults on Latinx immigrants and I personally witnessed the cruel conditions created by nation state policies. These forms of oppression have always been wedded to racist ideologies and sexist discourses (Saldivar Hull, 1991; Elenes 1997 & 2006) and because of this, my parents and ancestors, carry stories and wounds from U.S. and México’s long, violent, yet largely neglected and complicated history.

In distinct ways, I’ve always been connected to complex narratives and geographical themes related to borders and borderlands. Within this sonic memoir, I translate these memories via borderland epistemologies and critical visceral literacies. Using a “transfrontera sonic compass” (Vargas, 2012), I listen for dissonant, liminal textures and visceral rhythms that give voice to silenced and often unspoken notions of home, belonging, and non-belonging. By reflecting upon an intense and deeply loving moment situated at the ocean’s border wall, I share the complicated silences located within margins; the personal soundscapes and voices located within dehumanizing experiences.

**Sonic Geographies of the Self**

By including my own intimate, dissonant borderland soundtrack, I demonstrate how critical self-reflexivity can break down barriers and rework problems of representation while deconstructing binaries and unified, bare-boned considerations (Pierre & Pillow, eds., 2002). Within ethnography, writing oneself into research complicates linear approaches. “Writing vulnerably” (Behar, 1997) shifts social and dominant conventions of writing (that privilege objectivity) and reinvents hegemonic methods that often never address issues of voyeurism nor
power. Yet these issues are often overlooked within qualitative, ethnographic approaches. For this reason, I follow Denzin (1996) who supports transforming ethnographic writing. He states that researchers should “write from the inside out, [so that] stories become cultural texts… [where] new writing always carries traces of autoethnography, the personal memoir, and the confessional” (p. 201).

Anzaldúa (2016) also acknowledges that our personal sensibilities and worldviews are shaped from relationships connected to ourselves, to our bodies, and to our collective past. She calls these "geographies of the self" and extends personal reflective strands of experience specifically out toward more collective ones. By exploring commitments that challenge and expand singular perspectives, she urges the importance of continuously remaining conscious of social, relational, and historical conditions.

For example, my maternal grandmother was the first to show me through her kind, loving, and fierce advocacy, that migrant workers demanded respect and dignity. I witnessed through her embodied work and heart-centered labors that marginalization silences and renders inaudible the uniquely complex, and multi-layered lives of immigrant, Spanish-speaking communities. In the same way, my paternal grandparents were agricultural laborers who, like so many others, worked on and at the México / US border for seasonal pay. Eventually they settled in El Paso, Texas as local industry began to employ farm workers year-round at minimal pay and under rudimentary conditions.

Yet, these narratives currently remain unheard and uncharted by dominant, US, English-centric media conglomerates. Likewise, with nativism on the rise (alongside chants and soundbites to “secure our borders” and “build more walls”), the need to locate silenced voices and narratives is of greater consequence. This is why I listen within the margins for immigrant family voices and histories and I approach this through borderland feminist ways of knowing; by listening for dissonance, critically imagining, and narrating sonic “geographies of the self” (Anzaldúa 2016). These conceptual tools critically tune into, map, locate, and sound out silenced and marginalized narratives. This method pushes beyond conventional narratives and helps to sustain and affirm cultural histories, values, and rooted sensibilities.

My sonic memoir is an affirming strategy that resists the marginalization of my family stories and many others. These kinds of digital interventions invite the sonic (such as ocean waves alongside my own voice and self-reflective thoughts) into larger discourses that can be amplified through speakers and/ or shared through social media. These efforts rupture geopolitically charged landscapes. Ultimately, a critical dissonant approach validates geographical, historical, personal, and collective soundtracks.

Realizing that educational literacy efforts often overlook self-reflexive engagements, in these times, I find it imperative to decenter mainstream narratives that normalize oppression and continuously uphold deficit representations; especially when our teaching and learning contexts hold possibility for these kinds of interventions. Surely, because I use deep critical listening
practices that attend to dissonance and silence, I too must share my own personal story and continuously reflect on dominant modes of listening that catalogue difference and that marginalize and displace certain sounds, voices, and lives.

**Listening for the Contours of Difference**

In seeking to explore the sonic and affective aspects of the México / US border, critical dissonance makes use of self-reflexivity in order to disrupt normative and oppressive acts. The above dissonant borderland soundtrack amplifies the contours of the borderlands. It pushes us to consider visceral, personal, and collective stories, and it requires that we tune in toward ourselves with conscious and intentional effort. *Because our lives are complicated and messy, critical multidimensional and multisensorial tools are necessary.* By positioning our ears toward dissonant sounds and our own sensibilities, we can confront and negotiate our day to day experiences through diverse levels of understanding. Self-reflexive listening can function as a critical means to uncover that which we have yet to understand.

More so, perhaps due to our unintentional routines, we remain unaware and unconscious of lives that are inextricably and painfully interwoven to borders and borderlands (or bordered marginalization). Generally, we do not hear nor choose to listen to narratives beyond our own, especially those that are interwoven with multiple historical textures, collective tones, and multifaceted interpersonal stories. This needs attention since immigration topics are brought up in small, problematic, and deficit ways. As official border scripts continuously draw consequential lines of citizenship, criminalizing narratives escalate, and they uphold one-dimensional stereotypes that lead toward racialized, gendered, and linguistic terror.

 Granted, these lines of belonging and non-belonging are also audible. Stoever (2010) discusses how the “dominant ear” registers difference through sounds that have become associated with race, citizenship, class, and ethnicity. In other words, *notions of belonging and boundaries are marked by sound.* She writes,

> It isn’t just the sound of an accent or the blare of a trumpet that marks someone as a noncitizen - or worse yet, a non-person, as the dehumanizing term ‘illegal alien’ would have - but where and when the sound appears and what boundaries it is perceived to cross by citizens empowered to lodge [such] complaints (*The Noise of SB 1070*, blog post).

Sounds often do mark difference and rearticulate racist discourses that afford permissions and privileges to “deserving citizens” (Stoever, blog). Additionally, sound can uphold boundaries, borders, and contracts. *Sound’s ability to mark space and place allows us to reflect upon its multiple, layered, and multidimensional meaning making modes.* Below, I discuss how critical dissonance sonically maps the borderlands through historical, spatial, and erratic, temporal moves.
Sonic Dimensions

Soundtrack 2: 2487

In the sound art composition 2487 (2006), Luz María Sánchez brings the U.S. / México border to our ears and engages us to listen within the margins for lives that have been long forgotten. By naming these silenced lives, she vocally charts and tunes us in toward the disappeared. Her voice intimately draws us closer to the people who attempted to cross hazardous and precarious landscapes. By recognizing these lost lives, she represents a fluctuating and unstable “sonic borderlands” (Krell, 2015). This innovative aesthetic inspires a reexamination of border histories, border communities, and their surrounding environments. Sánchez maps spaces and stories that are largely unknown to mainstream populations. Similarly, Cantú (1993) writes;

[The] pain and joy of the borderlands – perhaps no greater or lesser than the emotions stirred by living anywhere contradictions abound, culture clash and meld, and life is lived on an edge – come from a wound that will not heal and yet is forever healing. These lands have always been here; the river of people has flowed for centuries. It is only the designation [of] border that is relatively new and along with the term comes the life one lives in this 'in-between world' that makes us the other, the marginalized… (Borderlands Festival Program Booklet)

2487 narrates the violent and often invisible context of borders and borderlands. As a dissonant borderland soundtrack, it locates silenced lives and spaces we attempt to understand, yet often misconstrue. This is because experiences of difference (of borderland realities and the sensations of marginalization) are complex, and therefore demand inquiries that take into account alternative and critical commitments. Critical dissonance decenters conventional, essentialist approaches, and it listens within the margins while tuning into and toward multilayered dimensions; or, in other words, multiple “acoustical viewpoints” (LaBelle, 2015).

Multiplicitous and Overlapping Sonic Dimensions

For the displaced and non-dominant body, the U.S. / México border has remained a geopolitical site of corporeal violence. Consider the pandemic killings of women in Juárez - the "Juárez femicides" (Minich, 2013). Yet still, the border is often discussed through indifferent, politically charged “viewpoints” that take place far away from the surrounding physical terrain and local social realities. Misrepresentations proliferate through mainstream media and are often racist, heteronormative, classist, and sexist. However, in 2487, Sánchez complicates dominant narratives that “lump immigrants together into one sound bite” (Casillas, 2011) and disrupts citizen-nation tropes through a creative, sonic, tech-based approach.

She records her voice, speaking the names of those who lost their lives at the border. 2487 is the number of bodies found dead in the year 2004 throughout geographical border areas
that make up the U.S. / México borderland region. As a written or visibly read number, it is solely a statistic. But, through audible technologies, this silenced and dispossessed group is given voice. Lost lives are named and rendered audible across digital and geographical landscapes and time. Within 2487, border lives are expanded, animated, and amplified.

Additionally, 2487 chronicles a complex issue that cuts across social, personal, economic, and interminable worlds. Precisely because of these entanglements, Sánchez employs a randomized, and seemingly disorienting sonic method; one that represents the irregular migratory patterns and routes of the historically displaced. It traces sonic and embodied movements across border spaces and regions. She also composes with intermittent silences. These are interspersed with the rapid voicing of names, and at times, these are represented in a slow-tempo. Her voice is singular and then it is overlapping. Gradually, it becomes multiplicitous. Using this style, she layers sonic methods. This sensibility contests linear thinking/ logic and therefore, 2487 resists criminalizing and essentialist notions of migration because it takes into account multiple, historically layered understandings. As a dissonant critical soundtrack, 2487 locates and sonically maps the inaudible, while narrating the borderlands through humanizing, multi-temporal, and overlapping sonic knowledges.

The Sonic Visceral

Soundtrack 3: Border Spirits: Inside the Nogales, Arizona Barrier

George Rivera's sound art project titled, Border Spirits: Inside the Nogales, Arizona Barrier (2010) investigates the México / US border's materiality. It sounds out the physical barrier that divides Nogales, Sonora México from Nogales, Arizona. By placing a microphone within the iron metal fence, Rivera records noise from within the border, and, in a way, liberates its somatic narrative qualities. Through this approach, loud vibrations emerge from within the iron metal barrier. The sound is amplified and the aural experience is harsh. It is raspy, clunky, and grating and one cannot listen for long because the reverberations deliver a painful, dissonant state.

As a frame of reference, the entire México / US physical border (to date) is 1,954 miles long (“México-US barrier”, n.d.) and the border fence displayed in Border Spirits is made of chained sections. These sections include walls that consist of recycled steel gathered from the earlier Gulf Wars. However, the materials used that make up the border vary tremendously throughout, and much of this boundary consists of open, natural terrain (for example, El Río Grande River). It follows the path of El Río Grande from the Gulf of México through Texas, crossing deserts that separate Arizona and México, and it divides California where Tijuana and San Diego boundaries flank until it reaches the Pacific Ocean. Granted, there are many parts of the México / US border where no such wall nor barriers exist.

For Anzaldúa (2007, [1987]), the border between México and the US is both tangible and psychic (thus unseen) and these sensing qualities are always-already somatic due to their links to

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settler colonial histories and violence. In other words, the border is concrete and geographical, and it is also a chronicled, metaphysical metaphor representing collective trauma and internal struggle. She writes that it is an open wound where "the third world grates against the first and bleeds" (p. 3). Depicting the borderlands as a physical space, overlaid with brutal re-occurring events and entangled circumstances, Anzaldúa sketches its characteristics as painful and sensing. By stating that the border is an open wound, she speaks of its visceral-chronic qualities; specifically, its inability to heal.

The word “grates” suggests a sonic and repeated intensity over time. Grating, as an active force, is continuous and is genuinely felt when listening to Border Spirits. As we listen, we feel the sounds within the border. In a way, painful acts of exploitation and violence are rendered audible. Because borders and borderlands are psychically, socially, and physically (economic / material) lived experiences, we often cannot relate due to our geographical distance and/or due to interpersonal, psychic, socio-cultural factors. Yet, we feel this soundtrack. We sense a disorienting and deep agonizing experience and because of this, our relationship to borders and borderlands becomes more intimate. It becomes visceral.

In Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art (2015), LaBelle writes that “sound is relational… it vibrates, and agitates; it leaves a body and enters others” (p. v). These visceral qualities may not be much of a surprise to audiophiles and musicians. The affective nature of music has been given serious attention throughout history. However, objects, such as a border wall or fence, have often been overlooked. But Border Spirits tunes us into a concrete body. It is a material one that holds multiple, socio-political and geographical understandings and overlapping histories. Through Border Spirits we are able to listen within a physical boundary to marginal, disorienting and dissonant histories and traumas. In other words, liminal sensibilities are rendered audible and they are deeply felt. As such, a border's materiality (physical, historical, and felt relational aspects) becomes intensified. It vibrates with purposeful intention. Border Spirits is a dissonant borderland soundtrack that amplifies the diverse somatic experience of life on the margins… of historical isolation, complexities and violence.

Sonic Vibrations and Environments

Through critical dissonant approaches, silenced and marginalized narratives - embedded within space - are rendered audible. As reflected within all the above critical soundtracks, border environments and borderlands are personal, social, and embodied spaces that vibrate with sound and meaning. Comparatively, Schafer (1994) explores how acoustical elements frame the social characteristics of environments. To an extent, I follow Schafer and seek to understand how spaces (especially where trauma resides) possibly soak up collective and personal reverberations. Imagine that vibrations travel throughout a landscape, pass through, and enter material objects and/or sensing bodies. Then imagine sonically mapping, and sensing these subaltern vibrations in meaningful ways that might elevate them into new, healing channels. By
examining what may have rendered borders inaudible, critical dissonance offers educators a way to transform counter narratives via embodied and felt modes.

Expanding multimodal literacy, Ceraso (2014) argues that sound is vibrational and that we are essentially embodied listeners attending to the interactions between sounds, our bodies, and the world. Similarly, Gershon (2013) states that sound’s vibrational and resonant characteristics represent systems of meaning. This is because sound vibrates, circulates, and also describes an environment or scene. Critical dissonance helps us re-imagine preconceived thoughts, memories, and/or emotions connected to soundscapes.

These sonic imaginations are initial inquiries that come from visceral and creative practices. These practices are informed by critical sound art and sound studies perspectives that guide and tune us into and toward sounds, voices, and soundscapes that represent marginalization. When we choose to listen within the margins and uphold critical, self-reflexive engagements, we uncover new ways of knowing, sensing, and thinking. Likewise, as we recognize the multidimensional and multisensorial nature of subaltern experiences, we delve deeper into the manifold nature of oppression. The sonic provides a key to unlocking the breadth of diversity felt when living within the interstices of power. More so, critical sonic approaches can validate and affirm the personal and collective textures, vibrations, and tones found across educational experiences.

**Dissonant Educational Borderland Soundtracks**

**Soundtrack 4:**

You are teaching an undergraduate class focused on sound and literacy where a close community of young adults meet once a week to discuss the cultural, social, and political aspects of sound and listening. At the beginning of each class, you all share recordings collected from everyday experiences. From a Bose Bluetooth speaker that’s placed in the middle of the room, sounds from walks to campus, family visits kitchens are amplified. Laughter, Spanish and English words are layered over the brassy-like vibrancy of Banda music and the clattering and clanking of dishes and silverware. Alex shares Creedence Clearwater Revival’s tune from YouTube, “Have You Ever Seen the Rain?”; a song he heard growing up while smooshed in the backseat with his brothers and sisters during long drives to Disneyland. Personal and private sounds are also shared; like the synchronized scratching and chime-like sounds of art paintbrushes tapping up against a glass filled with water and across paper. These are interwoven with soft, yet condensed, breathing.

**Soundtrack 5:**

The class is small. There are only nine of us, yet everyone has an interest in becoming a teacher or working in a related educational career field. When you meet, you have discussions, much like any other Education course on campus, however this class is different. In each class
meeting you listen… deeply. You are all learning and experiencing how to “listen within the margins”.

This week in class, you discuss the various roles Spanish language radio and music play within Latinx communities. You read aloud from Delores Casilla’s (2015) Sounding Out blog post titled, ‘Listening (Loudly) to Spanish Language Radio’. The article is displayed on a large screen.

“In many ways, the workings of race, language and labor resonate through radio. And the very public nature of Spanish language radio - listening - represents a communal, classed and brown form of listening that differs markedly from ‘white collar’ modes of listening, which offers more solitary practices - those that are - promoted by commuting in private cars - right? - and listening to personal satellite radios, iPods, or Internet broadcasts.”

You ask the class, “How can… how is a sound brown? Here…Casilla asks us, what are brown forms of listening?”

Celina recalls commuting with her father early summer mornings and listening to Spanish radio programming. She describes the intimate space shared with her father inside the cab of his work truck and she connects this nearness to the accompanying voices from the nationally syndicated program “El Show de Piolín”. She remembers how the radio talk show hosts would greet listeners (meaning, them) headed to work with shout outs and phrases. She mimics these voices as she shares this experience. “Saludos, to all my workers… toda mi raza que está trabajando!”

The following week you ask everyone in class if they think music or sound can transcend boundaries. You ask these strong and amazing young adults, whose family histories and experiences of displacement and dispossession are continuously bound to systems of power and privilege, and whose marginalized lives are often silenced. You ask them, “Can sound cross borders, boundaries… walls?”.

Diana gently clears her throat and says, “I think transcending regions… that’s very important. Because last class when we were talking about how a lot of immigrants listen to radio and you hear not only people speaking Spanish, but music from México, that transcends any physical, regional boundary. Because once you hear that, you are transported back home … whatever home is for you.”

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1 The phrase “toda mi raza que está trabajando” translated to English is “to all my people who are working”. However, the words “mi raza” literally translated into English becomes “my race”. Yet, the expression “mi raza” holds more weight; especially in the connectedness it intends to express. It represents a collective cultural, historical, and linguistic experience throughout the Latinx diaspora. “A toda mi raza”, used here, is much closer in meaning to the phrase “to all my people”.

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Soundtrack 6: dissonant borderland soundtrack

Visit: https://soundcloud.com/mariposavisions/soundtrack6

Conclusions & Thoughts

In addition to the scope of this article, I foreground these approaches during a particularly relevant time in history. While US anti-immigrant sentiments and xenophobic, racist acts and policies surge (and as immigration enforcement practices proliferate across the nation), educators and educational researchers must reimagine methods and pedagogies. Because of this sense of urgency, critical dissonance functions beyond education and scholarship. Critical dissonance remixes and re-conceptualizes personal and collective ways to move forward in confronting current socio-political climates, economic conditions, and environmental degradations. In particular, it can agitate power systems that normalize oppression, corruption, and violence. By providing an alternative analytic, a critical faculty or facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987), critical dissonance encourages us to renegotiate and trouble deficit, criminalizing, and marginalizing narratives, while also tuning in and amplifying affirming ones. This is why I draw attention to both specific and broad dimensions of sound.

Critical dissonance serves as a guide. Specifically, critical dissonance insists on locating and attentively listening to experiences we do not fully understand, and it turns our ears toward ones we have yet to hear. Because sounds, voices, and soundscapes hold a multiplicity of perspectives and vibrate with assorted and mixed sensations, they are dynamic resources that open up unique opportunities for relational praxis. These relationships include those we already have, continue to nurture, and seek to create. In all aspects, critical visceral listening is a deep engagement with our sonic and embodied self. Prioritizing this type of attentiveness reworks our commitments as educators and scholars. Critical dissonance is therefore particularly useful within the spaces we frequent, and more so those places we have never been, yet have only imagined. The México/US border is one of those spaces.

Reimagining Sonic Approaches in Education

Critical dissonance highlights the need for educators to intervene through the arts in order to affirm the multisensorial and multidimensional textures, rhythms, and contours that exist across margins of race, class, gender, sexuality, language, and/or citizenship. Reflecting on how we listen in and/or tune out is pivotal, considering these efforts push on our limits and boundaries. A critical dissonant approach is an everyday, embodied awareness, and it transforms our relationships and how we read the world through creative, sonic interventions. Certainly, these commitments reinvent our understandings about social, cultural and linguistic resources, narratives, and sensibilities.

Given these points, educators should work to disrupt routine practices and complicate multimodal approaches. Literacy should listen within the margins for sounds and silences that
have never fully, nor intentionally, been experienced. Because our aural surroundings connect us
to human activities and realms, critical dissonance expands pedagogies. These include: 1) centering deep listening practices grounded in self-reflection; 2) critically attending and tuning into and toward silence, 3) questioning what has rendered inaudibility and sonic marginalization;
4) understanding that sound always-already consists of multiple perspectives and sensations. In summary, critical dissonance is an aesthetic intervention that sonically maps, senses, and seeks to understand our multidimensional world through deeper modes of consciousness, and this move shifts us toward viscerally rich methods.

Toward this end, listening within the margins is a way of knowing that holds possibilities to intervene. Educators and those interested in anti-oppressive tools and practices should remix optical centric approaches, and delve deeper into the everyday textures and tones found within culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012). On the whole, critical dissonance expands understandings and everyday life– even if just for our own listening purposes. These moves are important within educational learning contexts where affirming, critical, and self-reflexive methods matter.

Outtake: Sonic Breaks & Transgressive Modes

The soul of a people lives in that people’s voice and is streamed in the continuous sounds that run deep like rivers through their lineage. (Kirkland, 2013, p. 40)

Sound can also be transgressive (hooks, 1994). This is because of its ability to travel and be in multiple spaces at one time. It holds possibility and connects us, bending and shifting into new forms. As such, sound emerges as radical and distinct. It is a form of improvisational engagement; a “break” (much like in hip hop) where spaces are held and open for aesthetic expression (Moten, 2003). Therefore, sound can offer unique and subversive opportunities. These audible “breaks” have often been found within radio, inside of electromagnetic waves where immigrant communities can connect and unapologetically communicate with one another. Because digital sounds can cross boundaries, reverberate through walls and travel across continents, they reach out, through walls, stretching beyond and across boundaries. In other words, sound can liberate and celebrate connectedness; it can create notions of belonging, particularly when visibility is detrimental or dangerous.

Casillas (2014) writes that Spanish language radio affords immigrants (and those who are undocumented) an alternative form of communication where privacy and anonymity are essential. Her analysis follows radio as a non-visible acoustic means of communication for Spanish-dominant speaking communities who are often vulnerable to state violence. By focusing on radio’s transgressive and far reaching aspects, she refers to it as an “acoustic ally”, thus calling us to reimagine notions of belonging and diasporic connections through sonic perspectives. Be that as it may, radio sounds can move through and across borders, and this transgressive sound practice uniquely affords concealment. This is undeniably important,
especially when people themselves (their own bodies) are physically unable to move across borders due to social, economic, and political conditions, and/or citizenship status.

With the continual advancement of technology and social media, deep listening practices, sound art compositions, and critical sound studies perspectives offer productive tools to resist and revitalize humanizing pedagogies (Paris & Winn, 2013). Ultimately, our sensibilities and ways of knowing are limitless. Therefore, we can expand everyday living, learning, and liberating perspectives and reinvent acts of resistance through critical sonic approaches. Likewise, my hope in writing this chapter is that all who are on the path of transformation and healing, also amplify culturally and linguistically affirming narratives; the sounds, voices, and soundscapes that are life sustaining.
References


Creating School Partnerships: Multilingual Family Engagement Through the Arts

Sarah Davila & Maura Mendoza Quiroz, Lesley University

Abstract

Music artist and School-based Family and Community Liaison, Maura Mendoza Quiroz from the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC), shares her experiences of how music, visual arts and language workshops have served as the entry point for immigrant families in the Somerville Public Schools. The examples help teachers “read” their community of parents and create spaces responding to families’ needs instead of providing arts programs that are unfamiliar to them. As parents participate in these activities, their “physical time” inside the school increased, home-school communications improved, and overall the welcoming efforts translated into better school attendance. Sarah Davila, director of English Learner Education and Family and Community Partnerships, provides context, organizing frameworks, and introduces the chapter with recommendations about systems that must be in place within the school district for successful arts-based family engagement.

Keywords: family engagement, parent involvement, English Learners, multicultural education, arts education, culturally responsive practices, popular education

Introduction

Maura and Sarah work together on a family engagement team that collectively enacts core practices essential to whole family learning, leadership, and caring relationships. In this article, you will hear Maura’s voice as she describes her experiences in interaction with families to develop programs and resources, and Sarah’s voice as she comments on systems and structures that Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) has created to support families and to better prepare schools to work with families.

Putting our heads, hands, and hearts together: Sarah’s perspective on district systems

Maura’s creativity and leadership in developing art-based activities for family engagement represent one example of shared effort to positively impact our children’s education and development. However, none of Maura’s work would come to fruition without strong systems within the district that are dedicated to family engagement. In my position as a District Administrator, I am lucky that my two areas of work – English Learner Education and Family
and Community Partnerships – intersect at the point where heads, hands, and hearts come together. We fully recognize family engagement as a lever to close opportunity and performance gaps among our very diverse student body.

In this work, we have learned that there are (at least) six key practices that are essential to whole family learning, leadership, and caring relationships. These practices are (1) Culturally responsive communication, (2) Drawing upon family and community knowledge, (3) Family-to-family connections, (4) Providing a ladder of leadership (5) Engaging with community about important issues and joint problem solving, and (6) Supporting school leaders.

1. **Culturally responsive communication** in our diverse community starts with a robust Multilingual Services Department. When the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) was founded, our first order of business was to create a network, systems, and infrastructure to provide translation and interpretation across the school district. While demand for the service is high, our primary concern is to ensure that proper interpretation is provided at Parent-Teacher Conferences. In addition, culturally responsive communication is dependent upon ongoing staff training, and professional development for teachers, administrators, and all school staff. Maura’s new role as Language and Leadership Liaison is designed to increase the school district’s capacity in culturally and linguistically responsive communication.

2. **Drawing upon family and community knowledge** and having that knowledge to inform our programming is foundational. Maura starts her arts-based Family Engagement activities with parents’ songs and stories. The relationships that she builds with individual family members are based upon learning about and applying what they know.

3. **Family-to-family connections** are the basis for building relationships within and across the diverse communities in our city. Parents enjoy each other’s company and find common challenges as well as practical advice regarding everyday routines (getting kids to do their homework), the logistics of dropping off and picking up kids at school while working two or three part-time jobs, and sharing information about formal or informal childcare.

4. **Providing a ladder of leadership** empowers the community and also helps us develop authentically representative programs and services. Maura works with a team of Parent Leaders who emerge during their participation in Parent English. A former Parent English class participant is now a teacher in one of our more popular classes. In many instances, parents are hired or volunteer to replicate programs, and provide direct assistance to families by staffing and coordination of the Clothes and Food Pantry. The goal of the Escuela de Padres and IMPACT group (described below) is to further develop leadership skills in the parent community and increase representation in the decision making process in each school as well as at the district level.

5. **Engaging with community about important issues and joint problem solving.** The looming issue facing our community is represented by the threats to immigrant families,
undocumented children, their parents, and unaccompanied minors and youth that have been intensified by federal orders since presidential elections in November 2016. Since then, in addition to other responsibilities, Maura is co-chair of the Somerville Sanctuary City Steering Committee. Her work is doubled in collaborating to organize regularly Know Your Rights Workshops and Legal Clinics for immigrants and undocumented students and family members. The basic safety and sense of belonging for our children and families is a requisite for engagement. Members of the community will not come to school if they do not feel safe.

6. Supporting School Leaders and holding school administrators accountable to the work and reward is essential for sustaining meaningful family engagement. Maura and the SFLC Liaison Team provide technical assistance to school principals including a Multilingual “Cheat Sheet” (see below) for communicating with families. Aligned to school district improvement goals, the SFLC is facilitating a Professional Learning Community (PLC) for school principals to learn about the conditions for culturally responsive communication with parents as partners as well as to share their best practices. The SFLC Liaisons are readily available to support in unique crisis situations as well as in the daily life of school.

Community Context

Somerville, just north of Boston, Massachusetts, is a small urban gateway community for generations of immigrant families. Currently one third of city residents are born outside of the U.S. and more than half of students in our schools speak another language than English in their home with fifty-two languages represented. At the same time, the city is gentrifying rapidly with new shopping areas and trendy restaurants in development. The cost of housing is skyrocketing with some new residents moving into luxury units on one end, and immigrant families doubling and tripling up in small apartments on the other end of the city (City of Somerville, 2017).

In the Somerville Public Schools (SPS) more than half of the students come from a household where English is not their first language, and more than forty percent of the students enrolled identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino (MA DOE, 2016). The efforts to welcome Emerging Bilingual (EB) families into SPS have grown in the last decades with the creation and consolidation of a continuum of services for families (See Appendix A for all acronyms).

Theoretical and Practical Framework

To address the growing diversity – and bifurcation – in the school community, the school district launched the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) to promote universal family engagement. The SFLC mission is to increase the capacity of parents and family members to support their children’s learning and healthy development. At the same time, the SFLC works towards the development of “partnership” schools within the dual capacity framework (Mapp, 2007; 2013) to increase the capacity of schools to welcome, support, and engage with diverse families in meaningful ways.
SFLC School-based Liaisons adopt an explicit popular education model (Freire, 1970; 1994) always starting “where the families are” with their own experiences, collectively examining those experiences, identifying themes and common problems, and figuring out ways to address and fix those problems collaboratively within the school community. In the school where Maura shares her experiences as SFLC Liaison, she has found concrete ways through the arts (music, visual arts, and story sharing) to draw on funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & González, 1992) and cultural memoire (Allen, 2007) as a vibrant source for authentic family experience and to anchor the popular education cycle for family empowerment, leadership development, and school improvement.

**Art-based activities with community artist: Maura’s story**

Four years ago, I started serving the community of families at Capuano Early Childhood Center (Capuano ECC), both as a School-based Liaison and as an artist. My efforts were mostly directed, but not limited, to the Emerging Bilingual (EB) families at Capuano. During three years, I witnessed EB families become more involved in Capuano ECC activities because new and creative spaces were open for them to come and participate in fun and non-traditional ways. Many of these family engagement (FE) activities were art-based (AB) and included music, language, storytelling, and visual arts.

I began my journey as a school-based Liaison at Capuano ECC with a process of identifying successful family engagement (FE) efforts. The School-based Liaison role can be described as a point of contact person for families inside the school to facilitate and improve parent-teacher communication. Beyond this role, we also serve families with city resources and local-based programing. In this section, I will describe how these families supported the programs’ work and reveal how BY honoring and celebrating diverse heritages can propel successful family engagement efforts inside a public school setting. Under this premise, I developed different programs that included music, visual arts and storytelling. I discovered that collecting childhood songs from family and community members can be part of a sustained and ongoing family engagement effort. *Songs Around the World* was initiated as a specific program culminating with a CD/album compilation that advocates for families to bring their voices into their child’s classroom and out to the community.

For me, art-based activities are the most effective way to engage families, mostly EB families, as art can break cultural and language barriers. SFLC’s director, Nomi Davidson, states that activities that include arts add an enormous value for parenting engagement of families with children in the early childhood years (personal communication, October 2014). The SFLC tries, as much as their resources allow, implementing art-based activities during and after the school.

**Visual Arts: The Beautiful Stuff Project**

The Beautiful Stuff Project (TBSP) is a local based organization that provides arts and crafts from reused and recycled materials inside and outside the classrooms. Working with the
SFLC and the school principal in my first year as School-based Liaison, TBSP activities presented a great opportunity to promote art making among the families during after-school hours. We invited families for a half an hour parent/child arts and craft session during drop-off time.

![Figure 1. The Beautiful Stuff Project session at Capuano ECC during the 2013-2014 school year](image1)

The first TBSP sessions were for preschool families (as it shows in the pictures above). Later on we added Kindergarten aged children in back-to-back half hour sessions, one for preschoolers (PK) at 1:45pm dismissal and another at 2:30pm for K dismissal. During the last two school years, the SFLC and TBSP hosted 44 four Beautiful Stuff Project sessions. We started with a few sessions at Capuano ECC with an average of 15 participants per session and continue these throughout the city with an average of 8 families per session. Here are some pictures of TBSP sessions at three Somerville Public Schools: Capuano ECC, Albert F. Argenziano School and East Somerville Community School. Finger Puppets, sticky collages, spin tops, bead necklaces, etc. were some of the activities made during TBSP sessions.

![Figure 2. The Beautiful Stuff Project session at Capuano ECC during 2014-2015 school year](image2)
Figure 3. Detail of sticky-collage activity during the 2013-2014 school year

Figure 4. Detail of activity at Argenziano School during the 2014-2015 school year.
Figure 5. Detail of activity at Albert F. Argenziano School during the 2014-2015 school year.

Figure 6. Detail of beading necklaces activity at Capuano ECC, May 2015.
Figure 7. The Beautiful Stuff Project session at East Somerville Community Schools during the 2014-2015 school year

Figure 8. Detail of activity at Capuano ECC during Mother’s Day Activity during 2015-2016 school year
The pictures above (Figure 5 and 6) portray how parents help their children. TBSP activities are not “children’s art-making” they are intergenerational art sessions where families make art together. Figure 7 depicts a detail of a Finger Puppet, a very simple activity were families experienced not only their creativity in terms of combining materials, but also creating new characters and making stories. In Figures 8 and 9, depicts a mother and a son during a “Mothers Day” celebration at Capuano ECC. This particular activity was born out one of the ECC moms suggested. We see how the child is so proud of putting the necklace to mom, and how she is very happy admiring their work together. (For pictures and media credits, please go to Appendix B)

Music: Musical Mondays

I was very inspired by the diverse community at Capuano ECC where more than 41% of families identified themselves coming from a household where English was not their first language (MA DOE, 2013). These numbers were telling me that some of these parents may not be communicating with their teachers in meaningful ways and even may not be coming inside of the school at all because of language barriers. With that in mind, I created a drop-in program for PK families during dismissal time called Musical Mondays. Here, children and their parents would engage with interactive musical activities. There were 4 Musical Mondays sessions in the first year. Somerville Early Childhood Director’s Lisa Kuh stated in her monthly blog “Somerville early Education:”

Easy and catchy tunes [is] an important element for the families to engage (…) what Maura found is that not only do children love singing but their families joined right in once they learned the words. Important here is that Maura sang
songs that were in children’s home languages (Spanish and Portuguese) or had “nonsense” words that were easy to learn and where you really couldn’t make a mistake. For example, songs like “Rum Sum Sum” have many versions and can easily be adapted” (Kuh, 2014).

In that spirit of community arts, families feel welcomed with a “no room for mistake” guideline. On November 17, 2014 more than 40 participants came for that Musical Monday. SFLC director, Nomi Davidson, stated: “for some parents, ‘Musical Mondays’ is an entry point to get them into the school in a new way, in a safe way, that might get them to come to a Parent Teacher Conference for example” (Davidson, personal communication, 2014). Davidson’s statement reinforces SFLC’s framework that says that FE efforts should be linked to learning (Mapp, 2007; 2013). In between those two worlds of FE efforts and learning goals (increasing vocabulary, social skills, etc.) there is the art-based activities component that attracts, welcome families and hopefully invited them to stay connected with the schools. De Colores, Guantanamera, and O Pato were some of the songs sung during Musical Mondays in Spanish and Portuguese. The following video is a short preview of 20 minutes sing along during a drop-off Musical Monday in November 2014 at the Capuano ECC.

![Figure 10. Video “El Tambor de la Alegría” (Rhythm of Happiness) during a 20 minute drop-off Musical Monday, November 2014](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAhrfU5Lb_0)

In this video (Figure 10), we appreciate how a multilingual group of parents and children keep the beat and follow easy direction and motions. The person who held the camera was a young English-speaking intern with basic Spanish who have never heard the song before. The images below depict the first Musical Monday at Capuano ECC. Not that many people came to that
session so an afterschool class was invited. The parents and caregivers who joined the session helped keeping an eye on the children and sang along. On Figure 12, we appreciate the diverse crowd very representative to Capuano ECC.

Figure 11. First Musical Monday at Capuano ECC, November 2013

Figure 12. Detail of families during a Musical Monday at Capuano ECC, November 2014
Arts and craft activities and Musical Monday happened after school hours and teachers did not participate. However, teachers passed by to say a quick “hello” to the group of parents, being aware that they were participating in some kind of fun activity. The next day, during breakfast time (at Capuano ECC, PK and K classrooms eat breakfast and parents are allowed to stay) teachers and parents had a topic to talk about with questions like “how did it go yesterday at the Beautiful Stuff Project session? Which songs did you sing during Musical Monday? Would you like to come and sing it to the classroom?” Every time this happened I said to myself, “mission is accomplished.” In December 2015, a PK teacher invited two parents originally from Jordan, to sing “Jingle Bells” in Arabic and English. This time, the parents were the ones who invited me to add another language, Spanish. Parents, teachers and myself were in ecstasy seeing how all our differences came together in something we all knew and shared” a popular holiday song, singing, laughing and of course, learning. This is a perfect example of how family engagement where art is involved, comes into full circle with parents, children, staff and teachers.

The Chit Chat Club: Language and Storytelling Workshop

As we mentioned before, one of the greatest challenges as a district is home-school communication to overcome language barriers. I therefore wanted to provide a space where parents could practice their English and it occurred to me that staff and school administrators could participate too (unfortunately this was after drop-off during school hours, so teachers could not participate). I gathered with parents in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) room room every Wednesday morning around a cup of coffee or hot chocolate. The three round tables inside the room were perfect to host three languages for Spanish, Portuguese and English beginners. In some sessions we would have school staff, the principal or the assistant principal sitting with the parents. Through storytelling, I modeled using one of the languages from our communities.

The assistant principal and counselor participated in our first sessions and it was a powerful experience for parents to see the school staff trying to speak Spanish, hearing their voices trying hard and putting themselves in an insecure and vulnerable position. This made parents think about how we all are vulnerable when it comes to learning another language. We exchanged stories about our countries, family names, seasons, and many other topics. A Spanish-speaking parent who regularly attended Chit Chat Club stated: “Chit Chat Club [sessions] helped me to develop more patience towards my teacher and staff… I encourage parents to participate in these kinds of activities to help them to move forward with their child’s education” (Personal Communication, July, 2017). After three years of being exposed to these informal art-based sessions, this parent attends regularly to Parent Teacher Conferences, she is in constant contact with the School-based Family Liaison and support PTA activities throughout the year. In our last conversation during the summer 2017, the parent shared that her oldest daughter did not need to do SPPELL program, the SPS K-8 summer program offered to ELL/EB students to support academics.
The Chit Chat Club turned out to be what I call, “the art of a cup of coffee” because coffee was the hook to invite parents right after drop-off time (good coffee, of course!). Another highlight of having school staff, principals and counselors was that that year my own relationship as a school-based liaison grew among them. This was shown through mutually coordinated efforts to provide coats for winter, a food race and even Thanksgiving baskets.

The Chit Chat Club was the only family engagement activity where children were not present with their parents. Because this was an activity for adults, we had the opportunity to share more about our own backgrounds and personal stories in a more trusting and intimate way in a contained space. In the photos below, the three tables represented three different languages. By the end of the year, we added a fourth language, Arabic. We learned how to write down our names in Arabic. Also, we added the word “welcome” for the coffee hour sign offered by the PTA members (the “welcome” word was already in the SPS four targeted languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole). The following month during PTA’s coffee hour, an Arabic speaker PK paraprofessional approached me and said: “it is really nice to see my language included in the sign board, good job!”

The positive effects that the Chit Chat Club sessions had on the parents were almost immediate. Jose, for example, in the black sweater (Figure 14), started Chit Chat Club with no English at all. Parallel to Chit Chat Club sessions, Jose enrolled in formal English classes offered in the local community college. Jose is now a K paraprofessional in one of the SPS schools.

Figure 13. Chit Chat Club parents participants. Countries represented (left to right): Brazil, Morocco, El Salvador, Cape Verde and Puerto Rico. Spring 2014-2015 school year.
In Figure 14 we can also see some EB parents struggle with some words in English. In that particular session, we were reviewing the seasons and names of the year from Spanish to English.

**How do Art-based Activities Enhance the Parent-Teacher Relationship?**

During my last year at Capuano ECC in 2016, I talked to two teachers about how valuable art-based activities are for them to strengthen family engagement and how these can inform their curriculum. A Capuano ECC teacher who works primarily with EB students stated:

As a teacher, I feel that family engagement is very important. A relationship between a student’s school and home benefits the child, parent, and teacher. Family engagement gives teachers a better understanding of each family and gives parents an idea of what their child is learning and strategies to use at home.

(Personal Communication, July, 2016)

Needless to say, Capuano ECC is a fecund terrain to keep investing in art-based family engagement activities because school staff, teachers and parents are aware of the potential and enrichment of family activities. When I asked a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) teacher why art-based activities where important in her classroom, she replied:

Art is a wonderful way to meet a family and build a relationship. Working with parents of [EB] families, who might have different levels of comfort speaking in English and having a bridge of non-verbal communication is wonderful. Parents can participate in an activity with their child without the pressure of filling out
paperwork or answering questions. Parents get the opportunity to have a successful experience in the classroom with their child, helping their child in school. This comfort in the classroom and with me, the teacher, can help foster a relationship, when a more challenging issue comes up in the year, such as a question about a report card or field trip application, we have already built a relationship through art-based activities. (Personal Communication, July, 2016)

The relationship between teacher and parents/families improved and, as we said before, prepares the terrain to work in other issues that might emerge throughout the year.

**Songs Around the World: Ongoing Family Engagement Effort**

All these art-based activities for family engagement described above inspired a project at large. During these activities I introduced families to the research question for my M.Ed. in the Community Arts program at Lesley University. The question was *what song was sung to you when you were little?* The answers gave birth to *Songs Around the World (SAW)* a collection of songs from early childhood parents and the research question were a perfect thread to glue all family engagement efforts throughout the school year, and expand on them during summer school activities as well. The following figure expands on this:

SAW aims to keep collecting popular children songs from different countries among the East Somerville families, this means beyond the Capuano ECC realm, as these families go out into different schools after completing Kindergarten. The compilation of the songs will be accompanied by musical family engagement activities throughout the academic school year. Through these family engagement activities parents will create a song collection to share, and sing and celebrate their cultural heritage in a safe environment. The creation of a safe environment was developed through constant contact with parents during drop-off and pick-up times. Once that encounter happened, the next step was to sit in the PTA room, that I used as an
office and a welcoming place to share a cup of coffee. When the time came for parents to be invited to volunteer, share their stories on Chit Chat Club, etc. they already knew the place before everything happened. This gave them a sense of belonging to the school, a safe place they could always come and talk with each other. Some of my colleagues attribute the openness I have with each one of the parents because I come from a Central American country. I must say that being from El Salvador helps greatly, but what truly helped me to connect with a dad from Syria or a mom from Bangladesh was to work on my own identity and look into our similarities rather than our differences.

For the last three years, I have witnessed how difficult it is for families to have a sense of belonging and how to navigate through the system with language and cultural barriers. With an inclusive and multicultural project such as SAW, the community of families at Capuano ECC feel welcome and included because their song is on a final product (CD/album). The hope is that diverse families see their culture reflected and valued, and that their contributions are important to the wellbeing of the Capuano ECC community. The final outcome is to present a SAW compilation CD/album in the Kindergarten Welcome Package during Kindergarten Transition Day. The following video (Figure 15) is a condensation of some of the forty songs collected. To see the complete song list, please go to Appendix C.

On November 7th 2016, SAW was granted the Duhamel Education Initiative (DEI) Mini grant to start recording the songs with the parents/families and produce the album. Shortly after, we met with Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools, Mary Skipper, who expressed support of SAW initiative and recognized it as a model for a successful family engagement that can be replicated with “recipes from around the world” and/or any topic that can become a final
product to be used as an educational resource throughout the schools. While writing this piece, SAW was also awarded with additional funds by the Massachusetts Arts Council. Rehearsals have been taking place since then and families and teachers are eager to hear the final product.

**Language and Leadership: My New Role**

After three years of working among Capuano ECC parents with art-based family engagement efforts, including two other schools in the district (East Somerville Community School and Albert F. Arzenziano School) a new position at the SFLC was born. I started as a Language and Leadership Liaison in August, 2016. These FE efforts served to inform and to inspire me to work from an aerial perspective to further these efforts in other schools in the district. This new role allows me to keep developing new programing and to replicate the early efforts at Capuano ECC. Regarding language and leadership through the arts, these are the activities we have been able to continue efforts on the following:

- Continuing Capuano ECC efforts with the new school-based liaison. Chit Chat Club (the art of a cup of coffee!) it is now called: Coffee Connections.
- Continuing The Beautiful Stuff Project sessions in Capuano ECC, East Somerville Community School and Albert F. Arzenziano School and to add two more schools by 2017-2018 school year.
- Chit Chat Clubs have been happening monthly in two more schools (Albert. F. Arzenziano and Winter Hill School) and a third one will be added at the West Somerville School with the help of two Arabic speaking parents.
- Ongoing rehearsal, practicing and consultation with parents regarding Songs Around the World as parent give their input about language (pronunciation) and specific rhythms to musicians.
- SAW is going district-wide, not only because of city funds, but because our former PK and K families from Capuano ECC have moved to K-8 schools.
- In this district-wide collaboration and with the backing of the Somerville Superintendent, Mary Skipper, SAW has made a formal call to all music teachers, musicians and artist inside the Somerville Public Schools to participate in the production/creation of the album.
- A CD release party will be happening once the album is complete for its release.
- Continuing with the musical efforts, we have also created original songs with families and city members including: *Hola to the Mayor!* (Hello to the Mayor), we literally say “hello” in more than 5 different languages in this song! As is shown in the following video, Figure 16.
• TALK song, as part of the *Somerville Talk Campaign*; a messaging campaign regarding less use of phone/computer screens and more verbal communication/connection with family members.

• KIND Song, created with community volunteers in response to the children’s question of the year to the Mayor about *How Somerville can be a fair and kind city?*

The songs were launched during the annual celebration of the Week of the Young Child on Spring 2017, where more than ten early childhood centers participated. Before the celebration, a short video with the demonstration of the songs and body motions were sent to the early childhood centers, including SFLC playgroups and home-visit program. Families practiced the songs before the day of the celebration and on April 26, 2017 we all sang in unison in front of the city mayor, superintendent and city council. In the following video is the KIND song, behind the artist (left to right) Director of Early Childhood for the Somerville Public Schools, Lisa Kuh, City Mayor, Joe Curtatone, School Council member, Laura Pitone and Superintendent, Mary Skipper.
Families, teachers, school staff, including city officers, came together and sang about how to be kind, how to spend meaningful time with our family (TALK campaign). Everyone was greeted in their language. The following link to the Somerville Wicked Local summarizes the event: http://somerville.wickedlocal.com/news/20170501/somerville-celebrates-week-of-young-child

My new position of Language and Leadership district-wide allows me to have a macro perspective to advocate for the arts as a family engagement tool. As Sarah mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this is only possible if systems for language access are in place. Language access is imperative for families to move forward and feel part of the school. A needs assessment regarding systems of communication, increasing our pool of interpreters/translators, and improving our channels of communication with the dual capacity framework (Mapp) takes most of my time and energy in this new role. However, leadership trainings have been taking place so the parents who attended Chit Chat Club and TBSP can continue to move forward on the leadership ladder. An example of this is a parent from Mexico who took care of the TBSP arts and craft sessions and now is expanding to other schools, as the demand from families increased.

In our efforts to build language capacity among parents, the SFLC also coordinates Parent English classes. The classes happen throughout the year in five classrooms of around 20 participants, these are offered in the morning and evening. This has been a new opportunity for me to see all the aspects of language and communication to further family engagement efforts while parents are receiving their education. Coordinating the Parent English classes, it occurred me that we can learn and improve our English while engaging and assessing arts. I got inspired to develop a new leadership curriculum that I called Escuela de Padres (school for parents) that rely on art-based activities to develop leadership. This effort has a triple-fold goal:
● To level the ground for participants regarding their language, educational background and literacy.

● To “take the pulse” through art-based research tools (mostly with visual arts).

● To provide English participants with resources to express themselves beyond writing/reading and verbal communication.

The arts provide a threshold for developing leadership among parents and provide the tools for rediscovering and affirming their diverse identities along the way. The curriculum is divided into four sessions with four main topics:

**Art-Based Parent Leadership Training**

*Escuela de Padres / School for Parents 2016-2017 School Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Session 1:</strong> Identity and Family: <em>My Story/Mi Historia</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Collage making inspired of <em>Where I am From</em> poem by G.E. Lyon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Session 2:</strong> Channels of Communication: <em>My School/Mi Escuela.</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Answer the prompt: <em>I want my school to be...</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Session 3:</strong> Advocacy and Leadership: <em>Our Fight/Nuestra Lucha</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Quilt making with pictures of our community leaders inside the schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following video is a demonstration of a moment during the collage-making during Session 1: Identity and Family, *My Story/Mi Historia*:

*Figure 18. Video - Collage making during Session1 Leadership Workshop, "My Story/Mi Historia," Fall 2016-2017 school year. [https://vimeo.com/207156514](https://vimeo.com/207156514)*
Parents made collages with images from National Geographic magazines, responding to the prompt: *Where I come from*. The activity lasted around an hour during a time frame of two hours and a half. The activity happened smoothly with classical background music. Participants worked in groups of four or individually. At the beginning of the session, we did an icebreaker strategy, each one of us introducing ourselves saying our names accompanied with a body motion (we had a lots of laughs here!). This icebreaker helped participants to relax and create a safe space. At the end of the collage making we talked about the challenges in each of our schools (participants come from six different schools from the district) and how each school can support our children’s education.

The following images show part of the working process of findin the images (Figure 19) and observing each others work and our own (Figure 20).

![Figure 19. Collage making during Session1 Leadership Workshop, "My Story/Mi Historia," Spring 2016-2017 school year.](image1)

![Figure 20. Group reviewing each other’s collages during Leadership Workshop, "My Story/Mi Historia," Spring 2016-2017 school year.](image2)
Figures 21 and 22 are the final products of two of the participants. It got my attention in these two images how participant went beyond it was asked (glue images on a peper) and create tridimensional details to add to her work (Figure 21) and adding an image that stood outside the paper.
Four weeks later, during session 2, “My School/Mi Escuela,” participants were asked to draw the answer to two prompts: “My First Impression of the School” and the second prompt was “I Want My School to Be.” Below are some of the participants’ answers:

![Figure 23](image1.jpg)  
*Figure 23. Detail of drawing responding: My First Impression of the School during Leadership Workshop, "My School/Mi Escuela," Spring 2016-2017 school year.*

![Figure 24](image2.jpg)  
*Figure 24. Detail of drawing responding: My First Impression of the School during Leadership Workshop, "My School/Mi Escuela," Spring 2016-2017 school year.*

In these two images (Figure 23 and 24) participants portrayed two very different scenarios of their first impressions of their school. I like how they used words even if they did not know how to spell them. In the case of “not smail” the participant stated that she meant to write: “no smile.”
The following image (Figure 25) the participant’s words follow a story regarding a phone call she received from the teacher about her son being discriminated against at the playground and the cafeteria.

**Figure 25.** Detail of My First Impression of the School during Leadership Workshop, "My School/Mi Escuela," Spring 2016-2017 school year.

**Figure 26.** Detail of My First Impression of the School during Leadership Workshop, "My School/Mi Escuela," Spring 2016-2017 school year. The message of a high school student’s parent state “She went to the Hospital to much stress school.”
The last two images (Figure 26 and 27) are very different from each other in terms of context and experience about how a participant is experiencing school (specifically a mom of a high-school girl, Figure 26) the hopes of another participant stating what would she like to see in there school, which is “More Opportunity”
The last image (Figure 28) a mom numbered from 1 to 3 (probably in that order of importance) the things she would like to see in her son’s school: “Reading, Homework and Parents at school.” She also complete the drawing with a small statement, the word “book” and “music.” The following images (Figures 29 and 30) are other important examples on how AB activities can be also use an assessment for EB parents. More than drawings, they are explicit statements answering the prompt: “I want my school to be.”

![Figure 29. Detail of I Want my School To be during Leadership Workshop, "My School/Mi Escuela," Spring 2016-2017 school year.](image)

![Figure 30. Detail of I Want my School To be during Leadership Workshop, "My School/Mi Escuela," Spring 2016-2017 school year.](image)
Testimonials

After each art making session we dedicated a few minutes for reflection. In the following image (Figure 36), is an example of a response from one of the participants. The question was: why doing this activity is important for you?

```
... for me is very important this activities because we remember where we came from... para mi es importante hacer esto porque recordamos de dónde venimos y le podemos enseñar a nuestros hijos como nosotros vivíamos, nuestras culturas y enseñanzas y como fue nuestra educación y me gustó mucho esta actividad.
```

English Translation:

“For me [this activity] is important because we remember where we come from... we can teach our children how we used to live, our cultures and how our education was growing up, and I really liked this activity”.

The following Word Clouds on the next page are extracts from each leadership workshop reflection:
These two Word Clouds contain what the participants reflected on after these two specific sessions (Figure 36 and 37, Our Fight/Nuestra Lucha and My Story/Mi Historia). The SFLC team concluded that this kind of diagram are very helpful to summarize the participants experience around the leadership training with AB activities.
To finish this section, we would like to share the video that portraits the Parent English Classes program overall. The video contains all five different classrooms with their teacher, parent leaders (former Parent English classes students) and participants. We created this video for the end-of-the-semester spring 2017 graduation celebration. The importance of the video is that it portraits the EB community of parents represented. Their languages include Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Bengali and Punjabi. In the middle of the video we appreciate the art-based activities of the rest of the leadership sessions. Also included in the film is a visit from the City Mayor, Joseph Curtatone, who presented construction plan of the new high school in one of the classes. The Mayor’s visit demonstrated how English Classes participants are not only an entry point for school communication and triangulation between teachers, students and parents, but also leadership and city engagement participation:

Figure 34. Video of Parent English Classes Graduation Celebration 2016-2017 school year
https://vimeo.com/219877139
The following image (Figure 32) displays the Heritage Quilt that was presented during Heritage Night in another school where parents attend English classes.

![Heritage Quilt](image)

Figure 35. Heritage Quilt created during the last session of “Our Fight/Nuestra Lucha” Spring 2017 presented during Heritage Night.

The series of workshops at the end of the Parent English Classes semester, culminated in the creation of a parent’s advocacy group that we called IMPACT. IMPACT stands for: Immigrant and Multilingual Parents Action Team. This group advocates for a representative voice and informs the decision-making bodies in our schools, such as School Improvement Councils and PTAs. The goal is to ensure equitable representation in decision-making processes inside the schools. IMPACT furthers parents in climbing the leadership ladder beyond the Chit Chat Clubs and Coffee Hours. The following image (Figure 33 portraits most of the class participants that were involved in the AB Leadership Training: Escuela de Padres/School of Parents.

![Immigrant & Multilingual Parent Action Team (IMPACT)](image)

Figure 36. Immigrant & Multilingual Parent Action Team (IMPACT) during the creation of the Heritage Quilt, Spring 2016-2017
Parent English participants were invited to attend “Raising Caring Children in Somerville” lecture in one of our schools. The group was present as IMPACT, consolidating the effort of leadership development.

Recapitulating what Sarah mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, these efforts would not have been possible without systems in place inside SPS. In my role as Language and Leadership Liaison, I helped to reinforce the importance of a positive first contact among families and school personnel with resources for secretaries and other staff members who welcome families in the main office or hallways throughout the schools. The first resource is the Spanish language “Cheat Sheet.” The next is the “One Somerville” resource guide with languages available for everyone on the SPS website (this is accompanied by a physical binder that School-based Liaisons keep in each school for Know Your Rights, Legal Clinics and other immigration related issues referrals).
### SIGN-IN MAIN OFFICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello/Hi</td>
<td>Hola</td>
<td>OH-lah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Morning!</td>
<td>Buenos Dias!</td>
<td>bwenos di.as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name, Please</td>
<td>Nombre por favor</td>
<td>Nohm-breh pour fuh-vore'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you today?</td>
<td>Cómo está?</td>
<td>Komu eshta?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a good day!</td>
<td>Que pase un buen dia!</td>
<td>keh PAH-seh un BWEHN DEE-ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>POR FAVOR</td>
<td>POHR fuh-vore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you!</td>
<td>GRACIAS!</td>
<td>GRAH-syahs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You're welcome</td>
<td>De nada</td>
<td>DAY NAH-dah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is</td>
<td>Me llamo</td>
<td>MEH YAH-moh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a pleasure to</td>
<td>Mucho gusto</td>
<td>MOO-choh GOOS-toh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td>Adiós</td>
<td>(ah-DYOHS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>SEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NOH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ABSENCES/TARDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is he/she coming to</td>
<td>VIENE A LA ESCUELA O</td>
<td>BYEH-neh ah lah e-skwe-lah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school or not?</td>
<td>NO?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is HE sick?</td>
<td>ESTA ENFERMO?</td>
<td>Es-TAH an-FERH-moh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is SHE sick?</td>
<td>ESTA ENFERMA?</td>
<td>Es-TAH an-FERH-mah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait a minute please</td>
<td>UN MOMENTO, POR</td>
<td>OOn moMANtoh, POHR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

88
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAVOR</th>
<th>Repita por favor</th>
<th>Reh-PEETHA POHR fuh-vore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you please repeat, please?</td>
<td>NOMBRE DEL STUDIANTE?</td>
<td>Nohm-breh DEHL ehs-o-thee-AHN-teh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s Name?</td>
<td>NO VIENE A LA ESCUELA?</td>
<td>Noh BYEH-neh ah lah e-skwe-lah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t be able to make it to school today?</td>
<td>Name of the Teacher?</td>
<td>Nohm-breh DEHL mah-stra?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TIMES/DAYS

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>Hoy</td>
<td>(oy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday</td>
<td>Ayer</td>
<td>(ah-YEHR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomorrow</td>
<td>Mañana</td>
<td>(mah-NYAH-nah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This week</td>
<td>Esta semana</td>
<td>EHS-tah seh-MAH-nah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Week</td>
<td>La proxima semana</td>
<td>lah prox-see-MAH seh-MAH-nah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last week</td>
<td>La semana pasada</td>
<td>lah seh-MAH-nah pah-SAHDah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Lunes</td>
<td>(LOO-nehs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Martes</td>
<td>(MAHR-tehs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Miércoles</td>
<td>(MYEHR-koh-lehs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Jueves</td>
<td>(WEH-vehs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Viernes</td>
<td>(VYEHR-nehs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Sábado</td>
<td>(SAH-bah-doh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Domingo</td>
<td>(doh-MEENG-goh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHRASES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't speak Spanish (well)</td>
<td>No hablo (bien) español</td>
<td>noh AH-bloh (bee-ehn) ehs-pah-NYOH-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you speak English?</td>
<td>¿Habla inglés?</td>
<td>(AH-blah een-GLEHS?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you need Help?</td>
<td>Necesita Ayuda?</td>
<td>Neh-ceh-seetah ah-YOO-dah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Buenos días</td>
<td>(BWEH-nohs DEE-ahs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good afternoon</td>
<td>Buenas tardes</td>
<td>(BWEH-nahs TAR-dehs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't understand</td>
<td>No entiendo</td>
<td>(NOH ehn-TYEHN-doh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you speak more slowly please?</td>
<td>¿Podría hablar más despacio por favor?</td>
<td>poh-DREE-ah ah-BLAHR MAHS dehs-PAH-cio pohr fah-BOHR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you repeat it please?</td>
<td>¿Podría repetirlo por favor?</td>
<td>poh-DREE-ah reh-peh-TEER-loh pohr fah-BOHR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bathroom is over there</td>
<td>El baño esta allá</td>
<td>EHL BAH-nyoh ehss-TAH ayah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you picking him/her up early?</td>
<td>Se LO lleva temprano? (masculine)</td>
<td>Seh LOH yehvah tehm-PRA-noh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Se LA lleva temprano? (feminine)</td>
<td>Seh LAH yehvah tehm-PRA-noh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's appointment?</td>
<td>Cita con el doctor?</td>
<td>See-tah Kohn ehl Doktor?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These multilingual practices help to create the conditions to welcome families and support teachers/staff. The more we know about our community, the more these tools emerge from the SFLC’s work within the dual-capacity framework (Mapp, 2007; 2013) explained throughout the chapter.

**Conclusion**

If we take a metaphor where arts have the nutrients that help parents to support their children in school, we feel comfortable saying that arts “prepare the soil” for successful family engagement. It is not making art for the sake of making art. Arts-based practices help us reach the district goal of increasing community engagement in order to reflect the community in which we live (Somerville 2016-18 School Committee Goals)

The SFLC continues to grow in staff and in strengthening systems. Art-based activities have multiplied as a successful family engagement tool for families during and beyond the early childhood years. Visual arts, language workshop, storytelling and music are supporting family engagement efforts because parents have increased their time in their child’s school. Under an
arts-based “prism” we help to break language and cultural barriers. Our goal is to increasingly involve teachers and school administrators to help them “read” their community of families and better understand their “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff & González, 1992).

Arts-based family engagement has potential within the dual capacity framework (Mapp, 2007; 2013) to increase the capacity of schools to welcome, support, and engage with diverse families in meaningful ways. In the beginning of the chapter, Sarah mentioned the keys to family engagement practices. While implementing them we know that when a mother comes to school, she is greeted in her home language and her immediate concerns are understood. Her child’s teachers understand her child’s background and goals. The parent is given the opportunity to meet other parents in a workshop and be engaged through the arts. She attends English classes, exploring and sharing her heritage with other parents, as well as with the teachers and staff through the creation of the heritage quilt during Heritage Night. She comes regularly to Parent-Teacher Conferences, and is selected to be part of IMPACT to participate in the School Improvement Council. She informs the committees about her experiences and ideas for improvements. She is recognized by the school principal as a resource, support, and partner in leadership. Now, the question is, could this ladder of leadership be walked without the arts being involved? Absolutely yes. But the practice of art-based activities makes the climbing of the ladder more welcoming, fun, appealing and easier. Arts in general is another super powerful tool to help parents move forward and model for other parents.
**Appendix A**

Table 1 Grid of Acronyms in alphabetical order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Art-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECC</td>
<td>Early Childhood Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>Emerging Bilingual(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
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<td>FE</td>
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<td>IMPACT</td>
<td>Immigrant &amp; Multilingual Parent Action Team</td>
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<td>Kindergarten</td>
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<td>K-8</td>
<td>From Kindergarten to 8th grade</td>
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<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
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<td>SPELL</td>
<td>Summer Program for English Language Learner Students</td>
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<td>Somerville Public Schools</td>
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<td>TBSP</td>
<td>The Beautiful Stuff Project</td>
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Appendix B

All pictures and videos were taken and made by artist, Maura Mendoza Quiroz, except for Figure 10 video that was taken by Tuft University Intern at that time, Julie Margolies. Most of participant, children, students and staff agreed to have their picture/video taken for the solely academic purpose of this paper.
Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Song</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Date Collected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghum parani mashi pishi</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Lullaby</td>
<td>05/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhor holo dor khoolo</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Lullaby</td>
<td>05/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciranda Cirandihna</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>04/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na Cabana da Floresta</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>04/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitáng Biān de Róngshù Shàng</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>07/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song Book from Head Start:</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>06/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Colores</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>06/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Ruedas del Camión</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>06/17</td>
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<td>Los Elefantes</td>
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<td>Buenos Días</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dormite mi Niño</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Lullaby</td>
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<td>Arrurru mi Nino/DuermetemeYa</td>
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<td>Lullaby</td>
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<td>Los Pollitos Dicen</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>07/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tengo una Muñeca</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Children</td>
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<td>Caminito de mi Escuela</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>Mi Árbol Mar Abierto Esta</td>
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<td>Pimpón es un Muñeco</td>
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<td>Ghassil Wejjak ya Amar</td>
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<td>Itsy Bitsy Spyder</td>
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<td>Old McDonald</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>On our Farm</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Learning about Colors</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Educational</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Allá en la Fuente había Chorrito</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Ni Ni a Momo</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>Winter Ooledat Aharata</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Popular</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Meow Meow Biralo</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Popular</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Jun ta Lagyo Tarale</td>
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<td>Soundtrack</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Pon El Dedito en el Pilón</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Chequi Morena Chequi</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Atirei o Pau No Gato</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Sleep Tired Toys, Books Sleep</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>TV show</td>
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<td>Yalla Tnam Rima</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>The Fox Went out on a Chilly Night</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>The Pretty Little Horses</td>
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References


“It Was Like Really Uncomfortable But Kind of Comfortable”: An Ethnographically-Informed Radio Play of Adult ESL Classes with Educational Drama

Won Kim, University of British Columbia

Abstract

This chapter explores possibilities and challenges of educational drama-based second language instruction for adult emergent bilingual learners. A part of the key findings from an ethnographic multiple case study of four adult ESL classes with educational drama in Canada will be represented, using playwriting as a means to uncover diverse nuanced insights and reflexive understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. The primary purpose of this ethnographically-informed radio play script is to serve as reflexive, dynamic, and artistic expressions that speak (about and to) students’ voices concerning their learning experiences in the course as heard/felt/perceived by the researcher as a participant observer-listener. Another central purpose is to bring to light potential pedagogic challenges of integrating artistic, contextual, and multimodal educational drama for more enriched and empowering learning journeys of adult emergent bilingual learners in ways that can reach out to wider audiences in a more engaging and accessible manner.

Keywords: educational drama, L2 pedagogy, classroom-based research, ethnodrama, participant listening, student voices, radio drama, adult emergent multilinguals, case study, reflexivity

Introduction

In accord with the continued development of and move towards more socially-attuned and contextually-situated second language (L2) pedagogies (Atkinson, 2011; Duff, 2014; Johnson, 2004), there has been a steady pedagogical/scholarly interest in aesthetic, creative, and improvisational educational drama as a means for creating more empowering learning spaces for emergent bilingual learners (Berriz, Wager, & Poey, forthcoming; Even, 2008, 2011; Kao & O’Neill, 1998; Piazzoli, 2011; Roman & Nunez, 2015; Schewe, 2013; Stinson, 2009; Wagner, 1998; Winston, 2004, 2011). These scholars share a strong conviction that educational drama can significantly contribute to supporting educational contexts where emergent bilingual learners have dynamic and creative opportunities to develop their expertise in an L2 as they “actively imagine and process information through the use of language and other symbolic forms”
(Baldwin & Fleming, 2003, p. 33). Nevertheless, there is little empirical evidence concerning what is actually taking place in L2 classrooms and how students' language learning is impacted when drama is introduced. More classroom-based studies are needed to deepen our understanding of how using educational drama affects teaching/learning for emergent bilinguals (Belliveau & Kim, 2013; DICE, 2010; Even, 2008; Nawi, 2014; Stinson & Winston, 2011; Wager, Belliveau, Beck, & Lea, 2009).

This chapter is an effort to contribute to the growing scholarly and pedagogical discussion on the topic of drama and L2 learning for emergent bilinguals. Empirically-grounded findings represented in this chapter stem from an ethnographic multi-case study design to document and explore four drama-based classes for adult emergent bilingual learners in Canada. The study aims to provide richer, nuanced, multi-layered, and self-reflexive autoethnographic auditory accounts of lived experiences of participants in the focal classes as heard, felt, and interpreted by the researcher (as a differently-abled multilingual ethnographer with visual challenge) taking on a “participant listener orientation” (Kim, 2016).

This chapter addresses how drama-based pedagogy for L2 learning is perceived and described by the students in the focal classes Playwriting has been adopted as a representational approach, considering the unique merits of playwriting in exploring, evocatively representing, complicating, and speaking to research findings (Belliveau, 2015; Ellis, 1997, 2004; Goldstein, 2000; Richardson, 2000). Specifically, concomitant with the participant listener orientation sustained throughout my qualitative inquiry, I have adopted a medium of radio drama, which is more auditorily-oriented. This fictional yet ethnographically-informed radio-drama play can be read and heard as a dramatic and evocative representation of students’ reactions to what they experienced in the classrooms with educational drama. This play script also sheds light on pedagogical issues and tensions that were audibly and affectively evident in all the classes. In the remainder of the chapter, the entire play script will be presented after discussing playwriting as a methodological approach.

**Playwriting in Ethnography**

There has been a methodological effort by a number of qualitative researchers to integrate playwriting with ethnographic research: performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003; Goldstein, 2000, 2002, 2008, 2012), ethnodrama (Mienczakowski, 2001; Saldaña, 2011; Sallis, 2010), and performed research (Ackroyd & O’Toole, 2010; Belliveau & Lea, 2011). Playwriting is recognized by its “artistic rigor and representational power” (Saldaña, 2003, p. 229) in that it offers a unique understanding that is different from that of a conventional representation of qualitative research findings. Many scholars echo the power of dramatic ways of analyzing and representing insights from qualitative research (Belliveau, 2004, 2006, 2014; Ellsworth, 2005; Fels & Belliveau, 2008; Goldstein, 2000, 2002, 2012; Goodall, 2000; Mienczakowski, 1995, 2001; Saldaña, 2003, 2011; Wager, 2014). In particular, Goldstein’s (2000) performed ethnography for anti-racist teacher education with multilingual students underscores how
ethnodrama speaks to research findings and participants in specific ways rather than simply speaking at them. Goldstein (2000) further illustrates the unique affordances of playwriting as a representational approach as it allows an ethnographer to 1) ponder the “ethnographic authority” (Clifford as cited in Goldstein, 2000, p. 316) of the conventional realist’s representation of one’s research, given the inherently interpretive and subjective nature of ethnography; 2) present research participants in a more nuanced way rather than in a fixed, stereo-typical way from a perspective of constructionism towards a social phenomenon; 3) with its performative nature, expand and display diverse dimensions of the identities of characters or research participants initially composed solely by an ethnographer; 4) strengthen, revisit, and further the validity and trustworthiness of one’s ethnographic work after each performance by attending to reactions and responses from research participants and audiences to the performed version of the work; 5) present both spoken and unspoken meanings of words, silence, and actions of characters/research participants in a specific way that is not often possible in conventional ethnographic written texts; and 6) reach larger audiences in a more personal, persuasive, and immediate way.

With these unique merits of playwriting in view, the present ethnographically-informed radio drama play script has been produced for two main purposes: 1) to offer a reflexive, dynamic, and artistic expression that speaks (about and to) students’ voices concerning their learning experiences in the course as heard/felt/perceived by the researcher as a participant listener and 2) to bring to light potential pedagogic possibilities and challenges of drama-based L2 instruction in ways that can reach out to a wider range of audiences in a more engaging and accessible manner.

**Ethnographically-informed playwriting process.**

With the above purposes in view, in composing this play script, I carefully, reflexively, and reflectively attended to students’ accounts regarding their experiences in the classes, narrated in face-to-face interviews and e-mail survey questionnaires. Specifically, I have listened closely to the relevant research data that related to pedagogical issues, students’ resistance, and their reactions towards L2 learning through drama. As I considered these relevant data, I selected a few moments of what could be regarded as tensions that arose and resonated from the research data (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011). The research data that speaks to such moments of tension evident within/among some individual students and in/about the class (including the closure of the drama course in the institution) and the key findings concerning students’ self-described perceptions of their learning experiences were then transformed into a dramatic dialogue as part of the play script.

In writing up a scripted radio drama play, I kept the actual research participants as characters (but used pseudonyms for their anonymity). While the plot is fictional, although the news about the closure of the drama-based course in the play was ethnographically informed, the dialogue closely reflects the perceptions of a majority of students and teachers towards drama-based ESL classes as described and represented in the data. The majority of the dialogue is
verbatim based. Especially, this was the case for the students’ lines, that have retained some linguistic errors, with an aim to better represent their nuanced accounts. The term "ethnographically informed" is used here to indicate how the overall plot was fictional except for the part about the closure of the drama class and how the dialogue (or script) was based on the actual data on how the students perceived and described what they had experienced in the class.

While creating this radio play script, I was continually reminded of the goal to deliver artfully researched content in an engaging way that holds moments of dramatic and artistic awe, sustains reflexivity, and expands a chain of gifting received via data (Belliveau, 2014). Importantly, inspired by Goldstein’s (2012) work, I also endeavored to keep in mind Richardson’s (2000) criteria for creative analytic practice in an effort to produce an “aesthetically sound, intellectually rich, and emotionally evocative” play (Saldana, 2003, p. 219). Careful consideration of these criteria in creative endeavours was also important because it could likely enhance its rigor as a qualitative inquiry (Duncan, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2002, 2006; Holt, 2003). Richardson’s criteria include:

(a) Substantive contribution. Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life? (b) Aesthetic merit. Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfyingly complex, and not boring? (c) Reflexivity. How did the author come to write this text? How has the author’s subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text? (d) Impact. Does this affect me emotionally and/or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move me to action? (e) Expresses a reality. Does this text embody a fleshed out sense of lived experience? (pp. 15-16)

In addition to the criteria discussed above, throughout the process of choosing data to be transformed into dialogue for my radio drama, I have also considered the following questions (Mackenzie & Belliveau, 2011): what moments arose and resonated from the research data?; does the dialogue carry action?; does the dialogue suggest character?; does the dialogue contain the elements of themes?; does the dialogue capture the essence or spirit of what may be in the research data?; does the play achieve artistic integrity while being grounded in the research data?

As Saldana (2003) argues, a successful ethnodrama can be entertaining and informative. It invites readers and audiences to be not just observers but also participants who take part in the affective process of grappling with conflicts or issues (Goldstein, 2000). It is my hope that the ethnodrama represented here can engage readers and audiences of this story in an entertaining and informative way and invite them to participate in thinking about pedagogical issues that might also challenge them in their own drama-based classrooms for emergent bilinguals. With such hopes, the remainder of the chapter will present and end with the play script, inviting the readers to be observers of and participants in exploring possibilities and challenges of drama-based ESL classes for adult emergent bilinguals.
It Was Really Uncomfortable but Kind of Comfortable:
An Ethnographically-Informed Radio Play of an Adult ESL Class with Educational Drama

Characters:
- Ben, Kevin, Sara, Sharon, Yuki, Mary, Miyuki, Yuna, Naka, Maggie, Sally, David, Ben, Joe, Mimi, Amy, Eva, Nari, Steve, Sam, Helen, Maki, Hemi, Esther, Jane, Michael, Morrie, Momo, Kona, Juna, Lexi, all emergent bilingual adult learners
- Nancy and Nick, two drama-based English language teachers
- Won Kim, the researcher
- Conference audience member

ACT I: THE NEWS
SCENE 1: Conference Presentation Room
(In the midst of noise in the audience, the researcher, Won Kim, stands in front of the conference room to begin a presentation. Won checks his talking watch for time to begin his talk.)

Won: (after a deep breath and with a confident smile) Thank you everyone for coming to this talk entitled “It Was Really Uncomfortable but Kind of Comfortable: An Ethnographically-Informed Radio Play of an Adult ESL Class with Educational Drama.” I hope that this radio drama play will be heard as a version of the soundscape of the vibrant voices and lived experiences of the students and teachers I have heard and experienced as a participant listener in English language classrooms with educational drama. What will unfold in and through this ethnodrama is a story about multiple sections of one drama-based course that seem to have significance in diverse ways for hundreds of emergent bilingual adult learners and the two teachers, Nancy and Nick, in their L2 educational journeys. The play captures some of the voices of the teachers and students as they react to their experiences with the course, which might be discontinued
after more than 25 years. (After a brief pause, he looks around the audience). So, I now invite you to close your eyes, but make sure to keep your ears wide open to listen.

SCENE 2: The Classroom

(Nancy and the students stand in a circle, facing one another in the center space of the classroom.)

Nancy: (with a proud smile) Wow, it’s already been 16 weeks. Whew, it’s hard to believe how fast the term flew by. You are all now 16 weeks older than before. Ben, you definitely look older (laughs).

(scattered grins around the circle of the students)

Nancy: It’s been a great time with you all. I won’t forget the imaginative dramatic worlds we’ve entered together over the term. Before we say goodbye, could I ask you guys to stretch your imagination (pauses and looks around the students) one last time?

Yesterday, I asked you to write a short letter to your future self, yourself in 10 years from now. (looks around and finds Kevin, smiling) Shall we begin with Kevin? Can we hear your letter, Kevin?

Kevin: Sure. (clears his throat) Humm. Here’s my letter.

(all attend to Kevin, wondering)

Kevin: Hi Kevin, I heard that you have become a business man traveling all around the world. I am proud of you because I know how much you didn’t like studying English, not until you took that drama class in Canada. You told me you came to like to learn English for the first time with that class. Now you are communicating with the world in English as a business man. Well done!

Students: (smile and clap)

Sara: Hi Sara, It has been 10 years since I saw you in the drama class in Canada. You wanted to learn English to get closer to your dream. You always want to be a volunteer to help children. You wanted to join an international volunteer group after you had been
to China and Indonesia and seen many people in need. You wanted to do something to help them. You have made your dream come true.

Sharon: (smiles shyly and reads her letter) Dear Sharon, today I just read a book translated by you from English. You made it! I was so impressed when I saw your name printed on the book. I am very happy for you as I know how much you wanted to become a translator of English and Japanese or Korean. When you were studying English in Canada, you often told me that you would want to speak fluently like native speakers and translate written work. I don’t know whether you’ve now become like a native speaker, but perhaps it doesn’t really matter. You should be proud of your name printed on the book as a translator.

Nancy: Lovely! Anybody else? (finds Yuki, looking down shyly, and gently asks her) Yuki, can we hear your letter?

(Yuki hesitates, then shyly lifts her head up)

Nancy: (gently) Yuki?

Yuki: Okay. (after a deep breath, starts reading her letter in a small yet cheerful voice) Hello, Yuki, you must be now 50 years old. We met 10 years ago when you came to Canada to study English. I remember you were very stressed and down at that time. You told me how much you once wanted to become an actress when you finished your high school, but you dropped the dream down. You told me that you felt tired from busy and complex relationships your life had brought to you in Japan and left for Canada for studying English. In your quiet and gentle voice, you talked about your new dream of becoming an English teacher for children in Japan. At that moment, I remember how young you sounded. You sounded like a 20 year old with full of hope. I remember how much you tried to break your shyness and get out of the nest you were in. You wanted to be part of every moment of the class even if I couldn’t hear your shy voice all the time. I remember your laughter after finishing your acting in front of the whole class. I remember when you humbly said you were inspired by your younger classmates going for their dreams. You said you promised to yourself that you’d think about your future again more seriously. You did it. You did keep your promise to yourself. I heard that
now you are teaching English to kids in Japan. You made it. I am very proud of you, Yuki.

(Nancy and the students remain in brief pause. Then, a few students start clapping, smiling, and warmly patting Yuki on the back)

SCENE 3: School Hallway
(The teacher, Nancy, stands in front of the meeting room with her face down. The other drama teacher, Nick, walks to her, looking concerned.)

Nick: (concerned) How did it go?
(Nancy looks down and sighs)

Nick: (slowly takes a sip of his coffee and seems concerned) Well. Can I (hesitates) um get you some coffee or something?

Nancy: Oh, I am alright. Thanks. Looks like the drama class won't be with us any longer.

Nick: Emm.

Nancy: Yah.

Nick: 27 years. It's been 27 years since you started the course.

Nancy: I know. 27 years of teaching this drama class. Over 100 different sections of the class.

Nick: This was the only class, the only class of its kind with drama, story, conversations, movement, and imagination in the program.

(Nancy nods)

Nick: What did you tell them?

Nancy: Well, I just told them, you know, how much students have been enjoying it, how much we loved teaching it, and how it could foster students' fluency, engagement and
confidence to speak. I told them what we’ve learned from working with students on a daily basis over the last 27 years as an instructor about the positive—

Nick: Impact! The impact that drama can bring, right?

Nancy: (looks at her classroom across the hallway) Exactly?

Nick: What did they say?

Nancy: (resigned) They told me that they had saved the drama class for me for more than 25 years in spite of all the changes to the programs.

Nick: Saved it for you. It was not for you. (turns to students chatting across the hallway) It was for students, for student enriched learning.

Nancy: Well, I know the school has been trying to reform the program, also for students. They want to develop it as more academic and more structured. They think that I shouldn’t be afraid of change.

Nick: Afraid of change? What change? Change for whom?

(Nancy sighs)

Nick: You know this is not about being afraid of change! This is about taking away a unique learning opportunity from students you and I know from our hearts, the learning that has been offered to hundreds of students over numerous years as one powerful way of learning and experiencing languages. (pauses) We know it works.

Nancy: Well, (still looks at the classroom across the hallway) honestly, (pauses) I felt resigned, just resigned. They don’t think there is room for courses like the drama class. I couldn’t say a word. I didn’t know how to respond when I was told that learning outcomes of the drama class are not measurable, not in line with the direction of the skill-oriented academic programs.

Nick: Why don’t both of us talk to the school again to reconsider the—?
Nancy: *(shakes her head)* I doubt it’ll have any impact. The decision won’t change. I don’t know how to describe in words how I feel, but I feel kind of a bit disheartened, thinking this term might be the last term for the course. Too bad but we won’t be able to give them the same experience any more.

Nick: I know.

Nancy: *(checks the time)* I should get going. I have a class at 1.

Nick: All right. Take care Nancy!

SCENE 4: Teacher’ Office

*(Nancy sits in the sofa and looks through letters and documents in a dusty box. She picks up and reads a card from her previous students.)*

Mary: I really like Nancy. I like how she teaches. I learned about acting. Sometimes during the class, I can act another person, so kind of dream come true because I was interested in going to acting school….so not real me stay in this class.

*(A soundtrack of a previous lesson plays in the background; the soundtrack captures a scene where Mary performed in one drama activity in front of the class.)*

*(Nancy continues to read card messages from Miyuki and others.)*

Miyuki: I think you are the best teacher. You always tried to relieve my shyness. You gave me power to speak English even though I used wrong grammar, but I learned trying to speak is important. I don’t feel nervous speaking English any more, it is a big deal for me.

Yuna: Thank you for the course. I could improve my English skills. With the course, I could enjoy my school life. I was happy to meet this class.

*(Nick knocks on the door and takes a seat across from Nancy.)*

Nick: What are those? Look like cards from your students?
Nancy: Yeah. This one is from the class about 2 years ago. I remember these guys. Cool kids.

Nick: Can I take a look? (reads the card) Wow, I can tell they really had a good time. (He picks up another card from the box). How about this one?

(a soundtrack of another lesson plays; the soundtrack captures students’ lively conversations and laughter in groups)

Naka: Thanks for your sense of humour, the atmosphere of the class was always good. You never made fun of students’ mistakes, but helped us find fun in making mistakes. We felt free to make mistakes in your class. I was happy talking and acting with my classmates.

Nancy: I was also happy with these guys, too. (notices a thank you card in Nick’s hand) What is in your hand?

Nick: (smiles) Well, I’m not as popular as you, but I’ve also just got a card from the class this term. We just had lunch all together after our last class this morning.

(a soundtrack of Nick’s lesson plays; the energetic voice of Nick announcing the beginning of the Christmas drama performance of the students to the public audience with music in the background is captured in the soundtrack)

Maggie: I feel sad because some of my classmates will leave. I also feel sad that the class is over. This session is special. Nick, I appreciated you. You gave us a lot of opportunities to learn. You are fun, and every time you led us through an attractive class and boosted our motivation.

Sally: I don’t wanna say goodbye. I will just say thank you. I am really glad to meet you and all my classmates. Also, I will not forget everything. So I want to tell I am thankful to everyone.

(another soundtrack of Nick’s class lesson plays; the soundtrack captures the sound of students’ group work on making a story to perform)
David: Thank you everyone for the nice time I've had here with you guys. I'll never forget this memory. Thanks and See you again.

SCENE 5: Cafeteria

(Nancy waits in line to order at a cafeteria and finds Ben, her former student, standing in front of her.)

Nancy: (taps on Ben’s shoulder) Hey, you must be Ben.

Ben: (Looks back) Uh, (smiling) Oh hi Nancy.

Nancy: How are you Ben? Here for lunch?

Ben: Yes. You too?

Nancy: Yeah, I often come here for a quick bite. They've got some good sandwiches.

Ben: I know. Also they are cheap too.

Nancy: Oh, it is your turn to order.

(both pick up their order and find a table together)

Ben: (takes a sip of his coffee) So, do you have any plans for a Christmas break?

Nancy: (takes a big bite of her sandwich) Well, I am planning to go to a concert before I fly away to my sister’s place in North Carolina for Christmas.

Ben: Concert? (smiles and speaks in a teasing tone) I know what concert you will go to. Steve’s, right?

Nancy: Hahaha. You got it! I am his big fan, and this will be his 14th concert I see. How about you?

Ben: Wow, 14th! Well, I don’t have special plans. I will probably live in the library. I've got a TOEFL exam coming next month.

Nancy: Oh, well, it doesn’t sound as exciting as mine. (smiles) Good luck with it. Make sure you take some breaks though!
Ben: Yeah, *(smiles)* I'll try. By the way, thank you for the class. I really enjoyed it. I didn’t want to miss your class even once.

Nancy: Thank you. I am glad that you enjoyed it. I enjoyed teaching that class as well.

Ben: Actually I took the class because a friend of mine who took your class a few years ago recommended it to me. Now I understand why he did. In fact, I've also recommended another friend of mine who is looking for a class next term.

Nancy: I am flattered. *(puts down her coffee cup)* But unfortunately the drama class won’t be offered next term.

Ben: Really? You are taking a vacation next term?

Nancy: No, I will be here, but teaching different courses. *(Sighs lightly)* The thing is that the school will change its program, and some courses including the drama class won’t be offered anymore.

Ben: *(disappointed)* That’s too bad because I really like that class.

SCENE 6: Bus Stop
*(Ben finds Yuki waiting for a bus to downtown.)*

Ben: Hey, Yuki!

Yuki: Hi Ben. How are you?

Ben: Good. You going downtown?

Yuki: Yah, I've got to go shopping for souvenirs to bring to Japan.

Ben: I see. *(looks to where buses are coming from)* When are you going back to Japan?

Yuki: *(also checks if buses are coming)* Soon in about two weeks.

Ben: That's very soon. Are you coming to the farewell dinner this Saturday?

Yuki: Of course. I can’t miss it. Do you know if everyone is coming?
Ben: I know some of us can’t come as they are leaving tomorrow, but hopefully everyone else will.

Yuki: How about Nancy?

Ben: She said that she can’t make it as she’s already booked a flight for Steve’s concert in Toronto this weekend.

Yuki: *(with a smile)* She really likes Steve.

Ben: Yah, I just ran into her at the cafeteria this afternoon, and she looked excited about the concert. Ah, by the way, have you heard about the drama class?

Yuki: What about it?

Ben: Nancy told me that the drama class won’t be offered any more. Our class will be the last one.

Yuki: Last one? Really? Why?

Ben: I don’t know, but it looks like the program will change.

Yuki: Nancy must be sad.

Ben: Yah, I think so.

Yuki: I feel sad too. I really had a great time in the class. It made me really interested in learning English. I also felt like more confident about myself.

Ben: You know what? I feel the same way. It’s too bad if we would have to be the last students of the class.

Yuki: Is there anything we can do to keep the course in the program as students?

Ben: Maybe not. You know it’s the school’s decision, and we are just students.

Yuki: *(resigned)* Maybe so.

**ACT II: TENSIONS**
SCENE 7: Farewell Dinner

(Students from the drama course get together for dinner. With music and noise in the background, the students talk about the class.)

Joe: Good to be together, everyone! I can't believe the term is already over. Time went by so fast. I really enjoyed our class. I met a lot of friends (shyly) like you guys in this class. This class was different from other classes.

Mimi: Joe, I remember your funny dance. When I saw you the first time in the class, I thought you were a very quiet person, but your acting and dancing was very funny.

Joe: Dancing? (smiles) Ah, I remember it. You are talking about the newscast scene with Amy, right?

Mimi: Yep, right. I think it was with Amy!

Amy: I remember it too. (smiles) It was our first performance. I remember we had to make a story about a man who couldn't control himself. I think I was interviewing Joe on TV and something ridiculous happened to you. Joe was so funny. I remember we were nervous and confused when we were preparing for the performance. It was our first time to make a story and perform it in English. We were like, "how can we do this?" Then I remember, Joe, you just said "Let us just ad lib." We both felt shy and embarrassed, but we did a really good job. After that, I felt like it is not too difficult to do it.

Joe: Yah, making a story was always very difficult. Actually, I am very very shy. I felt very nervous when I performed in front of the class, but I thought to myself, let's just do this. And I could become someone else, and I somehow felt fine to speak.

Yuki: Me too. I don't know why, but if I can change to someone, I feel like I can say everything. I am shy, but if I can be a different person, I have courage and then I can say.

Eva: Courage is something the drama class taught me too. In the beginning of my study here at the school, I set my goal as speaking like a native speaker. I really tried to participate actively in the class. The drama class gave me lots of opportunities to speak.
I don’t think I have become like a native speaker, but (pauses and smiles) I feel more brave as an English speaker.

Nari: I know what you mean. For me, I found role-playing helpful in developing communication skills. Although I am not sure how much, but I think my English skills have improved than before.

Steve: As you know, in the class, we didn’t have enough time to think in our first language and we became more nervous. I think it was a good practice for us.

Mimi: You are right. In the drama class, I didn’t have to think too carefully. In drama, it’s like someone said something, I had to say something as soon as I heard. We have almost no thinking time.

Ben: I feel the same way. You know, speaking needs confidence. This class and the teacher help us relax. Although we are afraid of grammar rules, we were encouraged to say what we would want to say. Nancy always encouraged us to speak freely. If she said that we are wrong and need to say certain way, then it would not be good for us especially because many of us don’t have too much experience to talk in English. We need to grow our confidence.

Joe: Interesting! Personally, that’s how I felt about the course too. You know I always wanted to get rid of my fear of speaking English (pauses and smiles shyly) I am too shy to communicate with native speakers of English.

Sam: Whether you believe it or not, I am very shy, too. To learn to speak English, I also wanted to break that shyness. I thought the drama class could help me break my shyness. By the way, you know what? To be honest, although I now appreciate the course, in the first class, I wanted to change the course because I wasn’t sure whether the course would be helpful. But later I decided to give a chance to this class. Now I think I made a right decision. I was really very happy in the class. I noticed my confidence has improved.

Helen: That’s interesting, Sam, because I also wanted to drop the drama class at first. Actually, at first I tried to change the class because I thought it was unsuitable for me,
but I failed to change the class. However, I’m really happy to stay in this class. If I had changed the class, definitely I would have regretted.

Sam: Oh, I see. (smiles) We were thinking about the same thing in the first week.

Helen: Haha. Yah, I am glad that we all ended up staying. I really came to like the class even more towards the end. I really wanted to act something with you all more.

Maki: Yah, Helen, I remember how actively you participated in the drama scenes. For me, doing drama was also so fun. Especially, do you remember the court trial? I really enjoyed the court trial. If someone asks me to evaluate the course, I would gladly give 10 out of 10 points to the class.

Sara: For me, what was unique about this drama class was that there was the pressing urgency to say something in English. There was always a kind of pressure to perform. If I forget something, I can’t stop. I have to say something. I have to use my brain to produce something to keep the story going during the performance. Especially the pressure was higher when we were performing to outside audiences. For example I remember how nervous I was when we performed our Halloween story.

Sharon: I also remember that. Oh, I was so nervous before the performance. I was embarrassed that I would have to perform to higher-level students and other teachers. That was my first experience to act in English in front of big audiences. But when I heard people laughing during our performance, I felt like “oh, this is not difficult.” I could overcome my fear.

Hemi: I know what you mean. I was scared during our performance, but I felt good when we were finished.

Sara: After that kind of performance, I kind of felt like, how can I say? It’s difficult to explain in English, but it felt like growing.

Sharon: Mmmm, growing. Mmm. Yah, right. Maybe I understand what you mean. At first I didn’t like performing in English, but it was kind of interesting how I felt after performances. It was like really uncomfortable but kind of comfortable.
SCENE 8: I Liked It. But I Didn’t Like It

(Esther and Yuki sit at a student lounge in the school and chat with their classmates from the previous drama class.)

Esther: Thanks, guys, for your time. As you know at the farewell party, some of us talked about writing a letter to the school to keep the drama class. Hopefully we can send this soon to the school. Many of us have already put down their names to support this letter. You guys mentioned that you’d like some more time to think on this, and (hesitatingly) we were wondering if we could get your support too.

Yuki: Some of us have already left Canada, so we won’t be able to get everyone’s support, but with you, we would then include almost all in the letter. (looks at Jane and others) Can you—

Jane: Not me. As you know, I didn’t want to participate even in Won’s research. I don’t also wanna be part of this.

Esther: Well, I know you didn’t consent to Won’s research, but this is not about his research. You know this is about whether we can keep this fun class for our friends and other future students.

Jane: Fun class? It wasn’t for me. Sorry, I just don’t want to be part of anything. I didn’t like everything about this class. I like the teacher, but it wasn’t the class I wanted from the beginning. Sorry, but I think I should get going. Good luck with it.

(Jane leaves abruptly. The students sit in awkward silence.)

Esther: Well, I guess we should respect her decision.

(some nod)

Michael: Speaking of decision, to tell the truth, I wasn’t sure if I made a right decision about the course. Actually in the midterm, I thought I mischose the class. My friends in the other classes told me that they studied how to make conversations or presentations, and they do it individually but in this class, the main way to study English was through acting with others. Umm, it was too much group work. I thought my friends in other
classes improved their English more. From the midterm, I thought if I pass this class, I would like to move to an academic class. In there, I would do a presentation individually. In this drama class, I felt I relied on other students too much, so I felt it wasn’t good for me.

Yuki: What do you mean you relied on others too much?

Michael: Sometimes I didn’t know what and how to say, and then I relied on others and asked them to speak. But in the academic or other general classes, students can’t rely on others. I think I will get more confidence if I don’t rely on others.

Esther: Yah, individual work is helpful for your English, but you know group work is also useful especially in improving one’s fluency in speaking. In the drama class, we made a story and perform it together. Whether you want it or not, we had to participate with others and produce something. I think it gave us a little bit of pressure, but a good pressure we could enjoy I think.

Michael: I know but don’t we do group work in other classes too!

Esther: It is a bit different in this class though. Group work is usually little and short. It is often just to share our opinions rather than we actually do something. You know but in this class we should create something and act it out.

Morrie: Mmmm, I agree with you. In group work in the drama class, everybody brings some ideas. It is a collaborative work.

Michael: *(not convinced)* I understand, but I don’t feel like this class benefitted me much.

Momo: *(tums to Michael, nodding)* Honestly, I have to agree with Michael. I think this class could be good for some students, but not for me. I didn’t like this class at all. I don’t feel that my English has improved in this class. The only time I liked was when we went to the lab and did listening exercises. I felt that in the class, we didn’t learn anything new. I felt the whole class depended on your own language. I would like to learn more new words, pronunciation, and spelling, and do more practice in the lab. I felt like I really improved so much after each lab time.
Kona: I kind of hear you Momo. Personally I like the teacher and had fun in the class. However, I don’t feel like it’s helped my English. Sometimes, I wasn’t sure and wanted to know what the objective of each activity was. I wish we we’d done more grammar and more vocabulary exercises.

Esther: Well, but I think this class helped us to communicate with other people in different situations. We were encouraged to talk without worrying about errors. Don’t you like that I could move my body when I spoke to other people. I felt freer. Well, Nick always said, just talk. “It doesn’t matter your grammar is right or wrong.” Didn’t you feel like you’ve learned to be free about your speaking through this class?

Michael: Yah, this may be good for those students with no confidence in speaking. I think I’ve gained confidence too from this class. But if one wants to work on your English seriously, well, I don’t think I would recommend this course.

Sharon: Mmm but wasn’t this class more enjoyable than other classes? Some of my friends told me that they said that their classes are a little bit boring because they do the same things almost everyday like small conversations and listening to a teacher or textbook CD, the same thing everyday. But in this class, we did something different everyday. We were talking, laughing, listening to and watching others.

Maggie: Yah yah, it’s interesting. My friends also said the same thing. They were envious of us. They told me like, “Your class looks so fun.”

Morrie: Yah, (nods but not fully convinced) I enjoyed it too. I feel I learned something from the class although I am not sure what it was. But for me, I was expecting more for myself from the class. I mean, my friends in other general classes seem to learn more vocabulary. I don’t think we learned lots of vocabs.

Yuki: Morrie, I am just curious. Would you then register for this class again if you had a choice?

Morrie: If I could choose again? mmm. Well, (hesitatingly) maybe yes. Maybe no. I was very shy and afraid of speaking, but I feel less afraid now. I think I agree with Michael in
that if one is too shy in speaking, this is the best class to break his shyness to speak freely. But if he doesn’t have this problem, he or she can go to other classes.

Yuki: Mmm. I see.

Morrie: Plus, If I could suggest, I thought maybe we could do more acting but in another way. We can use already made scripts because making a scenario was difficult. We were always concerned about a scenario. We had two kinds of stress: how to act out and what to act out. With a scripted play, we can reduce the stress and focus on how to act or say.

Esther: (turns to Maggie, Juna, and Lexi, who are from another section) What about you guys? Would you support our petition for the course? I know you all had a great time in the drama class.

Maggie: Yes, we did. However, (hesitatingly) I am not sure if I would want to support the letter. To be honest, (pauses briefly) um, I like the course, but also at the same time I didn’t like it much. I think we could have had more intensive listening exercise. We usually focused on making a story, performing, and having a conversation, so we didn’t have opportunities for general listening. You know we had a final listening test. But I didn’t do well on the test.

Juna: Yah, I think it might be good to have more intensive listening exercises, but (confused) I am not sure, but I also have to say that kind of class might be boring. Well, I know we need listening exercise, but at the same time it is also boring.

Lexi: (hesitantly) Mmmm. Well, even though this class is interesting, we can perhaps combine an academic class and a drama class. I think it is better.

Yuki: It’s interesting that you all three liked the course but was also not satisfied with it. Just out of my curiosity, if you were to evaluate the course out of 10 points, what would you give?

Juna, Maggie, and Lexi: (after some hesitation, they all say together) five maybe?
SCENE 9: Conference Presentation Room
(The researcher, Won, stands back in front of a conference audience. He is about to end his presentation.)

Won: Thank you for listening. What we all auditorily witnessed here today was the voices of the students, the teachers, and the researcher in these particular drama-based ESL classes that this artistic, ethnographically-informed, and engaging radio drama play has aimed to foster and empower. I hope that this play has helped you gain a more contextual and engaged understanding of an auditory narrative version of what the researcher experienced and how students described and reacted to what they experienced in the classes with educational drama. This radio drama play was also meant to serve as an invitation for a wider audience of L2 scholars and practitioners to hear a version(s) of the soundscape of the given drama-based classes (especially when it gets auditorily produced or performed on stage) and generates multiple interpretations of the implications and challenges of a drama-based L2 pedagogy by comparing with and reflecting on their own teaching contexts.

Above all, this was a story about the classes with educational drama-based pedagogy where the students exercised spontaneous freedom and right to speak, created stories and performed them. This was also a story about the two teachers, Nancy and Nick, who believed in the power of educational drama in creating a space to exercise students’ imagination and creativity, foster fluency and confidence, and promote the joy of learning in collaboration. It was also a story about the students who came to realize the joy of learning and using language as a more confident language user and meaning maker after being introduced to alternative ways of learning and experiencing language. Conversely, by telling the story about the closure of the class, this theatrical text also presents how the ESL instruction with educational drama was differently received by different students. The text brings to light the tension that was present within an individual student, among different understandings of learning, and between different curricular expectations. In that sense, this was also a story about tensions in conflicting beliefs, attitudes, and ideas surrounding the educational practice of drama-based L2 pedagogy. For example, drama-based activities necessitated different kinds of participation in class practices than teacher-fronted conventional instruction. That is, as opposed to being passive information recipients, the students were invited to be active participants/meaning makers/performers. Such repositioning created a tension within some students like Sharon who felt it took courage to participate as she said “it [performing] was like really uncomfortable, but kind of comfortable.” The tension also existed among the students because of the differences in the ways students
theorize learning. Some students viewed learning from a transmission model of learning perspective and thus valued less the affordances of participatory, less structured, creative, and student-centered educational drama. The tension was extended to how drama-based pedagogy and other general creative non-academic courses are valued differently by the program in the face of a pedagogical effort towards a more academic, structured, and outcome-oriented curriculum, leading to the discontinuation of the drama course after two decades of educating the creative minds and linguistic competencies of hundreds of students. Today, this rare English language course with educational drama remains closed. In fact, all other so called specialized courses at the school which included arts-informed approaches, such as drama, creative writing, and storytelling, have been removed from the course list of both the intensive and academic language programs. It is my hope that—

(there is an abrupt question from an audience member.)

audience member: Sorry to interrupt, but could I ask a question? I am sorry that the drama class was closed, but why does it have to be a drama class? As some students mentioned in your study, some students need to take a test after all. All some need may be a certificate. What they learned in the drama class can also be taught in general skill-oriented classes too, perhaps even in more efficient, structured, and systematic ways.

Won: Thanks for your question. Perhaps several of you may resonate with the question. The story I told in this presentation does not intend to argue that drama-based pedagogy is the only or best way to develop skills, competencies, knowledge, and practices of a second language to our students. What is told through the story in this presentation is how I believe that educational drama, which is multi-modal, imaginative, embodied, contextually-sensitive, and engaging in its nature, can be one powerful way to enrich our L2 classrooms in a very specific way, which might not be affordable in other types of L2 classrooms. I want to answer your question by sharing Cummins and Early’s (2011) advice where they urge us to think that, in our classrooms, educators are continuously involved in “sketching a triangular set of images: “An image of our identities as educators, an image of the identity options that we highlight for our students, an image of our society that we hope our students will help form in the future” (p. 156). It is my sincere hope that the present auditory account of the possibilities and implications of educational drama for adult language learners can be heard as a
contribution to the ongoing pedagogical discussion on these important questions: What identities are our L2 pedagogies cultivating in our students? What images are we sketching on a daily basis in our classrooms? I hope that my study is recognized as a call to a shared conviction among many scholars that despite adverse and oppressive conditions surrounding our classrooms, it is important that teachers recognize their potential to exercise their agency to restructure classroom interaction in a more democratic and dialogic way and ultimately to make instructional choices that promote what Cummins (2009, 2011) calls collaborative relations of power in our classrooms. I draw this presentation to an end with the hope that the pedagogical effort taken by two local teachers, Nancy and Nick, that we audibly witnessed today can be heard as an example of a small yet significant ground-up pedagogical effort towards creating a collaborative, empowering interpersonal space fostering our students’ identities as that of creative, competent, and confident meaning-makers. Thank you.

SCENE 10: Teacher Office

(The final line with “thank you” in Scene 9 is a crossover with the previous scene in the teacher office [Scene 4] where Nancy and Nick are reading cards from their students)

Esther: Thank you Nick. I felt you really want to try to help us to participate in the class. So I am very thankful to you. For my classmates, ah . . . well, thank you everybody for being close friends. It hasn’t been a very long, but we shared many things, many memories, it was very fun. We laughed a lot. I was very happy with them. In Canada, I see another side of myself. I think this class is the root of my change.

Nancy: Wow, that’s powerful, Nick.

Nick: It kind of saddens me to think that I will no longer be able to be a teacher for the drama course, but I guess (pauses) I could still be a language teacher teaching with drama spirit.

Nancy: (closes the card she was reading) I will miss these guys and a multitude of moments that my students and I had with stories, and drama.
Sam: Oh, thank you so much I am going to miss you and my classmates. I will try to keep in touch with you all. I enjoyed spending time in the class. Everyday we laughed. Everyday was different in the drama class. All these four months, we played to learn English. Thank you all.
References


Between Two Worlds: Utilizing the Arts to Increase Engagement and Effectiveness in the Spanish for Heritage Speakers Classroom

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Abstract

This article will address the need to increase positive attitudes toward Spanish in Spanish Language Heritage (SLH) classrooms and provide strategies to integrate the arts to support this goal. The primary goals of the contemporary SHL classroom are to maintain the language; to increase positive attitudes towards Spanish, including dialects; and to develop cultural awareness (Beaudrie, Ducal, & Potowski, 2014). In many SHL classrooms the first two goals are accomplished by reading and writing in Spanish but the latter two goals are less prescriptive and in some classrooms, overlooked. However, it is essential to address students’ attitudes toward Spanish in all their complexity as part and parcel of the language acquisition process. Here, the arts serve as robust multilingual tools for self and cultural exploration. Integrating the arts allows students of varying abilities in the heritage language to communicate self, other and culture in a way that gives voice and meaning to their experiences.

Keywords: heritage language learner, language acquisition, heritage speaker, Spanish heritage learner, arts integration, language discrimination, teaching strategies for Spanish heritage learners

[A heritage language learner is]...an individual who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language. (Valdés, 2001, p. 38)

[Heritage language learners are individuals who]...have familial or ancestral ties to a particular language and who exert their agency in determining whether or not they are HLLs (heritage language learners) of that HL (heritage language) and HC (heritage culture). (Hornberger and Wang, 2008, p. 27)

Overview

In her seminal 1981 article on the teaching of Spanish to speakers of Spanish in the United States, Guadalupe Valdés exposed historic prejudices and biases in Spanish teaching and called for a redefinition of the field. In particular, she concluded that Spanish for Heritage Learners (SHL) needed to be taught as a “language arts” curriculum that included not only a linguistic focus but also an “enhancement of self-image” (1981, p. 19) in relation to Spanish language and culture. Valdés’ redefinition was pivotal in changing how SHL teachers
approached the language and their students. In the years that followed, SHL classes began to focus not simply on language, but also on identity as it relates to language (author’s emphasis).

The primary goals of the contemporary SHL classroom are to maintain the language; to increase and expand students’ bilingual range; to increase positive attitudes towards Spanish, including dialects; and to develop cultural awareness (Beaudrie, Ducal, Potowski, 2014). In many SHL classrooms, the first two goals are accomplished by reading and writing in Spanish, whereas the latter two goals are less prescriptive and in some classrooms, overlooked. This can present pedagogic challenges, for if a student feels ashamed of the language, how will he be motivated to read a book in Spanish? And if a student doesn’t see herself in the text, how much will she truly invest in the development of a fuller expression of her Spanish?

I began to grapple with some of these questions and challenges while a graduate student in Lesley University’s Masters of Education program when, because of my background with Spanish, I was asked to step in for a public high school Spanish teacher going on leave. I inherited several standard Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) classes, but also several levels of Spanish for Heritage Learners (SHL) classes, as well. The SHL classes were part of a new program that had been implemented in both middle and high schools throughout the district to better address the academic and cultural needs of Spanish heritage learners (SHLs). I use the term Spanish heritage learner (SHL) very deliberately in this article, for it helps to define students who are neither monolinguals in English nor English Language Learners (ELLs) whose native language is Spanish. Instead, SHL students walk “between two worlds” – both culturally and linguistically. Their first “world”, Spanish, is often the language of home and is a connection to both culture and family. Their second “world”, English, usually comes with the advent of formal schooling, and is a connection to (and I would argue a currency of) the English majority culture that surrounds the home. (Carreira & Kagan, 2011)

When I began my assignment, I had not taught high school Spanish before, though I had spent many years as a public health educator working specifically with marginalized adolescents and developing peer education curriculum focused on identity and sexual health. My own background with Spanish is rich and varied but has not taken a linear path. I was raised in an English monolingual home in the U.S. and lived abroad as a young child in Great Britain. I began learning Spanish in college, in a traditional SSL classroom. However, after one year of traditional study the rest of my learning has been outside of the classroom, through the experience of living and working in both Central and South America. Because of my background – both with adolescents and with Spanish – I was excited to work with SHL students.

My work in the SHL classroom was not easy. Because I did not come from the same background (I am white, I am not Latina), my biggest priority early on was building trust between my students and myself. The fact that I spoke Spanish and had lived in various countries in Latin America did not necessarily help me in my SHL classrooms. What mattered far more – sharing a similar cultural background, for example – was something I did not possess
and would never pretend to have. Gaining trust took time, and involved a learning curve on my part to better understand Mexican culture and identity through the lens of a second or third generation U.S. teenager (this was the predominant cultural group in the classes). It also required me to share my own background, and to be honest about the differences with my students vs. hiding those differences.

Additionally, there were divisions and trust issues among the students themselves. SHL classes tend to be very diverse, and my classes were no exception. Native speakers who had been schooled primarily in their native Spanish-speaking countries were in the same class as SHL students who had been schooled almost exclusively in English. The native speakers, many of whom had recently arrived in the U.S., tended to sit with each other while the SHL students sat in their groups. This required differentiated instruction but also a strong focus on building bridges and community across linguistic and cultural differences between students.

As I began to teach SHL classes, it became clear that one of my biggest challenges was student engagement. There were two levels of SHL classes (Spanish Heritage 1 & 2) with the first level focusing on literature and the second level focusing on informational text. The Level 1 classes were reading Go Ask Alice in Spanish, which was problematic on several levels: it was a translation from English to Castilian Spanish and was very difficult for students to read; the main character is Anglo; it is set in 1971 in the U.S., so students had very few cultural connections to the period or setting, either personally or through their family members’ histories. Much of the material I had been handed for Level 2 classes consisted of pre-selected news articles that had little to do with the students, their cultures, or their lives. In addition, the way they were being asked to “show what they know” after reading these articles consisted of written summaries of a highly specific, non-varying format. While there was nothing inherently negative about the written summary approach, the students were tired of this format and their writing reflected their lack of engagement. Knowing that there had to be a better approach, I began to re-think how students were being asked to learn and also what kind of texts they were utilizing.

From my experience as a Teaching Artist and my graduate work in Lesley’s Master of Education, Curriculum and Instruction - Integrated Teaching Through the Arts program, I knew that the arts have the potential to be a powerful bridge across differences, as well as a powerful voice for students who have traditionally fallen outside the margins of the traditional classroom. As a public health educator addressing teenage pregnancy prevention, I had incorporated Agosto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed techniques into my work with marginalized youth. I had also presented findings from a community-based research project through a theatrical production that interwove music, dance, and poetry with excerpts from research interviews – all acted and co-created by local youth and adults. Later, as a guest artist in an Expeditionary Learning school, I utilized the art forms of music, poetry and movement to explore the U.S./Mexico border with middle school students. Because of these powerful experiences, I began gradually integrating the arts into my SHL classes to more fully explore the intersection of language, culture and identity. Much of what I tried out with students was new territory. It was out of this “field work”
in the classroom, that my project, *Between Two Worlds* – a series of arts-integrated lesson plans specific to SHL classrooms – began.

**Living Between Two Worlds**

In the United States, Spanish heritage learners effectively live “between two worlds”, both linguistically and culturally. In their book, *Voces: Latino Students on Life in the United States*, Carreira and Beeman (2014) poignantly describe the common heritage learner experience as “falling in-between languages” (p.58). Because they speak Spanish, SHLs are viewed by peers and even some teachers as less “American” or even “un-American”; however, because they also speak English, SHLs may be viewed by native speakers as too American and not authentically “Mexican”, “Dominican”, etc. For many SHLs, the end result is a feeling of *rechazo* (rejection) – and the sense that they do not truly fit in anywhere, culturally or linguistically. One SHL student interviewed by Carreira and Beeman shared that “…in school I was labeled Mexican, but to the Mexicans, I am an American. I am part of each, but not fully accepted by either…It's this weird duality in which you are stuck in the middle…. You take pride in both cultures and learn to deal with the rejection” (p. 88). This feeling of *rechazo* can greatly impact SHLs’ interest in Spanish; their engagement with broadening their use and understanding of the language; and the possibility that they will teach Spanish to their own children. The SHL classroom has the potential to become a safe space for students – a place to explore both language and culture within the context of a supportive community. For some students, the SHL classroom is often the one place they feel they can *be who they are*. One student in my classroom described it as *un hogar* (a home). Seen in this light, the arts can help to strengthen and expand this home.

In addition, Spanish heritage learners have unique needs and learning styles that need to be taken into consideration when developing curriculum. Unlike students in a foreign language (L2) classroom who must build their capacity with the target language from the ground up, SHLs already have a real-world foundation. That foundation comes from the SHL’s family and was built at home, in a way that is informal, day-to-day, and intrinsically tied to culture (Fairclough, 2016). Students in SHL classes need opportunities to practice and expand the language skills that they *already* possess. Thus, SHL classrooms benefit greatly from projects and activities that utilize a communicative approach in which students use the language to engage in meaningful, culturally-relevant tasks that are related to real-life concerns and ideas (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014). Examples of such projects are: personal narratives; interviews with family members; exploring identity and culture through food, music and stories (Apaez-Gutierrez, Beaudrie, & Gomez, November 2016); research into the local Latino community and its history; and research and presentations around professions (Carreira, July 2015).

**Arts Integration as a Bridge Between Worlds**

I chose to utilize arts integration in the SHL classroom for several reasons. First, I felt the multilingual nature of the arts would work well in a classroom where “fluency” in Spanish is not an endpoint but a spectrum of ability that varies widely depending on who is in the class. As
stated previously, SHL classes generally include U.S.-born SHLs who have been educated mostly in English, with native speakers who have often received up to 9 or 10 years of academic instruction in Spanish in their native countries. This mix of language abilities, identities, and cultures requires a high level of instructional differentiation and can pose challenges for both the teacher and the students. The arts provide new ways to interact with curricular material and express understanding. SHL students who may struggle with writing in Spanish can still create a fotonovela using digital cameras to convey plot and meaning; they can also harness the strength of their receptive, aural abilities in Spanish to gather oral histories in their communities and compose corridos (ballads). Arts educator Mark Graham, who has written about the integration of art and photography in urban schools, believes that art “allow[s] students to develop their own vision and personal voice…” – one that contains “…enormous divergence and imaginative response” (2009, p. 160). In short, the arts provide multiple access points; by not requiring that students all be at the same point in their bilingual journey; and allowing students to express themselves as they develop literacy in Spanish.

Second, the hands-on, experiential nature of art-making lends itself well to the idea that SHLs learn language best through projects that require “learning by doing” and activities that connect language learning with real-world experience. It is important to note that for many Spanish heritage speakers in the US, “real-world experience” is full of contradictions, prejudices, and mixed messages about Spanish (Carriera and Beeman, 2014). The expressive quality of art-making gives voice to SHL students and allows them to make meaning about their identity as it relates to Spanish, with all its gifts and challenges. In her poem “My Latin Gift” (Carriera and Beeman, 2014), Mexican-American student Carla Gonzalez expresses these contradictions:

Yes, soy American but también Latina
Sé hablar English, español y Spanglish
Yes, teacher I can speak English sin hablar español
Oh, disculpe, I mean I’m sorry
Por qué no debo mezclar los dos idiomas?
Yes, soy bilingual y estoy proud. (1-6)

[Yes, I am American, but I’m also Latina
I know how to speak English, Spanish, and Spanglish
Yes, teacher, I can speak English without speaking Spanish
Oh, sorry, I mean I’m sorry
How come I can’t mix the two languages?
Yes, I’m bilingual, and I’m proud]
Between Two Worlds: An Arts Integration Resource Kit

Given the unique needs of HLs, and the positive increase in student engagement that occurred when integrating the arts into my SHL classes, I developed a series of arts-integrated lesson plans for the SHL classroom. My own background as a professional musician, teaching artist, and former public health educator and researcher all served to inform my work and how I approached this project. The result is Between Two Worlds, a resource kit that contains 18 arts-integrated lessons, related to four central themes and organized by the six major art forms: visual arts, poetry, storytelling, drama, creative movement/dance, and music (see the Art Chart in Appendix 1 for a full list of lessons). The four central themes – exploring identity, building community, celebrating culture, and re-claiming Spanish language – are directly tied to best practices for the SHL classroom. In the visual arts, for example, students use oil pastels to document their personal linguistic histories with both Spanish and English by creating foldable timelines. In poetry, students explore the differences between standard and non-standard (home variation) Spanish through writing two-voice poems. In storytelling, students tell re-memory stories that relate an incidence of language discrimination. In drama, students create short scenes on being bilingual, inspired by bilingual poets such as Gustavo Pérez Firmat. In dance, students investigate different forms of dance in Latin America and choreograph short presentations. In music, students conduct a musical ethnography project of the important songs in their families and what those songs represent. The lessons range in scope from single class periods to multi-day, project-based plans and explore topics such as bilingual identity; code switching and dialect awareness; language discrimination; and the rich artistic traditions from the Spanish-speaking world. All the art-making is linked back to language, so that as students express themselves they are also increasing their literacy and fluency in Spanish. This inside out learning provides space for HL students to connect to themselves, their culture, and each other in a relevant way that honors their strengths and backgrounds.

Implementation: Pilot Phase

I began piloting the lessons from Between Two Worlds with former students from the SHL classrooms during a series of focus groups in the summer of 2015. Because I was not a permanent teacher at the high school, I did not have access to student contact information. However, I created a flyer about the focus groups and asked the current SHL teacher (now back from maternity leave) to hand them out to students just before summer vacation. I also offered a $25 Walmart gift card to participating students as both an incentive and compensation for their time. The focus groups were held in a meeting room at the main public library, which was in a central location accessible by several bus lines. The students who participated in the focus groups were all girls, ranging in age from 15 – 17. Though I had offered in my flyer to pick students up if needed, all of them arrived on their own. I am not sure why there was no participation from male students. Some of them may have declined to take the flyer in the first place, as it was voluntary. Others may have felt it was directed at the girls, either due to my wording or to the subject matter (the arts). It was certainly a limitation of my focus groups that...
there were no boys in attendance; however, their absence caused me to rethink my lesson plans and rework some of the artistic responses to be more gender neutral.

Several of the girls in the focus groups had been born in Mexico and moved to the U.S. as younger children. Others had been born in the U.S. but their families originally came from Mexico. During the focus groups, students explored their connections to language and culture through two lessons plans, using the art forms of poetry and visual art. For example, in the lesson “De donde yo soy: poemas autobiográficos” [Where I am from poems], students read and discussed New Mexican poet Levi Romero’s “De donde yo soy” poem, then wrote their own autobiographical poems in the style of Romero. I was struck by the high level of engagement that students displayed at all points during the lesson, from reading Romero’s “De donde yo soy” poem, to discussing unfamiliar vocabulary and Romero’s distinctive New Mexican Spanish dialect, to writing and sharing their own poems. Each student’s poem was highly individual, expressing both linguistic and cultural sameness and difference.

After writing and sharing their poems, students had a long discussion about their families and compared notes about their backgrounds. One student commented that she felt happy because she “learned about other people in my group”. Another student said she liked the process because “reading my poem reminded me of my childhood” (personal communication, July 23, 2015). Though these students had been in class together for an entire school year, they were only just learning about each other’s family backgrounds and unique traditions through the lens of poetry. Poetry, then, became a way to build community.

Another powerful part of the poetry process was that students had the freedom to write in their own voice. That voice might be full of colloquialisms, Spanglish, or code-switching (switching back and forth between the dominant language and heritage language) – and it might be a voice that students have been afraid to use due to insecurity or fear of being “incorrect”. However, it is an authentic voice. Those authentic voices varied in comfort level with Spanish, and knowledge of standard Spanish and home variations. One student whose family has been in the U.S. for several generations wrote (unedited):

Yo soy de deportes con amigas
Vacassiones a lugares extraños
I am from barriers
I am from adopted brother and sister
I am from arros con leche,
Japanese food y ensaladas
Yo soy de Sarmiento, Guerra,
Flores y Corral
I am from “con lobos andas,
aullar aprendes”
Yo soy de inspirational cousins,
Mom, Papá, and Abuela.
[I am from (playing) sports with friends/vacations to new places,
I am from barriers/I am from adopted brother and sister
I am from (Mexican) rice pudding/ Japanese food y saladas
I am from Sarmiento, Guerra, Flores y Corral
I am from “if you walk with wolves/ you will learn to howl” (popular saying)
I am from inspirational cousins/ Mom, Papá, and Abuela.]

Another student who had immigrated to the U.S. as a child, and whose parents are native
Spanish-speakers, wrote the following (unedited):

Yo soy de Mexico traficada a los Estados Unidos
Para buscar el sueño Americano
Soy de tortillas, tamales, posole, atole, agua fresca
y chile
I am from Garcia por parte de la Abuela
y Madrigal por parte del Abuelo
I am from pórtate bien, haz el bien y
en el bien acabaras. Reir aunque por dentro
estes destrosada.
Soy de el abuelo que en caballo andaba
y en caballo ensenó a su familia para el bien.

[I am from Mexico, smuggled to the United States
in search of the American dream
I am from tortillas, tamales, posole, atole, agua fresca
y chile]
I am from Garcia on my grandmother’s side
y Madrigal on my grandfather’s side
I am from “behave well”, “do what’s right, and
you will end up with a good life” (proverb). Laugh, even though you are devastated inside.
I am from the grandfather who rode horses
and on horseback, taught his family to do what’s right!

These poems demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of SHL classes and how – through the integration of the arts – that heterogeneity can be a source of strength in the classroom rather than a challenge to be overcome.

Another lesson I piloted, “Cajitas de tesoro” (treasure boxes), focused on reclaiming Spanish and used visual art to explore the idea of bilingualism as a gift. As an entry point, students watched a short video of the author Pat Mora speaking about her own bilingualism as un regalo (a gift). They also discussed the idea of what it means to reclaim the gift of Spanish in their lives. They read a quote by Spanish heritage speaker Gabriela Moreno, an assistant professor at New Mexico State University, who shares that reclaiming the Spanish language is like opening a box that contains treasure inside (Moreno, 2015). Students then wrote about their relationship to Spanish, utilizing adjectives, metaphors, and symbolism. This writing became the basic text from which the students created three-dimensional cajitas de tesoro. The boxes became a physical symbol of the gifts of being bilingual, and the value of those gifts. One student commented that there were “sad parts” to her treasure box, which opened up a discussion about the burden of being bilingual. Another student chose to put her family in the box, with the words, “Te amo” (I love you) featured prominently. In the focus group, this lesson seemed less about building community and more about introspective exploration.
Project Limitations

As stated previously, I stepped in for a teacher on maternity leave, so one of the biggest limitations of this project was the fact that I was not formally working as a full-time teacher in the district and as such, did not have ongoing access to SHL students and classes as a regular teacher would. When I completed the 18 lessons of the arts integration resource kit, Between Two Worlds in August 2015, I shared several copies with the district coordinator of the SHL program as well as the teacher whose classes I had taught. Shortly afterwards my family moved to the Boston area. The move impacted my ability to continue to test out lessons (as a guest artist) with the students in the district’s SHL program and gather feedback from any teachers who were piloting the lessons. Once in the Boston area, I began work as a Spanish teacher in a public high school that does not offer an SHL program, so even though I currently have my own classroom, I have not been able to pilot Between Two Worlds lessons with my non-SHL students.

Implications for Further Research

Over the past year, I created a simple website for Between Two Worlds that will provide all 18 lessons in free, downloadable format. My request for those educators who do utilize the lessons will be that they share their experiences with me and provide feedback about how easy the lessons are for a non-artist to teach (an important point for arts integration); how the students respond; and what results, if any, they produce. My hope is that more teachers will be inspired to begin to integrate the arts into their SHL classrooms, using my lessons as a springboard or guide. Further research could be combined with testing out the lessons; in fact, I strongly support research tied to piloting these types of lessons in the classroom. It’s important to note that not all SHL classrooms are the same, and not all of my lessons would work in a different region or district. For example, some of my lessons are very specific to Mexican identity and culture (the Mexican tradition of the corrido, for example), because that was the predominant background of the students in my SHL classes. But in the Boston Public Schools, where SHL classrooms are mostly populated with students of Puerto Rican and Dominican background, a lesson on the corrido might not resonate the same. Like any good artist, the SHL teacher must read her “audience” and improvise with what music/art/dance/poetry/stories/theater she includes in the process of arts integration.

Conclusion

My project, Between Two Worlds, is the result of one teacher/artist, inspired by her students and looking for ways to make the work of the classroom more relevant and engaging. For me, arts integration in the SHL classroom feels like an area of real potential; but one that has not yet been fully explored by educators or researchers. The field of SHL research is growing and there has been some excellent work on creating project-based curricula and curricula that more explicitly explore topics such as identity, culture and language. Arts integration shares some of the benefits of project-based learning while also providing a place for students to
discover their unique voice – culturally, linguistically – and express that voice. The multilingual nature of the arts offers numerous access points for a wide range of SHL students to engage with curricular material and understand it more deeply, from wherever they are at with the language. The experiential quality of art making provides students with opportunities to learn by doing, and to connect their learning to the real world and most importantly, to themselves. Through the expressive quality of the arts, students can explore what it means to live “between two worlds” – to speak the language of home and also a majority language; to be one person with family and perhaps another person with teachers/students/co-workers; and how this ability to trasladar and traducir can be embraced not as a burden but as a gift. Arts integration, when combined with best practices for SHL, can strengthen the hogar of the SHL classroom and create a safe haven for students to re-encounter language, culture and identity with their peers. Projects like Between Two Worlds are an important step in bringing the richness and rigor of arts integration to the SHL classroom. It is my hope that more teachers and districts will see the value of arts integration as it relates to SHL programs, and harness the arts to cultivate more engaging, creative and effective SHL classrooms for students and their teachers.
References


Appendix 1: Table of Contents for Lesson Plans, Between Two Worlds

### Between Two Worlds: The Art Chart

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Appendix 2: Lesson Plans from Focus Groups

Cajitas de tesoro

Students will explore the advantages of being bilingual and the regalos (gifts) that Spanish offers, and will express these through treasure box collages.

Standards

National Core Arts Standards, Anchor Standard 10: synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Materials

Shoeboxes of different sizes; glue or mod podge; paper scraps; Spanish language magazines/catalogs/newspapers; fabric scraps; acrylic paint and brushes; small yogurt tubs or paper cups (for paint); plastic tablecloths

Opening

- Hook – show video of author Pat Mora (first 2 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jf7qs5TLrr0
- Discussion prompts: why do you think Ms. Mora uses the word regalo to describe the advantages of knowing both languages? Does regalo accurately describe how you feel about learning/knowing both languages? If not, what word would you use instead?
- Have a student read aloud Prof. Gabriela Romero’s (New Mexico State) quote: “Reclamar la lengua de español es como abrir una cajita que tiene un tesoro adentro.”
- Pass out “Cajitas de tesoro” worksheet and have students fill out

Work Time

- Explain objective of cajitas de tesoro – the box will represent all the gifts about being a heritage speaker
- Have students use their worksheets as a guide for the artwork

Use a spare shoebox, acrylic paint and a few paper scraps to show the following steps for basic mixed media collage:

- Choose a theme (in this case, related to worksheet)
- Choose 1 – 2 colors for background that best reflect your theme
- Paint a section of shoebox in theme colors
- Apply several of your favorite scraps/images using glue or Mod Podge – use 1 scrap that has been paper pulled and 1 scrap that has been cut with scissors to show the difference in look
- Talk about composition: importance of trying different ways to arrange scraps BEFORE gluing them down
• Give students ample time for art making (40 - 45 min)

Closing
• Have students share their cajitas with each other in small groups

Differentiation
Allow students to work with a different metaphor – boys might be more invested in designing their own logo/tatuaje/superhéroe that represents the same gifts as a treasure box, for example

Extensions
Give students time to do a free write about what the cajita de tesoro represents for them/means to them; have students bring an object to class that can be placed in their cajita and have a “muestra y cuenta” with whole class

Assessment
Have students fill out the self-assessment form, “Mi evaluación” after completing their cajitas de tesoro

Resources
Good photo tutorial on mixed media collage:
http://laraberchdesigns.com/mixed-media-collage/

7 minute video tutorial – “Cómo hacer un collage con hojas de revista”:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxuwX1C23YY

Student making her cajita de tesoro, Jun 2
http://viz.arch.tamu.edu/about/news/2013/6/4/mexicanmurals

Hoja de trabajo: cajitas de tesoro

Lee la siguiente cita:
“Reclamar la lengua de español es como abrir una cajita que tiene un tesoro adentro.”
-- Gabriela Moreno, Assistant Professor of Spanish, New Mexico State University

Haz una lista de 6 adjetivos que para ti, describen la lengua de español:

_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________
_____________________

Haz una lista de 3 conexiones fuertes que tienes con la lengua de español (podrían ser: personas, experiencias, comida, música, etc.):

Conexión 1: __________________________________________________________
porque ___________________________________________________________

Conexión 2: __________________________________________________________
porque ___________________________________________________________

Conexión 3: _________________________________________________________
porque ___________________________________________________________

Piensa en 3 símbolos u objetos que representan tus conexiones y sentimientos acerca de la lengua de español (puedes escribir la palabra o dibujarla):

_____________________
_____________________
_____________________

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Mi Evaluación

Nombre: ___________________________ Fecha: ___________________________

Contesta las preguntas según lo que piensas de tu trabajo hoy día.

Actividad: _____________________________________________________________

1. Esta actividad fue (DIFÍCIL  FÁCIL) para hacer porque
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. La parte que hice lo mejor fue
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. Yo podría haber hecho un mejor trabajo con
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Después de completar esta actividad me siento __________________ porque
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

5. Pienso que mi esfuerzo en esta actividad fue (marque con un círculo)
   _______________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________
   fantástico                    muy bien                        bien                       aprobado

Da 1 – 2 ejemplos que muestran tu esfuerzo en esta actividad:
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

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De donde yo soy – Poemas Autobiográficos

Students will read and explore New Mexican poet Levi Romero’s “De donde yo soy” poem, then write their own autobiographical poems in the style of Romero

Standards

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2** – Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4** – Produce clear writing in which development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Materials

- Paper, pencils, pens; copies of Levi Romero’s poem; “De donde yo soy” worksheets; student sample poem

Opening

- Divide students into pairs
- Pass out copies of Levi Romero’s “De donde yo soy” poem and have students take turns reading the poem out loud to each other – tell them to read the poem through TWICE
- As whole class, discuss what students think is most powerful about the poem, making sure to include their ideas about language, place, food
- Have students share any words that they don’t recognize and discuss

Work Time

- Pass out worksheets and have students complete them independently
- Have students share their worksheet lists in pairs or small groups
- When finished, have a volunteer read the student sample poem out loud
- Using worksheets as springboard, students will write their own poems
- Allow time for a poetry reading, along with time for feedback

Closing

Have each student fill out a *Mi Evaluación* form as their exit ticket

Differentiation

Students who struggle with writing could record their poems, then get help from higher skilled students to transcribe them
Extension
Students could create a digital story of their poem using imagery, music, and voice narration.

Assessment
Have students fill out a “Mi evaluación” self-assessment form.
The Art Museum: A Site for Developing Second Language and Academic Discourse Processes

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**Abstract**

This chapter presents the art museum as a socio-cultural learning site, where emergent bilingual students engage in multiple modes of expression to expand oral, written, and visual literacies for academic purposes. A historical view of the art museum as an educational space is considered with past limitations and new directions. Theoretical considerations contributing to new conceptualizations of the museum as a contextual-space for development of academic discourses provide a backdrop for new museum approaches. After describing the situated perspective of the authors who work with students at a Hispanic Serving Institution, we offer three approaches for incorporating the museum in undergraduate courses: instructor-docent collaboration, paired conversation activities, and the use of voice in creative writing for those studying to be teachers of writing. We propose the museum is an outside-of-school context that requires further theoretical discussion and educational research for advancing second language development and college learning opportunities.

**Keywords:** art, museum, sociocultural learning, emergent bilingual, visual literacies, Hispanic Serving Institution, collaboration, writing, second language development, academic discourse

**Background and Purpose**

This chapter is designed to show how student experiences in the art museum can be instrumental in higher education for developing a second language and academic discourse. While there have been programs for English language learning in art museums in the past (Preece & Tomlinson, 1996), they have been few in number, limited in scope, and informal in design and setting. However, we propose there are varied possibilities for second language learning through oral and written discourse in the art museum, specifically for emergent bilingual undergraduate students. First, we explore the art museum as a potential resource for college students who are developing a second language and expanding oral, written, and visual literacies. Second, we examine the possibilities of the museum visit as a perceptual, cognitive, and socio-cultural experience, where students engage in multiple modes of expression, such as speaking and writing about artwork, and move through processes of perception and cognition.
elaborate, we consider the art museum as a conduit for developing academic discourse and thinking that may be useful in learning in academic disciplines offered in higher education institutions.

In order to achieve the complex interwoven goals stated above, the chapter is organized as follows: we begin with an historical view of the art museum as an educational space by considering past limitations and new directions for these institutions. Next, we proceed with theoretical considerations that contribute to new conceptualizations of the art museum as a space for emergent bilinguals and their language development. Finally, after describing the situated perspective of the authors who serve students at a South Texas university, we offer three approaches for incorporating the art museum in undergraduate second language learning and as a means for developing academic discourse processes.

As noted earlier, we address the oral, written, and visual forms of communication. In an art museum, visual presentations may include paintings, drawings, sculptures, and other historical objects. Discourse, oral or written, about and around an art object within a museum setting can contribute to an individual’s construction of meaning and second language development in ways that differ from the routine classroom context. For emergent bilinguals, our approach extends and supplements classroom learning in disciplines taught at the college level in novel ways.

**Historical View of the Art Museum:**

**A History of Limited Opportunities and Practices**

Traditionally, art museums functioned as sites for collecting, preserving, and displaying creative cultural objects, while the educative role of these institutions was mostly assumed to occur through visitor observations. Through much of the 19th and 20th centuries, it was believed that “patrons were cultured and educated about the world” and concurrently could grow by simply viewing the artwork (Hein, 2000, as cited in Acuff & Evans, 2014, p. 17). In addition to the classist view that working class visitors’ tastes and morals could be “learned” and elevated by simply accessing art objects (Weil, 2007), art museums have a history of serving White, upper-middle class, educated patrons (Reid, 2014; Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010). Even in recent times, there has been serious underrepresentation of some racial and ethnic groups visiting art museums. For example, only 11.9% of African Americans and 14.3% of Hispanic Americans reported visiting an art museum or gallery in 2012, while 24.1% of Whites reported visiting a visual arts institution (National Endowment for the Arts, 2013). This may be due to the location of museums, the kind of information disseminated about and within them, the lack of family exposure to the museum, or a number of other reasons.

The art museum’s history of hegemonic and exclusionary practices related to its visitors is also very likely related to its distinctly exclusionary practices in collecting, displaying, and
interpreting objects. Until recently, few artworks by minority and women artists were included in U.S. museum collections and exhibitions. For example, “[p]rior to 1967 one could count fewer than a dozen museum exhibitions that had featured the work of African American artists, with the exception of museums at historically black colleges and universities” (Cahan, 2016, p. 1).

**Current and Potential Shifts in Art Museum Functions**

Because of their history of catering to elite audiences with a Eurocentric curriculum, art museums may not initially appear as ideal educational sites for emergent bilinguals. However, over the past 30 years, museums have greatly broadened their policies and practices, initiating programs to include a greater spectrum of visitors, artworks, and perspectives. In order to remain relevant in our diversifying society, many institutions have re-oriented themselves to an outward, visitor-centered focus (Weil, 2007), and their educational purpose has come to the forefront with more inclusive outreach goals (O’Neill, 2006). As art museums continue to broaden their vision in terms of the artists represented in their collections, the interpretations of cultures presented by their exhibitions, and the communities they serve, these institutions become visually rich sites for a variety of types of educational experiences.

The new, learner-centered focus allows museums to offer unique educational opportunities that are “more open-ended, more individually directed, and more unpredictable and more susceptible to multiple diverse responses than sites of formal education” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p. 4-5). The subjective and expressive nature of visual art as well as the art museum’s new openness of interpretation allows much freedom for students in terms of the content of their dialogue in a museum space. Visual rhetorical messages emanate from the art and are processed from the unique perspectives of the viewer—whatever their language and culture (Handa, 2004). Emergent bilinguals “offer information about other countries and cultures, different perspectives about society, and varied cultural beliefs, which become opportunities for exploration in the context of the museum” (Gutiérrez & Rasmussen, 2014, p. 147), where cultural exploration is one of the main goals and outcomes.

**Theoretical Considerations:**
**Contributions to Re-conceptualizing the Art Museum**

In what ways can a visit to the art museum help undergraduate students develop literacies and academic discourse? In exploring the theoretical underpinnings for using the art museum to facilitate language learning, multiple aspects of the art museum visit should be explored, including the language experience of looking at artwork, the social engagement that takes place in the museum space, and the dialogic nature of student interaction with the museum curriculum.
The Language Experience of Looking at Art

Emergent bilingual students have often been subjected to constrained requirements of language use in the classroom. However, the museum opens the possibilities of many dialogic opportunities for emergent bilinguals who may have previously felt inhibited, constrained, or discouraged. As students engage in viewing artwork, they become part of a dialogic interaction with the object itself and the artist (Dewey, 1934; Sullivan & McCarthy, 2009). As Dewey (1934) explains, “Because objects of art are expressive, they are a language . . . Language exists only when it is listened to as well as spoken. The hearer is an indispensable partner. The work of art is complete only as it works in the experience of others than the one who created it” (p. 110). Bakhtin (1986) also discusses how objects (including artworks) have voice and the potential to “speak” to people. In other words, the student who is engaged as a visitor and viewer of artwork in the museum space becomes part of a conversation with the art simply by looking, thinking, and interpreting.

Not only are students engaged in language through their experience of looking, they are engaged in multiple languages, “for each art has its own medium and that medium is especially fitted for one kind of communication” (Dewey, 1934, p. 110). An oil painting speaks one language while a feathered mask speaks another. Signs, labels, and other textual exhibition materials are often provided in both written and audio format and often in multiple languages depending on the museum’s location. As students engage with various media in an art museum, they are essentially “communicating” and/or “hearing” multiple languages and rhetorical perspectives. As a place that “speaks” a multitude of languages, the art museum is an ideal site for those students developing and acquiring multiple languages with their respective ways of interacting and thinking.

The Social Experience of Looking at Art

Because of the public nature of museums, they become social spaces (Falk & Dierking, 1992). Art museums, in particular, are socially oriented by both their content and the person-to-person interaction that takes place in the space via group tours and activities. “It is because museums have a formative as well as reflective role in social relations that they are potentially of such influence” (Macdonald, p. 4), and community is formed through a variety of group activities for visitors in the museum, including conversations, discussions, and other forms of dialogue (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). As students interact with not only the artwork, but also instructors, museum educators, docents, and fellow students, these social experiences provide low-stakes opportunities for emergent bilinguals to practice oral abilities in a variety of ways with the potential to move into more formalized written exercises to further develop language.

It is worthwhile to discuss why oral conversations and dialogue in the museum space are so important for emergent bilinguals. There is a long history of limited opportunities for oral conversations in school classrooms, especially for diverse students and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds throughout the twentieth century (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). While the
status of classroom talk has grown significantly over the last 30 years, teaching practices have not necessarily kept pace with research in this area (Edwards & Westgate, 2014). However, the communal and social nature of the museum visit, whether its conversations are facilitated by a docent, museum educator, college instructor, or peers, allow emergent bilinguals to engage in academic dialogue.

As students listen and talk to one another in conversations analyzing, questioning, and interpreting artworks, they negotiate meaning and engage in co-inquiry. “In contributing to a knowledge-building dialogue, then, a speaker is simultaneously adding to the structure of meaning created jointly with others and advancing his or her own understanding through the constructive and creative effort involved in saying and in responding to what was said” (Wells, 2002, p. 74). When students contribute to a conversation about the artwork, they are enhancing their own understanding and constructing meaning. As Voloshinov (1929/1973) states, “Any true understanding is dialogic in nature” (p. 102).

The Academic and Personal Experience of Looking at Art.

Beyond meaning-making of the artwork itself, students can engage in conversations focused on a variety of academic topics and disciplinary vocabulary. For example, many European Renaissance paintings feature linear perspective and some Native North American pottery display perfect geometric patterns, both of which embody complex mathematical concepts. Also, historical and contemporary social issues can be discussed in terms of the visual imagery produced by various cultures. Abstract academic concepts become more concrete and personal when we examine them in the visual, social, and contextualized space of the museum gallery. For college-level, emergent bilinguals, there is often disengagement with textual-sources because of a lack of cultural connection to academic materials. However, the art museum offers an open field for varied cultural experiences particularly when there is opportunity for dialogue, and conversations in front of artworks provide opportunities for students to practice using the academic language they learn in their undergraduate classrooms from various disciplines and cultures.

Oral language is a significant part of meaning-making and building academic language for all students (García-Carrión & Villardón-Gallego, 2016; National Reading Panel, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978), but talk is particularly important for emergent bilinguals (Gunderson, D' Silva, & Odo, 2014; August & Shanahan, 2006). Opportunities for building vocabulary and literacy skills emerge as students engage in dialogue. As Bakhtin (1986) notes, we learn words from other people, not dictionaries. The opportunity to use new words in informal, yet authentic conversations about real objects in the museum help those words become familiar tools for building ideas, rather than just another term to memorize (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Both oral and visual literacies grow as students converse about artwork, such as the visual effects, mood, and symbolism of an artist’s use of color within a painting. As oral and visual literacies develop, they provide a greater foundation for reading and writing (Roskos, Tabors & Lenhart, 2009;
Horowitz, 2007). They also contribute to the styles of thinking that may be needed for studying different disciplines in the academy.

The subjective and expressive nature of visual art allows much freedom for students in terms of the content of their dialogue about artwork. As discussed by Elliot Eisner (2002), “[W]ork in the arts, when it provides students with the challenge of talking about what they have seen, gives them opportunities, permission, and encouragement to use language in a way free from the strictures of literal description” (p. 89). While Eisner describes the variety of types of talk (beyond description) that students can be challenged with, Sullivan & McCarthy (2009) identify the variety of content that viewers are free to dialogue about according to their own values. “In the context of viewing art . . . people get different meanings from the same work and place different values on the same piece of work. This involves making choices as to the kinds of value he or she feels the work is deserving of” (p. 186). As students are able to make choices around what to say and how to talk about an artwork, a more equitable educational environment and opportunities for critical thinking emerge.

Because of the ineffable quality of visual images, there is opportunity to be creative in the language used to describe, analyze, and interpret, which liberates students from “right” answers or even “right” ways of speaking about the artwork. While academic conversations can certainly be part of an emergent bilingual’s museum experience, more personal and subjective interpretations of artwork are also appropriate and can actually facilitate language learning and academic content as well as identity formation. As Lake (2013) states, there is “the need to imaginatively create spaces beyond the walls of the fragmentation of knowledge. The stories of individual lived experience that combine valuable content with personal, sensory-laden literary prose can tie geography, history, literacy skills, math, and science with the arts in ways that give context and humanness to dead and isolated facts” (p. 74). Artwork itself provides a visually sensory experience, often exhibiting a personal viewpoint or creative expression and frequently eliciting a personal and emotional response in viewers. Opportunities for students to respond to artwork either orally or in writing by connecting it to their own experiences can facilitate learning. “When we talk about learning, and particularly learning in museums, we are not talking about learning facts only. Learning includes facts, but also experience and the emotions” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, p.21), which can be expressed in speaking and writing.

The Authors’ Perspectives from an HSI Context

As the authors of this chapter, we write from a faculty perspective acquired at a large Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) that serves many first-generation college students. While one of the authors teaches undergraduate courses in art history and art appreciation, the other is a professor of discourse and literacy studies with a research focus on the centrality of oral discourse in the development of reading and writing processes. We note that approximately 73% of our student population comes from traditionally underserved populations, with Hispanic and Mexican American students making up about 50% of the student body.
The three approaches described below grow out of teaching and learning experiences with our undergraduate students in South Texas, many of whom come from border towns. Often, Spanish is a first language and English second for our students. We were surprised to learn that many of our college students had never visited a museum. Despite the low visitation of art museums by marginalized populations, we argue that the museum is an ideal educational site for multi-literacies and dialogic communication in order to facilitate language development, academic discourse, and thinking; we have used our local museum for just such purposes with the present student population.

As Duncan (1995) notes, the museum can be viewed as a social, political, and ideological instrument. One question that arises is how this instrument can be wielded to encourage language learning to empower historically disenfranchised students. Theorist Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) discusses the socio-cultural dimensions of informal learning environments and the geospatial powers that force learners to function in hybrid worlds. Emergent bilinguals may be caught between a familial world and the academic realm, living on both a physical and mental border. The microcosm of border crossing that takes place in an art museum as visitors move back and forth from one cultural exhibition to another provides a context for students to think, connect, and talk about their own cultural experiences and border crossings.

**Approaches for Language Learning and Discourse Processes**

The research on classroom discourse and language learning is extensive (Cazden, 2001; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991; Mercer, 1995). However, studies focused on dialogue within the art museum for second language learning is much more limited (Gill, 2007), and there is very little research focused specifically on college students in museums and their interactions with artwork. While the art museum has not been conceived of as a language training site for higher education, we propose there are unique possibilities for second language learning through oral and written discourse in this informal space. Below, three theoretically-based approaches are discussed that generate student collaboration and dialogic communication and advance learning about art, subject fields, and self.

**Developing Academic Discourse through Instructor-Docent Collaboration**

The first approach encourages that a coordinated effort between college instructors and museum educators be developed to design tours that enhance students’ experiences. As most trips to the museum are limited in frequency and length, instructors and educators need to be very focused and strategic in their planning. However, college instructors often depend on museum educators-docents to provide the content of a museum tour. The curriculum typically focuses on the artwork of temporary, special exhibitions at the museum or artwork from the permanent collections that the instructor indicates is related to their academic course content. One of the issues that arises with this generalized approach to a museum visit is that teachers have one set of learning goals for their students, and museum educators often have a different set of objectives for their visitors (Bhatia, 2009).
**Collaborative gains for the museum educator**

In order for a museum tour to offer enhanced opportunities for academic discourse and student dialogue, specific and extensive coordination between the instructor and museum educator on aligning tour objectives and methods is essential. Generally, goals for a museum trip would involve specific conceptual gains that enhance the classroom curriculum. For emergent bilingual populations and students with few museum experiences, goals should also involve engaging them in as much academic dialogue as possible and introducing the museum as an informal learning environment for creative and engaging inquiry.

Direct communication between college instructors and museum educators is essential in helping museum personnel to more effectively and purposively prepare to address the specific aligned objectives. For example, docents do not have to spend time asking questions at the beginning of a tour in order to gauge students’ previous knowledge about a topic if the museum educators have already spoken in detail about the classroom curriculum with the course instructor. Also, with prior knowledge about course topics, museum educators can select the most appropriate artwork for students to see, discuss, and relate to their course curriculum. While it may seem obvious that a docent would tour the contemporary art galleries with students from a Contemporary Art class, the tour plans for other groups in different disciplines may not be as apparent. For example, a museum tour for students in a Political Science course may involve viewing and discussing artworks that focus on a specific theme, such as political leadership, social rebellion, or racial experiences, but these artworks may be spread across the museum in various cultural galleries. This type of thematic tour would require significant planning on the part of the docent in terms of both the physical tour route through the galleries and also determining which aspects of each artwork would be emphasized and discussed. Substantial communication between the course instructor and museum educator to define learning objectives, determine themes-vocabulary, and select artworks, is needed to organize such a focused tour that addresses the conceptual goals of the visit.

Often there is limited time for interaction between faculty and a museum educator-docent. However, full coordination and cooperation between college and museum educators allows the opportunity for academic discourse to emerge during the visit that would enhance disciplinary classroom concepts. For example, docents can be purposeful and strategic in the contextual background information and disciplinary vocabulary they insert during the tour. How much contextual information to include about the artwork is a contested issue within the museum education field (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). Does too much background information on an artwork limit the interpretative experience of a viewer or does not enough contextual “facts” about a piece lead to inaccurate, misinformed interpretations? With familiarity of the students’ prior knowledge and an understanding of the museum trip objectives, docents can more effectively gauge how much contextual information is appropriate to provide for a certain group of students. They can also incorporate the pertinent academic terms that students are learning in the classroom. For example, embedding and addressing academic vocabulary, such as *three-
*dimensional, grid, coordinates, axis, and linear perspective,* has the potential to focus the tour and to reinforce terms and concepts specifically for students in a mathematics course.

On tours with emergent bilinguals, deciding how much contextual information to provide students is particularly challenging but important. Providing a lot of contextual information to students means the docent is doing a lot of the talking on a tour. At the other end of the spectrum, if very little background about the artwork is provided by the docent and the tour focuses mostly on visitor interpretation of artworks, then students may do a lot of talking but may not gain conceptual understanding or academic vocabulary. The more communication and cross-fertilization of ideas there is between a college instructor and museum educator in terms of expectations for the visit, the more carefully and strategically docents can balance pertinent academic information with room for personal interpretations, both of which are needed for an engaging and meaningful experience in the museum (Sienkiewicz, 2015) and determine how much students contribute to the tour dialogue. Before students arrive at the museum, faculty-docent collaboration on the following topics would greatly facilitate their experience: the faculty member’s learning objectives; the docent’s learning objectives; the specific artworks to be discussed in the museum galleries; tour themes and academic terms; the students’ familiarity with the artworks, themes, and vocabulary; and expectations of student participation during the tour.

Kate Gill’s (2007) dissertation shows that authentic conversation can encourage a language learner’s oral participation in the museum setting. Vital to authentic discourse is that learners are free to talk about what they care about and their own topics of interest, which means there needs to be some flexibility built into a museum tour. For example, a figurative sculpture by Latino artist Fernando Botero caught the eye of a group of students while on tour with one of our classes at the local art museum. Although the sculpture was not part of the originally designed tour, the docent facilitated an in-depth conversation on the artist’s presentation of the body. She was flexible enough to deviate from her original plan based on authentic student interest and their initiation of dialogue. While planning by college instructors and museum educators is crucial for meeting the agreed-upon learning objectives, leaving room to explore students’ interests and questions is also essential, especially for students where language learning is a priority.

**Collaboration for the college instructor**

While collaboration between teachers and museum educators is vital for docents in facilitating an authentic dialogic experience for students at the museum, the collaboration is also important for instructors in preparing students for their museum experience. Prior knowledge can affect student learning in the museum space. An example of this is D’Alba’s (2012) study examining the effects that visiting a virtual museum had on students before their visit to a real museum space. Participants who experienced the virtual museum agreed that using it was a positive experience, preparing them for the real museum because they already knew what they
would find. A majority of the students who experienced the virtual museum were more engaged during their museum visit, either agreeing, disagreeing, asking questions, and offering opinions and analyses. Introducing students in the classroom to the museum setting, norms, and curriculum before the actual visit enhances the learning experience.

As instructors and museum educators collaborate to facilitate an effective museum experience, teachers can use that information to more effectively prepare students for their visit and develop follow-up activities to incorporate speaking, writing, or visual presentations that capture aspects of the museum tour. This could be a simple introduction to general museum information, guiding students to the museum’s website where they can explore information on museum etiquette, photography policies, and artwork examples. Such an introduction to the norms of an art museum visit could be particularly important for emergent bilinguals who may be coming from marginalized communities that rarely make use of these institutions. However, preparation for the visit could also be much deeper with introductions to specific academic vocabulary, presentations of other artworks by the artists that they will see on their museum trip, or discussions of specific social issues, formal properties, mathematical concepts, etc. to be explored on the tour.

Prior experience with the museum context and academic content has the potential to propel or transform student learning while in the museum itself. As Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (1999) notes, “reality is not found intact, it is shaped through a process of continuous negotiation, which involves individuals in calling on their prior experiences to actively make their own meanings, within the framework of interpretive communities” (p. 16). When students are prepared for the museum experience, they more fully engage once in the museum space, and more engagement means more oral discourse and empowerment.

**Paired Conversations in the Museum Gallery**

The second approach to facilitating language development, such as vocabulary, varied syntax, or rhetorical structures, in academic discourse in the museum involves paired conversations about artwork. While many students and other visitors experience the art museum via the docent tours discussed above, people often visit museums with a partner, friend, or family member and choose not to participate in organized programs at the institution (Ebitz, 2007). This means that much of the talk that occurs in an art museum takes the form of peer conversations, and undergraduates who choose to visit the museum for their own personal informal learning would likely experience the space in this manner. Therefore, a college course activity within the art museum that prepares students for this type of informal collaborative museum experience and that enhances their personal learning would be beneficial.

**The paired conversational activity**

One of the authors of this chapter organized a museum visit for undergraduates in her art history and art appreciation courses, asking them to participate in a paired conversational and
writing activity while in that space. With a partner, students chose an artwork and spent 30 minutes to an hour examining, analyzing, and interpreting the object in person. A worksheet with open-ended questions, asking students to interpret meaning, analyze compositional and display languages, and make connections to other artwork-media was provided to each pair of students with the expectation that they collaborate and write answers directly on the paper (See Appendix). The assignment involves all aspects of language learning in that it asks students to read, speak, listen, and write. First, students read not only the visual artwork, but also textual sources such as museum labels, brochures, and other information in the gallery space. Second, partners spoke extensively with one another, especially in attempting to construct meaning and support their reading of the selected piece. Students not only conversed with their partners but they often turned to other classmates that selected the same artwork to discuss their findings. In addition, many students flagged the instructor, teacher’s assistant, or gallery attendant to ask questions about the artwork and verify their interpretations. Third, they listened to their peers throughout the process, but they also listened to the artist through careful examination of their selected piece. Lastly, students wrote about meaning, form, and presentation of the artwork. The writing process asked students to synthesize and make sense of what they read, spoke, and heard about their artwork.

A museum gallery is the ideal site for this type of activity in that the subjectivity of artwork frees students to make meaning, rather than look for a right answer. Within a constructivist learning model (Wells, 2000; Hein, 1996), students integrate their own ideas with the perspectives of their peers and museum experts in attempting to determine the artist’s message. “Knowledge is created and re-created between people as they bring their own personal experience and information derived from other sources to bear on solving some particular problem” (Wells, 2000, p. 77). As students dialogue with one another in composing their ideas on paper, the talk and writing shape their understanding and thinking about the object.

**Academic conversations for language learners in higher education**

For emergent bilinguals in higher education, this type of paired activity can be particularly important. At colleges and universities, it is likely that students will be in at least some large classes with little opportunity for talk, and even in courses that do incorporate discussions, emergent bilinguals may not feel comfortable contributing in front of the whole class or content experts, such as professors, instructors, TA’s, etc. Students may feel more comfortable in talking and sharing ideas about the artwork with their peers, since conversations with experts (docents, museum educators, or course instructors) can feel overwhelming due to differences in knowledge and authority (Lachapelle, 2007; Kim, 2011). Paired conversations in the museum allow for time and space where students can engage in much low-stakes dialogue.

The guided questions on the activity worksheet help to focus conversations on the academic content and vocabulary pertinent to the course discipline but also leave room for students to incorporate their own ideas and cultural readings of the artwork. In the present
project, students have the opportunity to show a working knowledge of academic art terms such as *medium* or *formal elements* and to reflect on course content by creating connections to topics and concepts already discussed in class. Although the questions anticipate an academic analysis of the artwork by asking for evidence and support, they are also open enough that students can bring their own funds of knowledge to their interpretation and evaluation of the images. The concept of funds of knowledge is based on the premise that people are competent, and their life experiences have given them valuable knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). As emergent bilinguals have often been excluded from both academia and museums in the past, facilitating educational opportunities that encourage and value their cultural perspectives and life experiences is important.

While it may seem obvious that students in a college-level art history or art appreciation class would visit an art museum, groups of students from other academic disciplines could just as easily make use of the space to enhance and contextualize their disciplinary course content. The interdisciplinary nature of the arts means that students in mathematics, sociology, history, communications, and many other courses, could engage in academic investigations through dialogue within the art museum. The guiding questions for this paired conversation activity can be tailored for almost any academic discipline. In fact, examining artwork in a museum may be even more effective for students in non-arts disciplines in terms of providing the visuals to contextualize abstract concepts introduced in higher education courses. Engaging in this type of visual contextualization within the informal learning environment of the museum could be especially important for those students continuing to develop language skills and practicing academic discourse.

**The Voice that Emerges When Students Take on the Personality of Art Sculptures**

The third approach in using the art museum for language learning and academic discourse introduces the concept of voice in the arts. During a trip to a local museum, one of the authors of this chapter asks undergraduate students to create a voice from the perspective of an ancient Roman figurative statue. While in the psychology discipline, there has been controversy around the meaning of the concept of voice, the literary arts, particularly composition and rhetoric, provide a more solid definition that refers to the persona or personality of an author or character. In this chapter, we introduce the literary concept of voice for meaning-making in the visual arts and in producing creative writing.

**The language of sculpture in the art world**

We selected sculptures for an oral and written discourse activity with our undergraduate students. As an artistic category, sculpture provides a unique vantage in that it not only represents a figure or object, but it also stands on its own as an object in the real world. Unlike a painting, a sculpture is not only a *representation* of the world but also a three-dimensional
presentation. Historic sculptures present a distinct form of perception and lend themselves to a unique form of speaking, often portraying an isolated figure or pair of figures, rather than the multiple figures embedded in a detailed setting as many figurative paintings portray. While two-dimensional artworks often provide a lot of situational context for their figures, three-dimensional works tend to be simpler as sculptors typically do not include as much visual detail due to the nature of their medium or language.

The voice project in the museum

In the present project, undergraduates toured a local museum led by docents. Students were exposed to various perspectives and readings of multiple artworks from different cultures. The tour ended in the ancient Roman gallery, which is filled with stone sculptures of gods and goddesses (e.g. Cupid, Athena, Aphrodite, etc.) in addition to portraits of powerful rulers and everyday people from history. We asked our undergraduates to choose a sculpture to focus on and write about. Students situated themselves around their selected statue in the gallery and composed an identity or voice for their selected sculpture.

We propose there are multiple layers of interpretation in this type of assignment as students both visually analyze the artwork and create an identity on paper. Students “read” the artist’s sculpture – as a visual text. In viewing the statue in a museum setting, the student perceives visual features, such as body position, costume, color, symbols, etc., that lead them to infer, imagine, and construct aspects of a personality. Through a combination of extracting visual information from the artwork and interpreting that information through their own personal and cultural lens, students create a persona that is then transmitted into writing. This personality is captured in the writing process on paper through use of a voice that will be processed by a reader-audience. The creative writing aspect of this activity inspired emergent bilinguals to personally encounter and dramatize an artistic figure and to practice a dialogue-like written form of communication. They can move from a first language (i.e. Spanish) to a second language (i.e. English) depending upon the intention of their writing and the audience for whom they are writing.

The dialogic communication that students practiced orally with docents and peers as they initially toured the museum served as a precursor to the voice and talk they produced in writing for their sculpture. Horowitz (2007) points to overlays among talk, text, and culture as exercised in cognition and learning that enriches the content. Research has shown that prior knowledge, specifically schema, plays an important role across cultures in reading and writing (Anderson & Pearson, 1988).

Among our students in a Writing Development and Processes Course and who are training to teach K-College writers, there was a wide range of prior knowledge and schemata about Roman history and its expression in art. Those with more familiarity and a distinct schema talked about potential historical contexts for the figures. For example, one student drew upon her previous knowledge of Roman history as it relates to the story of Christ. She created a voice
for a partial Roman sculpture of the torso of a man in armor and told his story as one of the Roman soldiers present and responsible for the crucifixion. She writes, “I saw the man they called ‘The Messiah,’ being dragged by my fellow guardsman to his cross. They threw him on the floor right in front of my feet.” Another student composed a speech-like document from the perspective of Septimus Severus, a Roman emperor featured in marble portraiture within the gallery. She used her prior knowledge concerning the succession of Roman emperors and the tumultuous nature of the late Roman empire to write a speech that the emperor could have delivered as he came into power. She writes,

There has been much chaos and hardships that have occurred following the assassination of emperor Commodus. I am now appointed as the new emperor and have elevated to the imperial throne. . . . I plan to pay great attention to the administration of justice. Fellow people of my community, please join me in this fight to fix our city and bring peace among us.

For those students with limited prior knowledge of ancient Roman history or art, the sculptures still served as rich visual stimuli for creating voice and dialogue in writing. Some students found opportunity to project a humorous voice by “speaking” from the sculpture’s perspective, rather than the person represented by the sculpture. For example, one student writing from the perspective of a partial Aphrodite sculpture says:

I am the goddess of love. What you see right now is my head. I don’t know where the rest of my body is because they lost it somewhere a long time ago. It’s probably in another museum. I sometimes wish I was complete. I would love to be standing here in the museum as bold and deep like Athena across from me. But I’m just grateful my head is complete. The random guy across from me doesn’t even have his nose. If you have any questions about me, just ask the internet. Apparently, the internet is the new guide for everything.

This talk and writing by emergent bilinguals, from their own cultural situations and perspectives, overlaid and interacted with the art object and its Roman culture to create personal meaning.

Conclusions

This chapter demonstrates how valuable the art museum can be as a site for fostering second language activity and discourse processes through dialogic communication initiated by educators-docents and sustained by students. The museum is valuable for higher-level learning. Initially, we provided a critical examination of the exclusionary history of art museum practices and a description of their more recent shift toward inclusiveness. Next, we addressed the theoretical aspects of an emergent bilingual’s museum visit, including the communicative experience of looking at artwork, dialogue within the social learning environment, and the academic and personal readings of visual texts. Finally, three methods for instructional
practices were described: college instructor-museum educator collaboration, paired conversations, and voice creation.

While we used an off-campus museum in exploring these three approaches, we also found a smaller on-campus gallery to be a useful site for similar practices and developments in language learning and academic discourse. As art galleries are fairly prevalent on the campuses of higher education institutions, these spaces may be more accessible than off-campus trips to an art museum, and some approaches may work equally well in such a space, such as the paired conversational activity mentioned above. However, if the activity calls for a more specific type of artwork, such as the figure requirement in the voice activity discussed above, then a trip to the art museum where there is more variety and consistency in the artwork displays may be required.

Since little research has been conducted on language learning and second language processing of college students or adults within museum settings, there is opportunity to explore the complex interaction of undergraduates and meaning-making in this informal, unique learning site. Also, because visual consumption and social conversation, rather than writing, are perceived as the main activities of museum visitors, less research has been done on writing in the museum (Noy, 2105). The present project is part of a research line being developed to shed light on how talk, writing, and art in a museum context can be integrated to increase second language development and discourse processes in academic content within higher education. We present the teaching of art and discourse in the context of the ‘reading’ struggles students experience and the challenge of relating to content fields. It is our hope that we have opened doors that lead docents, educators, and emergent bilinguals into genuine, authentic visual opportunities and collaboration that strengthen our capacity for learning. It is our hope that the conceptualization of art with talk and the examples provided will stimulate educational researchers in a variety of disciplines to pursue dialogue and writing research in the museum.
References


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Appendix

Paired Conversation Sample Questions for Students on a Museum Visit

On a museum visit, undergraduates partnered with a fellow student to talk about a single artwork in one of the galleries. The following questions were provided on a paired conversation worksheet to focus the conversation and written composition:

1. Provide the artist’s name, title, and medium of the artwork that you and your partner have chosen.

2. What meaning do you find in the artwork? Is there a message (political, social, personal, etc.)? What do you think the artist is trying to say with this work? How do you interpret this image? Be sure to provide evidence from the work of art itself to support your reading.

3. How does the manner in which the artwork is displayed in the museum setting affect the meaning or viewer’s experience? For example, is the work hung very high or low on the wall? Is it set on a pedestal or directly on the floor? Does the lighting in the gallery change the way you perceive the object? Does the image correlate visually or thematically with other works around it?

4. What is the dominant formal element in the artwork? How does a commanding use of this formal element focus the work visually and contribute to meaning?

5. How is viewing this artwork in person in the museum gallery a different experience than viewing artworks in textbook photographs or on a computer screen?

6. How does your chosen artwork connect to an issue, theme, vocabulary term, artist, and/or artwork that we have discussed in class this semester?

7. Would you or your partner want to install the selected artwork in your own personal space, such as your apartment, house, or office? Why or why not?
Reach for the Stars: Restructuring Schooling for Emergent Bilinguals with a Whole-Child, Arts-Infused Curricular Approach

Amy Gooden, Lesley University

Abstract

This qualitative case study describes a two-year, multi-pronged university-urban school district partnership in Massachusetts sponsored by former Governor Deval Patrick’s Gateways Cities agenda to support an innovative middle school summer enrichment academy for emergent bilingual (EB) learners. The partnership between Boston University and Malden Public Schools aimed at improving EB student success through a whole-child, inclusive, community-arts-infused, content-based curriculum with field trips, guest speakers, conversation classes with bilingual university graduate students, and performing arts, fitness and wellness workshops; a comprehensive teacher training/coaching model; and parent education and community engagement experiences. This chapter examines the impact of the whole-child, community-arts-infused curriculum on middle school EB student learning. Results from interviews, pre- and post-assessments, and observations indicate that the curricular approach boosted learner confidence and engagement; enhanced linguistic and socioemotional development and promoted intercultural awareness and positive cultural identity for attending EBs.

Keywords: emergent bilinguals, whole-child curriculum, arts-infused curriculum, integrated skills, content-based curriculum, Gateways Cities, English language learners enrichment academy

Thanks to my supportive teachers and classmates, the Brazilian graduate student, the inspirational bilingual guest speakers, and the many activities like Reader’s Theater, the poetry slam workshop, exercise classes, and working with real teaching artists in the afternoon, I have become less afraid to speak in English, even if it is not perfect. The academy made learning English and subject matter fun and I never felt judged. I feel stronger than ever about my ability to succeed in any English presentation, I just need to persevere. To myself in the characters in the novel means that I must believe to achieve. I didn’t always feel this way about my learning until this summer. Learning is fun here because it is not stressful.

–Tiago, a 7th grade Brazilian immigrant student in the enrichment academy
Introduction

Educating the whole-child (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011) and infusing arts in education are hallmarks of any high performing K-12 teaching and learning environment in the US. Unfortunately, the most troubling finding in recent studies (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012) is the “equity gap” between the availability of whole-child and arts-integrated instruction for students in more affluent schools compared to those in high-poverty schools; economically-disadvantaged and EB students simply do not have the same access to the diverse learning experiences – especially to the arts – that affluent students and their native English-speaking peers do. It is worth rethinking how we structure teaching and learning experiences for EB students since research (Durlak et al., 2011; Latta & Chan, 2010) clearly states the benefits of whole-child, arts-infused approaches to learning for Emergent Bilingual learners. To address whole-child and arts education disparities in middle level schools, this chapter explores evidence that infusing arts and a whole-child approach to development—one that takes into account the unique socioemotional, intercultural, language and learning needs of students—had a positive impact on EBs’ language and learning outcomes.

My paternal and maternal grandparents immigrated from Portugal and French-speaking Canada to a gateway city in Rhode Island and worked tirelessly their entire lives in mills and factories in order to give their children and their grandchildren a taste of the American dream. Never would they have imagined that their granddaughter would find her way into Harvard where as a Master’s student in Education, I was inspired to give back to the cities that gave birth to my family’s dreams by pursuing a career in TESOL and Bilingual Education. In 2013, while
simultaneously serving as a Lecturer at Boston University and completing my Doctoral studies in Language Teacher Education, I first heard about Governor Deval Patrick Gateways Cities Agenda for English Learners. I felt strongly that this was a unique opportunity to give back so I authored and was awarded the state grant to support a two-year partnership between Boston University School of Education and Malden Public School District to create and implement the Reach for the Starts Academy for middle school English Learners. In my conceptualization of the programmatic and curricular design, as someone who could identify with the needs of learners in these gateways cities, I sought out to create an engaging and meaningful program that included academics and socio-emotional, intercultural, artistic, and athletic experiences for newcomers, refugees, and emerging bilinguals who typically are not offered such a chance. I hoped to create an academy that offered what Theoharis and O’Toole (2011) define as an inclusive education experience: “providing each student the right to an authentic sense of belonging to a school classroom community where difference is expected and valued” (p. 649). My hope was to create an elite academic learning experience for those who would typically not be given the opportunity for experiential, rigorous learning experiences.

The Summer Enrichment Academies were part of the Gateway Cities initiative, launched by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (EOE) in 2013 and 2014 under former governor Deval Patrick. The Gateway Cities, such as Lowell, Fall River, Lawrence, and Malden, were once thriving industrial centers in New England with factories but due to economic declines and a new knowledge-based economy, face economic disparity and unrealized potential; the limited resources impact the educational and career opportunities available to students in these cities (https://massinc.org/our-work/policy-center/gateway-cities/). To address the growing needs of these communities, the EOE implemented the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Gateway Cities Education Agenda in 2013 with the goal:

to close the persistent achievement gaps that disproportionately affect children living in poverty, students of color, students who are English language learners and students with disabilities, many of whom are heavily concentrated in the Commonwealth’s twenty-six Gateway Cities.

After an initial conversation with former Malden Superintendent Dave DeRuosi and Assistant Superintendent Kelly Chase, I recognized them as visionary educational administrators bold enough to think outside of the box. The grant allowed us to partner—a university and urban public school district- and to “rethink school structures” and “instructional techniques” during the summers of 2013 and 2014 respectively. These elements are key in education models that are not only inclusive, but that also wish to emphasize equity in education. Due to the flexible structure of the grant program, we were able to envision and create a middle school summer learning experience for EB students with a safe space where their unique experiences as newcomers and/or immigrants were valued. As there is no denying the plethora of linguistic, socioeconomic, psychological, and cultural challenges faced by middle school EB students in Malden, we knew we had to educate the whole-child. In my educational model, I had proposed
the inclusion of non-cognitive skills (e.g. habits of mind), art education, physical education, interdisciplinary and integrated learning, role model educators with whom they could identify and trust, and intercultural education. Dave, Kelly, and I also recognized and celebrated the rich funds of knowledge and experiences that these students offer to the school and community and wanted to provide a learning experience that tapped into and elevated this social and cultural capital. We knew that designing a partnership between a university and urban school district with such lofty ideas was no small task and that we may encounter challenges in the process, but the benefits outweighed the threats and risks. So, we pursued the unique opportunity to forge a partnership, funded by Govern Deval Patrick, and dared to call upon the social and academic capital of the university, community, and local practitioners. We intentionally designed a multipronged approach to serving the needs and tapping into the rich funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) of middle school EBs in the district.

A Portraiture of the Emergent Bilingual Population in Malden

The Malden Public School District presently serves a vibrantly diverse multi-lingual, multi-ethnic student population in an urban educational context. It is indeed a cultural microcosm of our national macrocosm, with students representing numerous cultural backgrounds. School report student-level demographic data indicates that the number of EBs in the district has steadily increased over the past ten years. Presently, over 45% of students’ report speaking a language other than English at home, reflecting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity found in a large urban city. Approximately 19% of students are classified as EBs. Among current EBs in Malden, 22 home languages are represented. Of the 1,098 EBs in the district, students speak Spanish (6.5%), Chinese (9.8%), Portuguese (6.2%), French/Haitian Creole(6.6%), Vietnamese (3.9%), and other languages including Albanian, Arabic, Amharic, CapeVerdean, Hindi, Gujarati, Khmer, Luganda, Nepali, Filipino, Pushtu, Russian, Somali, Thai, Tibetan, Tamil and Urdu. Of the student population, 18.8% are considered beginning and intermediate level EBs (http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/).

The majority of EBs in Malden live at or below the poverty line, with most receiving free or reduced lunch. According to the DESE’s website, 49.9% of the student population receive free lunch and 9.4% receive reduced lunch. Overall, 60% of the student population in the district is considered low income. Most EBs in the district are first-generation immigrants. Many of these students have had Limited or Interrupted Formal Schooling Education (SLIFE), due to circumstances such as war, migration, civil unrest, or other factors, and some are not literate in their home language. A large number of EBs come from single parent households. Of all current EBs at the middle school level (the target population for this proposal), 13.4% are in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classrooms and 47.6% are English learners. In addition to the stresses of acculturation into a new society, many students face very serious life challenges. Some EBs in Malden immigrated post-Earthquake in Haiti and lost family members; others faced issues of homelessness and hunger; some have left war torn countries and refugee camps; many older EBs are expected to contribute to childcare for younger siblings so parents can work; and although
some gains have been made in the district over the years in terms of addressing the needs of EBs, retention and enrollment is still a major area of concern. For instance, the DESE adjusted four-year Graduation Rate Cohort Report shows 14.3% of EBs dropped out of school in 2013. Closing the opportunity gap for EBs and providing opportunities for tailored and accelerated learning continues to be a priority for the district. As indicated in our demographic data, the City of Malden has a burgeoning number of EBs who struggle academically and consistently perform low on statewide and school assessments. The wide range of EB backgrounds and experiences necessitate specialized instructional interventions and enrichment programs targeted to meet their unique language, literacy, and learning needs.

For a number of reasons, EBs in Malden struggle to balance the rigorous demands associated with simultaneously acquiring English and mastering content in various disciplines. In addition to these enormous cognitive demands, other factors such as receiving limited funding per pupil compared to higher income districts and the challenges of integrating into a new culture, pose as obstacles that contribute to the persistent academic achievement gap that disproportionately affects EBs in Malden. Unfortunately, information on this culturally vibrant population is all too often presented from a deficit-based perspective. For example, according to the DESE District analysis website (http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/analysis/state.aspx), data from the 2014 MCAS results on the DESE website show that the achievement gap continues to disproportionately affect EBs in Malden, perhaps due to its biased nature. Of the students requiring English as a Second Language (ESL) services as well as those who exited the ESL program in the district, 63% failed or needed improvement in English language arts; 59% failed or needed improvement in math; 74% failed or needed improvement in science.

We intentionally designed a curriculum that would allow these students (and their teachers) to view themselves from an asset-based perspective. Despite the obstacles facing EBs in Malden, we instead saw their dreams and goals of attending college and pursuing exciting careers; we saw the rich social and cultural capital that they offer the community. In essence, operating from a strengths perspective, we saw their potential and desires and dreamed of designing a program that would enable them to reach for the stars in spite of any challenges they face.

The Whole-child, Arts-Infused Curricular Approach

Based on the principles of transformative pedagogy (Cummins, 2000, 2009), the whole-child (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004) arts-infused curriculum aimed to empower and engage students through dialogic learning experiences, creative and critical reflection activities, and experiential learning opportunities. The content-based (Brinton, 2003; Brinton, Snow & Wesche 1989; Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Snow, 2001), integrated skills curriculum emphasized the development of language, literacy, and critical thinking skills across content areas, enabling students to expand both their linguistic and academic knowledge. The overarching theme of the 2013 and 2014 five-week summer enrichment academies was Reach
for the Stars: Pathways for Building a Bright Future and all curricular materials, guest lectures, field trips, and experiences built on that theme. Lessons tapped into students’ prior knowledge and included explicit language, literacy, habits of mind, and intercultural competence objectives. Instructors roles would not be the sage on the stage, but rather the guides on the side who would model, coach, monitor, and assess students in a variety of relevant and meaningful activities aimed to develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English while broadening and deepening their knowledge of and curiosity about topics in social studies, English language arts, math, science, health/wellness, and the arts. In addition to providing authentic, relevant language learning experiences, the curricular combination of guest lectures, field trips, and college visits aimed to help students make real world content connections and promote college and career-readiness.

Rooted in Understanding by Design (UBD) framework (Wiggins and McTigh, 2005) and informed by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) (https://www.wida.us/) and the Common Core standards (http://www.corestandards.org/), the program entailed an outcomes-based learning model. Each week students learned explicit language, content, and non-cognitive objectives.

The daily schedule included:

a) a content-based, integrated skills language education class aimed at accelerating students’ English language skills and content knowledge. These courses are co-taught by BU faculty and Malden teachers.

b) a literacy education class that targeted the development of students’ literacy skills and prepared/debiefed students for guest lectures and field trips. These courses are co-taught by BU faculty and Malden teachers.

c) a lunch conversation class that targeted the development of students’ social language co-taught by BU TESOL graduate students.

d) a performance workshop taught by three young teaching artists from Boston Arts Academy.

On Tuesdays, well-known guest speakers such as Pras Michel (Haitian-American hip-hop artist and entrepreneur); Moise Fokou (Cameroonian born NFL player); Ishmael Beah (Sierra Leonian author and human rights activist); Linda Nathan (Executive Director of the Center for Arts and Scholarship) and many more presented and facilitated student discussions. On Thursdays, students attended physical education classes. Fridays were field trip days where EB students were able to build on content learned in core classes. They visited the JFK museum (https://www.jfklibrary.org/), the Museum of Fine Arts (http://www.mfa.org/), Boston Improv (http://www.improvboston.com/), and many other cultural and artistic sites.
An overview of the academy, which was filmed by Haily Ho of MATV, Malden’s local television station, can be found at 
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJvXxIVbAA&feature=em-upload_owner#action=share)

Figure 1: NFL Player talks about empathy

Figure 2: Hip Hop Icon Pras Michel of the Fugees inspires the students
Habits of Mind

Given the myriad learning and life challenges faced by middle school EBs in Malden, coupled with the rigorous demands of schooling in a second language and new culture, we infused habits of mind (Costa & Kallick, 2008): perseverance, empathy and listening to others, imagination, precision, and learning continuously into the curriculum as the overarching weekly objectives and brought these themes alive through the arts and literacy based activities. Each of the academy’s five-week units of study featured a specific habit of mind as the central, organizing theme; the five habits of mind were selected collaboratively among teachers and university consultants as the most fitting for our overarching goals. From there, all of the weekly readings, guest speakers, learning activities and experiences, and field trips built on that theme, and students were asked to draw connections between the materials as well as to their personal lives in order to increase their understanding of these dispositions. For example, students read about perseverance, heard from Ishmael Beah, a former child soldier turned author, about how that habit of mind brought him from war-torn Sierra Leone to the United States, where he perseveres every day; and eventually the students demonstrated their own perseverance by telling their unique stories and performing on stage.

Arts-Infused Curriculum and Engagement

It is well documented in the literature that EBs can benefit immensely from a rich arts-integrated educational experience, presenting unique opportunities to develop their language, literacy, and writing skills—in a low stress environment—by interacting with different forms of art and media such as drama, film, visual and graphic arts, music, and dance (Latta & Chan, 2010). Inequities in arts education are blatantly obvious in the United States educational system. According to a Los Angeles County Art Commission (2001) study, wealthy and high-achieving students are more likely to receive arts education than low-performing and economically-disadvantaged students. Sadly, arts education is virtually nonexistent for EBs and low socioeconomic status students as extra time is dedicated to double literacy and math development. As Woodworth (2007) mentions, “Disadvantaged and at-risk youth are often barred from school arts programs in favor of remedial instruction in reading and math” (p. 138). This imbalance is further evident in middle level schools where substantive arts learning is contingent upon the availability of funding and experienced personnel.

We purposefully attended to enhancing learning through the arts both in language and literacy classes as well as by including afternoon theater, dance, and music classes that were also content-based and tied to the overarching weekly themes. The academy began with a kickoff performance by Linda Nathan, former Headmaster of Boston Arts Academy (BAA) and Executive Director of the Center for Artistry and Scholarship, as well as BAA alumni corps teaching artists from the Center for the Arts in Boston and internationally acclaimed hip-hop artist, Delie Red X who: (a) helped students to start to interpret the academy theme and habits of mind, (b) served as a model of the type of artistic performance that students would be expected
to do for their final capstone performance of learning, (c) taught the afternoon dance, theater, poetry slam or chorus classes with content-based connections, and (d) coordinated the final performance of learning.

Arts-infused learning was a critical aspect of the innovative curriculum that was designed to empower participants to fluently and confidently express who they were, what their goals are, and what they learned. Some activities included theatrical and dance performances of short stories; making visual collages of learning; writing and reciting “I Am From” poems and other poems connecting their sociocultural lives to the Habit of Mind themes, and ongoing opportunities to demonstrate their learning through the arts in the morning language and literacy blocks (e.g., role plays, visual interpretation of readings, storytelling using smart pens and creating short movies as formative assessments of learning). Students were encouraged to include cultural artistic knowledge throughout the curriculum: one young student, Maria, who immigrated from the Dominican Republic (DR), taught the entire afternoon dance class the history and art of the music genre bachata. This idea was born when the teacher invited students to think about cultural connections related to Native American artistic expression, a part of the language block lesson about Native American History of Perseverance. Maria then shared with the dance class how bachata is a cultural connection in the DR, she then taught the dance to her peers, and co-choreographed the final performance with the teacher. For one of our field trips, the students went to Boston Improv Asylum to receive professional performance training from real actors that boosted their expressive skills and self-confidence. Students in the academy were asked to demonstrate their learning through artistic ways in formative and summative assessments. For example, teachers incorporated a reader's theater performance of We Beat the Streets (2007) and excerpts and interpretations from other literature and texts; a summative “I Am From” poetry slam performance; multimedia learning portfolios were displayed across the room for parents and teachers to see how much they learned, including an interpretation of the elements through a Native American rain dance, Jazz dance, a collage of poetry and pictures, a “Still I Rise” theatrical interpretation, and improvisational theater and “If the World Were a Village” performance.

The entire final performance of learning, including dance, musical, theatrical, and poetry performances and interviews with teachers and EB scholars aired on Malden’s local television station, MATV, at http://vp.telvue.com/preview?id=T01001&video=209058.

The level of student attendance throughout the academy was very high, a signal of engagement in a non-mandatory program. Of the students who participated in the academy, 92% had perfect attendance for the five-week program. Perhaps this was because of how the program, the teachers, and the learning mediums made them feel engaged and motivated to learn, as well as welcome and validated.

Qualitative data collection suggested positive gains for students in the area of engagement. Nguyen, a 12 year old Vietnamese immigrant learner, was one such case:
Throughout the school year, Nguyen was a passive student in my class. However, during the academy, her level of participation and active learning notably increased. She always demonstrated consistent effort on improving her academic discussion and presentation skills. At the beginning of the Academy, she was shy and hid behind the podium when asked to speak. She did not want to be called upon during class discussions. But around the second week, something changed. She suddenly spoke up more in whole and small group discussions and expressed an eagerness to participate in classes. It was like night and day in terms of her participation. At the end of the Academy, she had learned to project her voice, enhance her speeches with personal anecdotes, and add meaningful comments to class discussions. As a writer, Nguyen learned to pay greater attention to subject-verb agreement. She also provided more details and descriptive adjectives in her writing at the end of the Academy than she did at the beginning. N.’s social skills also improved as she made new friends.

This marked increase in Nguyen’s engagement in both her writing and speaking tasks and interpersonal relations could very well be attributed to the meaningful, arts-based, who child curriculum. Another student, Kim, a 13 year old Korean immigrant learner, was one of many who displayed an increase in participation. Results from interviews indicate:

*Kim’s goals for herself at the beginning of the summer were: “I want to get a more good grade at reading writing, science, social student and all of the subject in school.” Kim demonstrated marked improvement in confidence to communicate orally and in writing. At the beginning of the Academy Kim was quiet and lacked self-assurance in class discussions and writing. During the Academy she began to volunteer in both small and whole group class discussions. In small group discussions her teacher’s reflected that she “emerged as a leader.” Her teacher’s noted that “Kim [was] more confident in self correcting and taking risks in her writing” at the end of the Academy.*

Seeing the trajectory of Kim’s change from a passive to actively learner in activities affirmed to her teachers that the curricular design specifically met the unique needs of EBs. One of her teachers who worked with her all year stated:

*It was like an overnight change in her learning behavior. She always seemed so disengaged throughout the school year, but in this summer experience, she really seemed to not increase her participation, but also her joy for learning. She thrived in all of the arts-based activities and I was amazed to see her level of participation in the final performance of learning.*

It is well known in the field of education that without engagement in meaningful activities, learning usually cannot occur. A major successful outcome of the program was the high level of sustained student engagement throughout the program which, as evidenced in the interviews and questionnaire results, can directly be attributed to the art-infused curriculum. The following figures show students actively immersed in arts-infused activities including the poetry
slam and workshops; guest speeches with famous artists; theater classes, and dance interpretations of content literacy.

Figure 3: Student Poetry Slam: Final Performance
Figure 4: Hip-Hop Artist Delie Red X helps students compose poetry

Figure 5: Reader's Theater workshops with Boston Arts Academy Teaching Artist

Figure 6: Dance performance of literacy expert with Boston area Teaching Artist
Figure 7: Kickoff theatrical performance introducing the theme habits of mind to students

Figure 8: Governor Deval Patrick, Mayor Christenson, and Dr Amy Cournoyer Gooden listen to student’s “I am From” Poems
Role Models and Confidence Building

When students see their lived experiences and communities reflected positively in the curriculum, it strengthens student engagement and increases the relevance of academic learning (Cammarota & Romero, 2014). We designed a curriculum that purposefully allowed EBs to see themselves in a positive light. Given the adversity that many of the learners in the academy face, we wanted to include inspirational guest speakers, teachers, and authors with whom they could identify with to share their stories about overcoming the odds and navigating their way to success. We chose texts that also reflected positive EB role models. In Malden, the majority of teachers who work with the EB population are White females who struggle to connect with and relate to the sociocultural worlds of EBs. To ensure that students had a variety of cultural role models, we also hired performing arts teachers of Haitian, Barbadian, and Jamaican descent, as well as BU international graduate students from China and Brazil, so that students felt they had individuals with whom they shared similar backgrounds, identifying characteristics, upbringings, languages, and experiences. The academy also featured an inspirational line-up of guest speakers with immigrant backgrounds who could connect to the habits of mind themes. The guests included Moïse Fokou, a Cameroonian-born National Football League Titans linebacker; Mayor James Diossa of Central Falls, Rhode Island’s youngest and first Latino mayor; and Pras Michel of The Fugees, a Haitian American hip-hop icon, activist, and entrepreneur. Key community partners who supported the academy included performing artists, entrepreneurs, museum curators, personal trainers, librarians, political leaders, family liaisons, and leaders from local area field trips. These include:
- **Center for the Arts in Boston (Dr. Linda Nathan and Boston Arts Academy Alumni Corps Teaching Artist members)**: presented a kickoff performance on the theme of *Habits of Mind* and the Teaching Artist members taught the performance workshop.

- **Larz Auto Museum**: Field Trip to Larz Auto Museum to study empathy and entrepreneurship and empathy and the environment.

- **Body & Soul Personal Training**: guest lecture on physical fitness and wellness as it pertains to navigating one’s way to success. The company taught kids how to exercise at home, middle eastern dance, and boot camp training. The themes connected to habits of mind (e.g. *empathy* to your own body is key to success).

- **John F. Kennedy (JFK) Library**: Field Trip to JFK Library to study perseverance in politics and society.

- **Local Community Translators**: Two parents were hired as translators for other Haitian and Chinese parents during the parent education events.

- **Museum of Fine Arts**: Field Trip to explore themes of *creating and imagining* across the curriculum.

- **Boston Improv Asylum**: Field Trip to in preparation for final performance as well as to explore themes of *creating and imagining*.

- **Boston University**: Campus visit to BU. Welcome by BU Admissions Officers and Thurman Center Director, University tour by official BU tour guides, including the MLK collection library.

- **Noble Society**: Brooklyn-based reggae/hip-hop band member, Delie Red X, delivered workshops on writing and delivering lyrics in preparation for the student poetry slam during the final performance.

- **MATV**: the local Malden televisions stations worked with our students and teachers to create an online video summary of our program.

- **Holistic Roots Wellness**: Guest lecture on yoga and mindful meditation. Tips on creating vision board.
In a post-academy questionnaire, 99% of students reported an increase in their self-confidence. Data from interviews and questionnaires indicate an increase in confidence for participating students, many of which link this increase to the positive influence that role models.

In an interview, Sun, a shy student whose family immigrated from a rural town in northern China, reported her perceived increase in confidence (for the purpose of this chapter, some grammar is edited in student quotations):

_During the school year, I never speak up in class. I always let another student who speaks English to share our ideas with the whole group. I guess it is because I do not want anyone to make fun of my poor English. I am afraid they will think I am not smart. In this academy my teachers have helped me to speak up many times in class but told us it is to help us and we all compliment and edit each other’s presentations. I have learned so much and feel like everyone is learning so it is ok to make mistakes. The theater games and role play are fun and help me to relax. I enjoyed learning with the graduate Chinese students in the afternoon. They showed me that anything is possible._

This remark indicates that the use of arts with role model teachers who focused on the socioemotional environment promoted the lowering of Sun’s affective filter and led to her increased sense of a safe, non-judgemental space where making mistakes was viewed as a natural part of learning. In an interview with Sun’s teacher, Maryanne, she reported an observable increase in Sun’s confidence level both verbally and non-verbally:

_I don’t know what it is about this experience, but I have witnessed a change in Sun’s sense of self or comfortability. I know this may sound strange or insignificant, but during the school year, Sun always walked around school with her head down and when I greeted her, she barely said a word and kept her eyes looking downward. She had one good Chinese friend that she clung to. I worried about her. She never raised her hand during class and teachers had expressed concerns. It is like night and day here. When I first saw her quite verbal was during afternoon dance class. She was paired with a Brazilian girl and they became friendly. She also made another two Chinese friends. They seemed quite talkative. Then, one day, during the first week of the Academy, during the role plays in the morning literacy workshop, she got up with her group and presented. The other students in the group praised her and applauded because they knew she was nervous and never presented. My co-teacher actually brought her for a special teacher’s room lunch to celebrate her brave step. After that moment, she was more active in class than ever before. Her participation in the final performance of learning was another example of her increased confidence. I know that she benefited greatly from working with the Chinese graduate students from the university._

Again, the teacher’s report indicated that arts classes, role models, and role play activities in a nurturing environment enabled Sun to have more confidence in the learning environment whereas in the traditional learning environment she did not exhibit such confidence and
participation. During the school year, Sun came across as shy and passive while in the academy she was a social and active learner.

In the opening vignette, another student, Tiago, noted that what he mostly took away from the experience was a bolstered sense of confidence:

*Thanks to my supportive teachers and classmates, the Brazilian graduate student, the inspirational bilingual guest speakers, and the many activities like Reader’s Theater, the poetry slam workshop, exercise classes, and working with real teaching artists in the afternoon, I have become less afraid to speak in English, even if it is not perfect. The academy made learning English and subject matter fun and I never felt judged. I feel stronger than ever about my ability to succeed in any English presentation, I just need to persevere. To myself in the characters in the novel means that I must believe to achieve. I didn’t always feel this way about my learning until this summer. Learning is fun here because it is not stressful.*

Tiago’s comment speaks to the positive impact that the whole-child, arts-infused curriculum had on his overall sense of confidence as a learner. In addition, it sheds light on the fact that role model instructors who were once emerging bilinguals like him, served as positive role models and inspired an increase in his self-confidence. Unlike traditional learning settings during the school year where he is afraid of being judged by his peers and teachers, the curricular design in the academy coupled with positive bilingual instructional role models and guest speakers, seemed to have liberated him intellectually and linguistically via the promotion of a safe and fun learning environment.

Overall, the use of the role models with whom the students could identify coupled with the arts-infused, whole child curriculum, served to enhance many of the learners’ confidence in their abilities and sense of selves.

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 10: Student rehearse “If the World Were a Village of 100 People” in front of city and government officials*
Integrated Curriculum and Language Development

An integrated curriculum purposefully draws together knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values from within or across subject areas to develop a more powerful understanding of key ideas. In one integrated unit, for example, students were asked to examine and compare the examples of perseverance they learned about during the week which included a guest lecture by Ishmael Beah, author of *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* and UN Ambassador; readings from the works of Maya Angelou and Sandra Cisneros; and a field trip to the aquarium to explore the habit of mind in sea life.

![Image](image_url)

*Figure 11: Author and Human Rights Activist Ishmael Beah reads excerpts of his book*

In one lesson plan within this unit, for example, students read the poem “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou. In addition to learning the English language arts content objectives of similes, metaphors, and figurative language, and the social studies objectives of civil rights history, they simultaneously reached language objectives such as learning WIDA Tier 2 academic vocabulary (words: adversity, challenge, perseverance, success) as well as the rhythms and word stress patterns in spoken English (https://www.wida.us/). The socio-emotional objectives for this lesson were self-awareness and self-expression. Weaving creative thinking and the arts into this lesson, students were asked to write and recite their own poems about resilience or identity, and they were invited to then work with internationally acclaimed Hip-hop/reggae artist Delie Red X on the refinement, recitation, and rehearsal of their poems, which they presented at a poetry slam in the final performance for teachers, parents, and community members.

In terms of intercultural objectives, students were able to practice their critical thinking skills while examining issues of racism and sexism in the U.S. and in their own countries, discussing all of the cross-cultural norms and values represented in the room – Vietnamese,
Ethiopian, Haitian, Brazilian, and Syrian. In the afternoon dance class, the arts teacher helped students put together a step-dance choreography to the poem that they also performed at the final celebration of learning. Although challenging to create, we believed that such an integrated curriculum would lead to more profound and effective learning outcomes for EB students.

The featured curriculum for Malden’s GELL Academy language education block was the BU/Malden Language Education Curriculum, a compilation of narrative and informational texts with accompanying lessons plans and assessments, edited by a co-authored team of EB curriculum specialists, including myself, who were also the BU instructional lead teachers in collaboration with Malden teachers. The curriculum, which was considered a working document, as teachers and instructional leaders assessed the specific language and learning needs of participants, targets language development across the 4 domains, critical thinking, and an in-depth understanding of Habits of Mind. The texts, which include themes that allow for an integrated curriculum across content areas, includes stories of adolescents who overcome extraordinary obstacles and go on to become successful leaders.

**Teaching and learning strategies:**

- Content, Language, Socioemotional, and Intercultural Objectives:
- Expressing ideas through art:
- Critical Reading Strategies:
- Process Writing:
- Fishbowl Discussions: Public Speaking:
- Group Roles:
- Roundtable Discussion:
- Academic Debates: Create Your Own Dictionary:
- Multi-modal Learning Stations
- Character analyses
- Making predictions and drawing inferences: Connecting text to self, to other texts, and to community and world:
- Reader’s Theater and role plays
- Student choice
- Comprehension games:
- Vocabulary development:
- Technology use
- Brief and Debrief Field Trips/Guest Speakers:

The integrated curriculum which infused explicit language and literacy goals had a very positive impact on students’ language growth. Academy students showed overall improvement in English language and literacy gains. Of the 46 students who had pre and post test scores on the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)—an assessment that uses a scale of six proficiency
levels to measure EB learners’ overall reading, writing, and speaking skills—34 improved one point and 11 earned the same score. For a student to improve one whole proficiency level in such a short period reflects the intensive learning that took place in the program. In addition, student data from the portfolios and grading rubrics from in-class assignments revealed considerable gains in vocabulary and fluency for 89 percent of participating students. These results suggest that the 25 day Academy did promote language and literacy gains for most participants.

Of the participating students, 95% reported an increase in their ability to express themselves in English writing and speaking. The data from interviews with teachers and students suggest that students increased their expressive skills in the academy.

Katrina, a newcomer student who only arrived three months prior to the start of the academy and who had very little knowledge of English notably grew in her expressive skills. Her classroom teachers reported a notable increase in her expressive skills:

Because we develop receptive language more quickly than expressive language, students like Katrina often understand more than we realize but are not able to express their learning. The art project options that required less language production gave Katrina an opportunity to express what she knows.

The increase in these students’ expressive English skills was probably due to the fact that the curricular design targeted specific language and literacy goals in an integrated curriculum that provided emerging bilinguals with a chance to be successful and demonstrate learning through visual media projects -- drawing, video, photography, collage, and more.

Ying, an outgoing 12 year old from a Chinese speaking family who owns a restaurant in town, was another student who demonstrated gains in expressive skills:

At the beginning of the Academy, Ying struggled to express her ideas in academic conversations, due to weaknesses in fluency, vocabulary and pronunciation. During the Academy Ying overcame her frustration and worked hard to develop her writing, public speaking, vocabulary, and grammar. She demonstrated improvement in organization and grammatical accuracy on classroom writing assignments. Her public speaking skills improved in the following ways: greater confidence and enthusiasm; organization of ideas; emphasis on key words; and use of more sophisticated vocabulary. She was able to express herself with clarity in both written and spoken English.

Experiences like visiting the Boston Improv Aslyum and receiving acting training from professionals, theater and music classes taught by bilingual instructors, and attention to habits of mind such as precision and perseverance could very well have contributed to Ying’s increase in expressive English skills.

In sum, the curricular weave of explicit language and literacy objectives in an integrated curriculum that allowed for authentic language learning opportunities led to significant gains in the language development of learners who attended the program. During the school year,
learning is not integrated and there are few opportunities for authentic language learning opportunities. However, teachers noted that they were inspired to carry this lesson design framework into the school year to promote student learning.

**Socio-emotional learning: Building successful character**

Social-emotional learning is the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors (Zins et al., 2004). It doesn’t matter how excellent language and content instruction is – if the social and emotional needs of learners are not met, success in the classroom is difficult to achieve. According to a recent study, students engaged in in school-based social and emotional learning attained higher grades and scored 11 percentile points higher on academic achievement tests than peers who did not engage in such learning (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2008). Feeling safe and emotionally supported at school translates into higher academic achievement, increased student well-being, and greater engagement, according to numerous studies. Children who do not feel safe cannot concentrate on their studies, do not connect with their classmates, or do not go to school at all.

To equip students for challenges of cultural transitions and prejudice, self-awareness was taught through opportunities to learn about examples of strong and courageous peer models with great ethnic pride. They were given opportunities to celebrate and appreciate their own and each other’s differences. Some EBs face tremendous extracurricular stress, including adjustment, missing family members, financial concerns, and other issues. The curriculum provided them with opportunities to learn about how to deal with anger and problem solving skills. Given these extracurricular demands and the added cognitive and linguistic demands faced by the learners in this academy, self-management—such as setting and achieving goals—was included as an objective in this area.

Malden is a highly diverse setting. Learning how to solve problems and work with others, especially those from vastly different backgrounds, is paramount to learning success – and was included in the curricular weave. Some of the life obstacles faced by some of the Malden middle EBs were overwhelming – such as losing family members due to manmade or natural disaster, or not seeing parents or loved ones because of transnational migration of some family members and not others. The power of positive thinking was included as an additional socio-emotional learning objective. Participants were able to focus on the development of these social-emotional skills with role model guest speakers and teachers with whom they could identify with as sources of inspiration and tangible examples of personal success. Each lesson included explicit socioemotional objectives such as social responsibility and the well-being of self and others; problem-solving and conflict resolution; the ability to label, express, interpret and respond to basic and complex emotions in oneself and others; and creating supportive learning
environments. Students were able to artistically demonstrate this knowledge via role play, collages, and songwriting.

In the following lesson excerpt from a lesson on an article about the Galapagos Islands, students were able to learn how to mediate differences of opinion respectively, a socioemotional objective, by assuming the roles of scientists who negotiate their differences of opinion. The language objectives were to orally express differences of opinion respectfully with the use of sentence starters as a scaffold. Art was infused in the lesson by allowing students to demonstrate their learning via the creation of a photo album and/or newspaper articles.

Intercultural Awareness and Competence Development and Positive Cultural Identity

Intercultural and Socioemotional Connections

Being a global citizen means learning how to work well with others even when ideas or beliefs are different. To be a successful scientist, a person must possess the quality of persistence. This means that in order to learn and solve problems, you may need to: ask for help; change your ideas if they aren’t working; and consider how you can work with others to get things done. Persistent people don’t quit when things get difficult…they negotiate.

Task(s): Find and perform a brief role play that involves people negotiating to get things done. If you choose to write your own role play, be sure to include a conflict and a resolution (ex: two students have to work together on a project but their ideas are very different). Try to use some of the following language that people sometimes use when negotiating:

“I think….”
“I understand what you’re saying, but…."
“Can I make a suggestion?”
“Something else we could do is…."
“Why don’t we try to use both our ideas....”

WRITING

You learned that many tourists visit the Galapagos Islands every year. Do you think this is good for the Islands or not? Think about the pros and cons of tourism on the Galapagos Islands. Write a short opinion statement. Be sure to give reasons to support your opinion. You may choose instead to represent your ideas on a mind map.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

A good internet source is www.oneworldclassrooms.org, where you will find E-travel logs for the Galapagos Islands. Here you can learn much more about the culture and daily lives of people living on the Galapagos Islands, including kids your age.

Activity Ideas:

- Create a photo album (print or digital) of things that interest you about the islands (be sure to consider including things about the daily lives of people there, such as foods, jobs and recreation, pets, etc.). Label your selections with short labels or bits of text…like a photo album.
- Find something of interest and write a newspaper or magazine-style article about it. Be sure to use language and form that is appropriate for reporting. Some ideas for a story focus might be: how the islands were formed from the volcano; how one island is different from another; what people who live
Researchers in the fields of second-language teacher education and multicultural education recognize the critical role that intercultural learning plays in facilitating language development and academic success for linguistically and culturally diverse students (Banks & Banks 2010; Kramsch 2004; Nieto 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2012). Intercultural learning objectives were woven into the curriculum and explicitly taught to help equip our learners with the awareness and competence they need for current and future cross-cultural success. The content and activities were designed to provide students with an understanding of identity and how it shapes us all; an awareness of how stereotyping, prejudice, and ethnocentrism stifles us all; and a critical review of diverse learning and communication styles, and implications for learning.

The curriculum offered an opening to discussions aimed at developing students’ understanding of norms and expectations for participation in U.S. classrooms while validating their prior learning experiences. The uniquely diverse learner context allowed students to learn from each other’s rich cultural histories and perspectives, offering deeper learning opportunities on topics such as the perseverance of characters in the novel We Beat the Streets or the empathy of leaders such as JFK, or the imagination of artists and writers like Van Gogh or Maya Angelou through the mediums of interpretive dance, reader’s theater, and deep discussion of their reflections of learning.

There were many opportunities in the academy for students to express their cultural funds of knowledge and make content connections. Of the students attending the academy, 90% reported in a questionnaire an increase in intercultural awareness and 95% perceived an increase in positive culture identity. In fact, when Governor Deval Patrick visited the academy, he stated what most impressed him, “was not only the rigorous curriculum, but the fact that they were learning how to get along with each other coming from many different backgrounds and experiences.” Numerous reports support this finding. In an interview, Tiago, a Brazilian immigrant who was not only struggling with the emotional challenges of being separated from his mother, but also with peer relations during the school year stated:

As immigrants, we often feel pressured to assimilate. Whether it’s food, clothing, music, or language, kids sometimes get the message that their family’s traditions are something to be ashamed of. In this academy, we were able to celebrate our cultural traditions which made me feel so proud of who I am and learn a lot about other kids’ backgrounds.

Intercultural learning objectives were specifically woven into daily lesson plans and students were encouraged to celebrate and share their cultural traditions and backgrounds in classes and in the final performance of learning. This design honored and valued the cultural funds of knowledge that each student brought to the academy.

In an interview with Hoang, a Vietnamese-speaking 14 year old student who initially only socialized with his fellow Vietnamese-speaking peers, he noted an increase in his intercultural awareness:
In the academy, teachers valued and encouraged us to share students' backgrounds, and gave us opportunities to share about our family's culture through arts-based projects. I learned that we have a lot more in common at our core but we express those values and beliefs differently. As a Vietnamese student, it was a lot of fun to learn about Brazilian, Haitian, El Salvadorian, and Ethiopian leaders and cultural and art forms.

One teacher reflected on the intercultural awareness gains he had observed from the beginning to the end of the academy:

The students throughout the year always seem to sit in culture groups. You’d have the Asians who stick together and then the Hispanic students over here and finally the Haitians at another table. The beginning of the academy was no different. But, due to the high level of interactive and engaging tasks, and the accepting environment and intercultural objectives, something changed. During the last three weeks of the academy, you started to see kids of all different ethnic groups willingly mixing together during lunch and class periods. It was one of the most impressive areas of growth witnessed.

Throughout the academy, students were asked to make cultural connections to the content. For instance, if they read poetry, they were asked to bring in similarly inspirational poetry from their cultures and translate for others. If they learned about scientific and social issues, they were invited to share what they knew about these same issues in their native cultures. When they took music and dance classes, they were allowed the opportunity to share and celebrate dance and musical traditions from their own backgrounds. This not only led to validation of their backgrounds and positive cultural identity, but it also promoted intercultural awareness and sensitivity among a diverse group of students.

Professional Development/Coaching

Strengthening teaching for EBs is a critical factor for closing the achievement gap. The program provided ongoing professional development/coaching aimed at training Malden SEI and content teachers in effective strategies for addressing the whole-child needs of EBs across content areas, establishing a strong foundation of knowledge upon which to base practice in the enrichment academy and beyond. The first phase of the project included a blended professional development seminar with both online modules and a mandatory three-day professional orientation for academy instructors. This professional development was designed to enhance teachers’ understanding of foundational concepts in secondary EB learning and teaching, such as how to infuse arts in the curriculum, design intercultural objectives, and infuse socio-emotional learning into the experience. In addition, teachers were provided with continued training on the WIDA standards (https://www.wida.us/) and creating language objectives that were tailored to their students’ English language development levels, and reviewed strategies to deliver high quality instruction. The BAA Teaching Artists provided content area teachers with weekly training and daily coaching on infusing arts into the content area learning.
Positive learning outcomes were mentioned by all instructors during focus groups discussions. Mary, a White, female veteran English language arts teacher in the district remarked:

*I learned so much from the BAA Teaching Artists about how relatively easy it is for teachers and inspiring for students when art is incorporated in the learning experience. I had always wanted to refresh my lessons with artistic techniques and I was very fortunate to learn from these young teaching artists. I also felt like I was able to discuss with these instructors and the international graduate students how my position of privilege should be checked on a daily basis. I am now more sensitive about integrating students’ cultural experiences and knowledge into the lesson.*

John, a White, male second year math teacher at the school expressed how the professional training inspired him to rethink his teaching approach:

*When I signed up to teach in this academy, I was initially skeptical. I just wanted a script and did not want to work so hard in summer school. After the professional development and coaching activities, and the opportunity to co-plan with peers and experts in the field, my mindset has changed. I guess this is because I see how much students benefited from and enjoyed the experience. I now see that integrating the arts, culture, language, habits of mind, and socioemotional objectives is possible with a little creativity and effort. I plan to incorporate these strategies into the school year.*

The outcomes from focus groups with teachers indicated that the ongoing training and professional development within a collegial atmosphere provided everyone with tools to enhance their ability to meet the needs of EBs in the academy. Each instructor, whether teaching artist, content area teacher, or international graduate student, was able to learn from and teach something valuable to others. This intentional co-construction of knowledge enhanced the quality of instructional delivery and curricular design in the arts-infused, whole-child curricular model.

**Parent Education**

The summer enrichment academy program director and teachers hosted a bilingual orientation for parents/guardians that provided them with training on how to promote academic success for their children in U.S. schools. Translators were available in the languages represented in the district. Weekly informational sessions were held throughout the academy to help parents acquire skills and knowledge necessary to participate in their children's educational process. Topics included: navigating the U.S. school system, tips for promoting their child’s academic progress, school resources, parent-teacher conferences, standardized testing, the college application process, and information on the benefits of reading at home. Parents were informed about the intentional design of the arts-infused, whole-child approach to the curriculum and were asked to participate in daily tasks and attend field trips and lectures. In
fact, parents actively participated in the final capstone performance for the academy. Some of the parents prepared food, others helped the students to rehearse, and two parents even helped the Teaching Artists to coordinate the performance. The performance brought families together and created a vibrant multicultural community. One parent noted in an interview:

“This performance experience is probably the first time since we moved here that my husband and I and child feel great pride in sharing our cultural heritage” (personal communication with parent, August 9, 2014).

By integrating the arts and embracing a whole-child approach to the curriculum into daily instructional activities, observation notes, interviews with students, and the pre- and post assessments indicate that students in the program developed their confidence, engagement, language development, and expressive skills in English while learning more deeply about their own and other cultures.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored the impact of a whole-child, arts-integrated curriculum on middle school EB learning in the 2013 and 2014 Reach for the Stars Academy. The analysis from interviews, pre and post assessments, and observations indicate that for the majority of participating students, the structure of the curriculum resulted in positive learning outcomes in the areas of confidence, expressive ability, language gains, socioemotional learning, positive cultural identity and intercultural awareness for this group of students. The results from this study indicate the transformative impact the whole-child, arts-infused curriculum had on middle school EBs who attended the academy. The outcomes point to the promising potential for transformative education that such a curricular model could offer EBs should it be infused into their everyday learning experiences. Obviously, this was a state grant that provided helpful funding resources and the academy was not bound by rigid testing constraints. Despite these advantages, designing programs where teachers consider the needs of the whole child, integrate the arts, capitalize on community resources, and celebrate the strengths of multilingual, multicultural communities simply requires the will, creativity, vision, and commitment of teachers and educational administrators.
References


Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds: Promoting Access and Opportunity for Emergent Bilingual Students

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Abstract

In this report, we explore the potential for drama pedagogy in the classroom to support the engagement and growth of emergent bilingual students in language and literacy. We are focused on the use of drama to promote dialogic interactions during teacher read alouds. This study was conducted as a collaborative, action research investigation involving classroom teachers and university-based researchers. Our goals focused on three areas. First, we were interested in the impact of the drama intervention on comprehension. Second, we were interested in the responses of students to drama in read alouds with attention to differences in responses related to gender, grade level, skill level, and English Language Learner (school labeled) status. Third, we were interested in the students’ explanations for why (or why not) drama enhanced their engagement with the stories read. The findings suggest the power of incorporating drama to promote participation and dialogic interactions in support of language learning.

Keywords: drama based pedagogy, emergent bilinguals, English Language Learners, reading comprehension

“Because it’s drama! Romance, mysteries, all the juicy stuff.” (Jalan, 5th Grade)

There are many voices present during a read aloud experience in a classroom. There is the teacher re-voicing the author. There is the teacher’s own voice talking over and around the words of the author in ways that are intended to engage and direct the attention of the students and support comprehension. Finally, there are the voices of the students commenting throughout the experience in response to the author, teacher, and other students. Arising out of this ensemble of voices are socially constructed interpretations of the text. The engagement in a read aloud experience allows participants to gain insights into and control over discourse patterns that are essential to students’ future interactions with others around texts both inside and outside of schools. Sadly, the voices of Black students (Delpit, 1988) and Emergent Bilingual students (Garcia, 2009; Olsen, 2014) in the United States are too often silent in this important work with read alouds—particularly in the presence of an author and a teacher privileging a Standard English language medium. In what can be a fast-moving, complex discursive environment, Black and Emergent Bilingual students’ contributions to meaning making are often absent, and the
opportunities for them to grow in their English language abilities through dialogic interaction are unavailable to them. It is not only the absence of participation and growth that is of concern, but also the “lesson learned” that silence is the safe (or only) path for living in spaces where Standard English dominates. In this study, we describe our experiences as teachers and teacher educators engaging elementary students in read alouds of chapter books using drama based instructional (DBI) strategies to enhance access, dialogic meaning making, and language growth. The vast majority of the participating students in this study were non-White (85%) with over half (64%) identifying as Hispanic and over 30% formally identified as English Language Learners (what we call emergent bilinguals). DBI strategies provide a non-standardized approach to literacy instruction that invites and encourages students to engage in and interact with a text, which typically is overlooked in schools serving students from historically marginalized communities, as a result of narrowed curriculum (Gutiérrez, 2001; Medina & Campano, 2006).

**Background: Read Alouds and Interactive Read Alouds**

Read alouds have been recommended as part of elementary classroom reading instruction for decades (e.g., Teale, 2003), at one point proclaimed as “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading.” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23). Although the daily enactments of classroom read alouds may not always meet the standards for excellence documented in the research literature (Hoffman, Roser & Battle, 1993), there continues to be widespread advocacy for read alouds to promote interests, vocabulary, appreciation, fluency, and comprehension (e.g., Fox, 2008; Miller, 2013; Tompkins, 2014).

In recent years, there have been calls for “interactive read alouds” to emphasize the active and participatory role of children in the read aloud experience (e.g., Barrentine, 1992; Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2009; Lennox, 2013; Pantaleo, 2007; Wiseman, 2011). Fountas and Pinnell (2006) describe interactive read alouds as deliberate and explicit instructional activities that involve the teacher modeling vocabulary development, reading with fluency and demonstrating comprehension strategies to students, while allowing opportunities for students to join in the discussion and interaction. A typical interactive read aloud consists of selection and preparation of a text, an opening, reading aloud, embedded teaching, text talk, discussion, a record of reading, and written or artistic response and self-evaluation.

In their observational study of interactive read alouds, Fisher, Flood, Lapp and Frey (2009) identified seven characteristics of effective interactive read alouds: (1) books chosen were appropriate to students’ interests and matched to their developmental, emotional, and social levels; (2) selections had been previewed and practiced by the teacher; (3) a clear purpose for the read-aloud was established; (4) teachers modeled fluent oral reading when they read the text; (5) teachers were animated and used expression; (6) teachers stopped periodically and thoughtfully questioned the students to focus them on specifics of the text; and (7) connections were made to independent reading and writing (pp. 10-11). While variations of interactive read alouds emphasize different features, most emphasize the critical role the teacher plays in fostering
conversations around meaning making. For the most part, this work around interactive read alouds has focused on discussion and the discursive moves that a teacher can make in promoting interaction. Seldom have the studies in this area offered a consideration of how these interactions can become dialogic, nor have these studies included significant attention to the potential for drama in supporting this critical transition.

Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds: A Theoretical Framing

Drama is an art form that is becoming more and more recognized for its potential as a pedagogy (O’Toole, 2002: O’Toole & Stinson, 2009), in particular in support of emergent bilinguals (Cummins & Early, 2010). All drama involves actors (people), acting (people taking on roles), and action (people doing something). Drama may or may not involve a script or even spoken words. Following the lead of Edminston (2013), our work explores drama as action that fosters dialogue in interactive read alouds. We situate our work in dialogue theoretically within Bakhtin’s (1981) notions of dialogism and the appropriation of language, Freire’s (1970) constructs of dialogic engagement and the mediating effects of codifications, and Bruner’s (1986) emphasis on experience, iconic representations, and language interaction leading to concept formation.

According to Bakhtin (1981), speech utterances always appear in the context of chains of utterances. An utterance is made with the expectation and anticipation of a response from the audience. There are no limits on the dialogic context as it reaches into the boundless past and the boundless future.

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one’s “own” only when
the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he
appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.
Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and
impersonal language … but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other
people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions; it is from there that one must
take the word, and make it one’s own. (pp. 293-294)

In the context of dialogic read alouds, the circulating words belong to the author (of the text
being read), the teacher, and the other students. It is the work of the individual student, with the
support of an interpretive community, to appropriate these words (or discourse patterns) into
something that he or she owns. Edminston (2013) draws on Bakhtin’s writing on dialogic inquiry
to explain the importance of learning through drama. Bakhtin explains the processes of coming
to new understandings in terms of a dialogic process that moves from the inside to the outside
and back into the inside again. This process is facilitated in the enactment of text through drama,
with the student moving through the initial understanding as an outsider engaged with the text, to
stepping into the text in becoming a character, to stepping back out again to examine the self
with a new perspective. Edminston (2013) describes the triggers for this learning through drama
in terms of the students’ movement through “presentness” (placing oneself inside of the
character) and “eventness” (placing oneself inside of multiple characters) and engaging in
dialogue with others around these experiences. These embodied experiences are viewed as fundamental to engagement.

Freire (1970) approached dialogue from a more social and political perspective. He focused on the dialogue that arises as individuals engage with other people in the naming and reading of their world. Freire regarded dialogue not just as a pedagogical practice, but also as a complement to our human nature. It is through dialogue that we humanize others, through people acting and interacting with each other. He was determined to open a path of liberation for those who are marginalized in a society as victims of institutional and politically oppressive forces—including education. Freire (1970) argued that a more humanizing alternative to the banking model of education that focuses on the transfer of information as a commodity into the minds of students, is a problem-posing approach that explores how challenges or realities people find themselves in can be transformed through dialogue (McLaren, 2000). In a process Freire termed conscientization, the teacher supports students to critically think about the situations they experience, often nurtured through a process of codification. Codification involves a gathering of information in order to build up pictures (images) around real situations and real people. Such codifications are socially constructed within communities and, in Freire’s system, most often take the form of drawings that are then extended through dialogic interactions that uncover and reveal oppressive contexts.

One of the most powerful extensions of Freire’s views on dialogue in education is found in Boal’s (1985) work in Theater of the Oppressed. Boal believed that the human was a self-contained theater, actor, and spectator in one. “Spect-actor” is a term coined by Boal to reflect this layering of participation and observation. Because we can observe ourselves in action, we can amend, adjust, and alter our actions to have a different impact and to change our world. Boal’s techniques use theater as means of promoting personal, social, and political transformation. With his associates, Boal explored many different techniques, theatrical styles, and cultural applications (e.g., Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). Dialogism, in concert with Freire’s theory, is at the heart of all of these.

Bruner (1986), building on Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development, was one of the first to apply the metaphor of scaffolding to the teacher’s (or knowledgeable other’s) support for the learner in gaining concept formation (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Bruner’s theory of concept formation is complex regarding the role and placement of language interaction. He argued that concept learning moves from enactive representation (doing), to iconic (image based exploration—semiotic), to symbolic representation (language based). The progression is not a rigid sequence but one the learner may recycle through again and again. In our view, the discussion strategies typically associated with scaffolding support based solely on the symbolic (verbal) may fail to provide significant opportunities in the formation of ideas in the enactive and iconic modes and may fail to provoke meaning making that the child is invested in through their own sense making. We believe what is needed is more exploration, more image making (iconic formation), and more ‘doing’ that puts the participants in the lead and thus becomes dialogic.
Across these theories is a shared focus on dialogue as situated in humans acting on their world in ways that make personal, social, and political sense. Imagery, movement, and language play key roles in supporting the development of a critical consciousness about the world and our place in it. The stepping in and out and back in again into action suggests not a linear path to knowing but a highly interactive and relational understanding of what meanings are present in situations.

**Drama in the Teaching of Emergent Bilingual Students**

Spada (2007) advocates for a communicative approach to second language teaching that is meaning-based and learner-centered and where “…fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and production of messages, not the teaching of correction of language form” (p. 272). This view is consistent with Cummins’s (1981) position that children best learn the English language when they are actively involved in the process of communicating with one another. The possibilities for drama to create a context for meaningful communication, interaction, and the negotiation of identity for emergent bilingual students are enormous (e.g., Lee & Finney, 2005; Medina & Campano, 2006; Medina, Weltsek-Medina, & Twomey, 2007).

In Belliveau and Kim’s (2013) synthesis of the scholarly literature around drama and L2 learning, four findings stand out. First, the synthesis documented the widespread interest and enthusiasm for drama to be used in language learning. Second, despite this expressed interest in drama, it does not appear to be widely implemented. Third, even when drama is integrated into classrooms, it has often been limited to “decontextualized scripted role-plays, memorization of superficial dialogues, and warm-up games that fall outside the curriculum” (p. 6). And fourth, teachers face numerous challenges implementing drama including: “a need for teacher training, skepticism from teachers and students; product-driven or examination-oriented circumstances; [and] cultural differences in learning styles” (p. 13).

**Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds: A Pedagogical Practice**

There are many different forms of drama-based instructional activities currently being explored through research (e.g., Adomat, 2012; Cawthon, Dawson, & Ihorn, 2011; Lee, Patall, Cawthon, & Steingut, 2015; Willcut, 2007; Wilhelm, 2000). Drama activities are often used as a ‘culminating’ activity to work with a piece of literature—as in the writing and/or presenting of a reader’s theater performance of a story that has been read (e.g., Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999; Worthy & Prater, 2002; Young & Rasinski, 2009). We subscribe, in our work, to Kao and O’Neill’s (1998) notion that the most powerful forms of drama for language support are not the less contextualized script-based drama activity but rather process dramas that evolve over extended periods of time and “build on the ideas, negotiations and responses of all the students to foster social, intellectual, and linguistic development” (p. x).

Our work has focused on using drama in working with emergent bilingual students as a tool for language learning and comprehension. Our work envisions drama in read alouds as a
scaffolding tool for concept formation that is experiential, iconic, and dialogic. We use drama to expand on and extend Sipe’s (2000) concept of ‘performative’ responses as part of text engagement. Performative response refers to children’s spontaneous responses to text that reflect a performative (e.g., making the face of a monster as the character speaks out in the story). Sipe (2000) describes this performative stance as “entering the text world and manipulating it for one’s own purposes” (p. 268). The student in-role sees the world through the character’s eyes, through a differing perspective lens for a while. Sipe (2000) has referred to this as the transparent stance, whereby one “enters the story world and becomes one with it. The story world becomes (momentarily) identical with and transparent to the children’s world” (p. 268).

Initially, we used two formats for drama activity. In one format—a reader’s theater approach—the teachers created short scripts surrounding critical moments in a text that was read the day before (i.e., from a previous chapter). A small group of students took on roles, practiced the script, then performed before the class. The teacher and other students engaged the actors in a conversation around their motivations and thought processes. The teacher continued to draw the actors into the conversation as the class moved on to read the next chapter in the book on that same day by asking them, for example, to consider how the characters they played might feel about a particular event. In a second format the teacher invited a small group of students to create a “tableau vivant” (Clyde, 2003; Cornett, 2006; O’Neill, 1995; Wilhelm, 2000) around a critical moment from the text that had been read the day before. A tableau, rooted in the French word for a living picture, offers a motionless scene or pose created by actors. The students chose the moment, created and practiced the tableau, and presented it to the class. The class engaged the actors in the tableau in a discussion to explore characters’ intentions, feelings, and motivations. While there was some preparation time and guidance by the teacher for the small group presenting, the presentation was short and built momentum for the reading of the next chapter.

In the tableau option, the identification of the critical parts was the responsibility of the students in the performing group. One of the key questions posed in the interpretation of a tableau was “Why did you choose this section of the text to enact?” When there were multiple groups presenting different representations, this conversation around the choices of scenes to perform could be used to encourage further discussion around what makes certain parts of a story significant. In the case of the reader’s theater scripts, the identification of critical moments rested initially on the teacher’s judgment, who was encouraged to identify a moment of significant plot development, a major shift in character development, or something particularly complicated that might need further sorting out. As the students became more experienced in the reader’s theater format, we began to involve them in the identification of the critical moments and even the authoring of the scripts.

There is nothing particularly new in either of these drama strategies. What is new, to our knowledge, is the use of these strategies woven in and through a classroom read aloud experience with chapter books over an extended period of time. Also new are the explicit connections made to the theoretical work around dialogue found in the writings of Bruner, Freire
and Boal. Drama work embodies Bruner’s “enactment” and “iconic” (imagery) constructs that accompany dialogue and support concept formation. We stress the importance of Freire’s codifications, problem-posing, and generative themes that are of importance to the participants as well as Boal’s concept of “spec-actor” as everyone is collectively involved. We stress the importance of Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism where language expression is always in the middle—drawing on the past and speculating on the future, as the students and teacher move through a text experience making their own meaning along the way utilizing iconic representations. Finally, what is new in our effort is the focus on emergent bilingual students, and the possibilities for promoting access, engagement, language growth, and comprehension.

The Drama in Dialogic Read Aloud Study

This study was conducted as a collaborative teacher research investigation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Classroom teachers and university-based researchers were involved in both designing the study and in collecting and analyzing data. Our goals were focused on four areas. First, we were interested in the impact of the drama intervention on comprehension. Second, we were interested in the responses of students to the use of drama in read alouds, with attention to differences in responses related to gender, grade level, skill level, and English Language Learner (school labeled) status. Third, we were interested in the students’ explanations for why (or why not) the drama enhanced their engagement with the stories read. Fourth, we were interested in the feasibility of implementing the drama practices in the flow of classroom teaching.

Participants and Setting

The participants included five elementary teachers and their students across three schools. Two of the three schools, and four of the five teachers, served low-income, predominately Latino communities with high percentages of emergent bilingual students. All of the participating teachers had been involved in a graduate course involving the use of drama in the literacy classroom. Teachers worked in two groups: four teachers in a 2nd/3rd grade group, and one teacher in a 5th grade group—with this same teacher working with three classrooms as the departmentalized reading/language arts instructor. Student participants included a total of 86 second/third graders and 56 fifth graders. While our primary focus for this study is on emergent bilingual learners and drama, we have included students in one second grade classroom from a school serving a predominately English monolingual community as an opportunity to examine engagement with drama across two different student populations.

Procedures

The research team identified four chapter books for use in the 2nd/3rd grade group and four different chapter books for use in the 5th grade classes.

Figure 1. Books for the Dialogue in Drama Study
Consideration in book selection was given to quality literature, cultural relevance, and themes appropriate to the age of the students in the classes. Scripts were developed for each chapter in each book with the exception of the first chapter. Each teacher employed the Drama into Dialogic Read Aloud strategies for two of the books and traditional interactive read aloud methods for the other two books. The traditional interactive read aloud refers to the methods these teachers had used prior to their engagement with the drama-based strategies for use in read alouds. The traditional interactive read aloud practices included the use of think-alouds, discussion, and reader response. All of the teachers had participated in a methods course at the University of Texas, Austin with a focus on drama methods during the summer prior to start of the study. Effectively, the teachers alternated the drama and traditional interactive practices moving from one book to the next, with the order of books the same within the grade level groups. In this way, each book was read by at least one teacher and her class, under both the Dialogue in Drama and control conditions.

**Figure 2. Books by Title and Order**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
<th>Book 1</th>
<th>Book 2</th>
<th>Book 3</th>
<th>Book 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd/3rd Grades</td>
<td><em>Because of Winn-Dixie</em></td>
<td><em>Poppy</em></td>
<td><em>James and the Giant Peach</em></td>
<td><em>The Hundred Dresses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td><em>Firegirl</em></td>
<td><em>Love, Ruby Lavender</em></td>
<td><em>Liar and Spy</em></td>
<td><em>Glory Be</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the classrooms participated in a two-week introductory unit for the drama-based instructional approaches to be used. This introductory unit provided opportunities for students to practice the drama-based strategies with several picture books. Teachers then read the chapter books to their classes with a roughly parallel schedule across all the classrooms. Drama in Dialogic Read Aloud activities were conducted daily when the book being read was designated for the drama condition and not used when the book being read was designated as the traditional condition. Most of the books required four to six weeks to complete.
Throughout the study, teachers followed the research protocol that was outlined and scheduled prior to the school year beginning. Each teacher maintained a log with general information relating to drama or traditional conditions for the book as well as anecdotal notes about the read aloud (e.g., students’ comments, participation). There were variations in the ways teachers elected to design language charts, utilize quick write journals, and offer strategies to support students in the drama activities during the read aloud cycles. These differences were noted and shared during research meetings. Once the drama intervention was concluded, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher. During these interviews, the teachers were asked to describe: (1) their experiences participating in the study; (2) the effects of using Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds on students in the classroom; (3) how their participation in the Drama in Dialogic Read Aloud study impacted teaching practices; and (4) strategies and modifications used during the study.

**Data Collection**

There were multiple data-sources for this study: pre- and post-assessments of attitudes toward reading and drama; comprehension assessments for each book read; teacher logs documenting implementation and student responses; and teacher interviews at the end of the study. Research members that were not one of the identified teacher-researchers from the previous section created the assessments utilized in the study. Additionally, six focal students were selected from each class for interviews following each book. Interview protocols were developed to guide these interviews that focused on students’ enjoyment of the book, participation in drama activities, and support for understanding through the drama activities.

**Data Analysis**

Open-ended questions on the post assessment and comprehension tests were coded for emerging patterns. The research team refined codes and analyzed data using constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The comprehension assessments, which had multiple choice and short answer sections, were graded by members of the research team. At least two members of the team graded the short answer section of the tests to ensure reliability. In cases of disagreement, a third member of the team graded the item.

Furthermore, for the quantified data gathered from the assessments, significant tests were employed. Specifically, the two-sample t-test was used to determine if comprehension means of the students in drama or control conditions were equal; the Chi-Square test was used to examine whether the attitudinal responses (e.g., book preference) varied among the participating students. The 5% level of significance was used in all significance tests, and the software package Stata was used to run the analyses.

**Findings**
Before moving to general findings, we will ground our report in an example from our data of how the students in one of the 5th grade classrooms engaged in a reader’s theater dialogue after reading Chapter 9 of *Glory Be*. The setting for this book is a small Mississippi town in 1964, as seen through the eyes of 11-year-old Gloriana Hemphil. “Freedom Workers” from the north have entered the community and are shaking up the status quo, including efforts to open the community swimming pool to Black residents. The reader’s theater script followed the read aloud of the chapter from the previous day. Over the course of the book, the class had engaged in conversations problematizing issues of segregation and racism, as well as the complexities of race. Frankie is faced with a decision whether to follow the lead of his older brother (JT) regarding his family’s stance against integration and viewing the presence of Freedom Fighters in their town as interfering with the social norms of the community. Frankie’s father and his older brother, JT, continue to adhere to ideological beliefs supporting segregation and racism.

**Glory:** You wanna bat, Frankie?... What’s the matter? Just cause your brother doesn’t want to play, you’re leaving?

**JT:** Let’s go. (*turns and looks at Frankie*) You comin’?

**Frankie:** (*looks at Glory, then Laura, then moves closer to Glory*) I can’t stay. My brother’ll tattle to Daddy that I was playing baseball with a Yankee. (*rubs his arm where JT usually whacks him*) Or worse.

**Glory:** Why’re you always doing everything he tells you? JT is not your daddy.

**JT:** My little brother ain’t supposed to play with no Yankees, here to cause trouble and mess up our town. (*narrows his eyes at Laura*) Wish you’d go back to where you came from. (*spits next to Laura’s bare feet*) You need to get out of Hanging Moss, go where you’re wanted, if there is any such place.

**Glory:** (*hollering and clenching fists*) JT Smith, you stay away from me and my friend! Stay away from my house and don’t ever come back!

Given the salience of race and racism in the script and the ensuing discussion, it is relevant to recognize the racial and gendered identities of both the characters and students playing them. The student who took on the role of Glory (a White female character) identified as a Black male. Frankie (a White male), Glory’s best friend, was played by a female Latina student. A Black female student played JT (a White male character) who is Frankie’s older brother. A female Black student portrayed Laura’s character (a White character) who is the daughter of a nurse helping out at the Freedom Clinic. Below is a portion of the class’s discussion after the performance of the script:
Teacher: Okay. Questions for our actors.

Student 1: Frankie, how do you feel?

Frankie: Sad.

Student 1: Why?

Frankie: ‘Cuz I can’t play with Glory and Laura.

(Teacher recaps question and asks Frankie to repeat their response.)
**Student 2:** Frankie, do you want to listen to JT or Glory if there was no segregation?

*(Teacher notices some confusion around the question and rephrases question to clarify and scaffold for character to respond.)*

**Frankie:** Yes, because my brother may have still hated people like that. And if I didn’t listen to him because he’s the oldest, I’d probably get hurt…so

**Student 3:** Frankie, do you want to play with Laura and Glory?

**Frankie:** Yes, but I’m just scared of my brother.

**Student 4:** Frankie, why do you let JT push you around?

**Frankie:** ‘Cuz, he’s the oldest and he bullies me and tells my dad.

**Student 5:** What’s your problem JT?

**JT:** Well, my dad is putting all these things in my head and I’m actually believing him. So then…if my dad tells me, I follow. I go along with it.

**Student 6:** Frankie, why don’t you just take the consequences and stay with your friends and play and stand up for what’s right?

**Frankie:** ‘Cuz I’m scared. I’m a little kid and he’s a teenager, a football player. He can beat me up. And I’m scared of my dad.

**Student 7:** JT, why are you being so mean?

**JT:** Because it’s my job to look after my little brother and my dad always tells me that certain people are bad and stuff like that…

*(The teacher acknowledges that the class has strong feelings around the situation that is happening. She expresses that the students playing the characters are responding in realistic ways that corresponds with the characters’ beliefs and interactions in the text.)*

**Student 8:** Laura, how do you feel about the situation?

**Laura:** Weird.

**Teacher:** Okay. Can you explain why you feel weird, Laura?
Laura: Because Frankie wants to play with Glory but JT is in Frankie’s way. He [JT] tried to spit at me, which is…that’s why it’s kinda weird.

Teacher: Right. Do you feel really comfortable right now?

Laura: No.

This is just one script, one chapter, and one discussion in the middle of a book, but this was one of many instances when dialogic interactions emerged through drama. Generative issues of race, identity, and power were a central part of this interaction and might have never taken place without the affordances of this drama work. In the following section, we report findings from across the study around the four major research goals: impact on comprehension and engagement; student responses to the experience; student explanations of their own learning; and the feasibility of implementing drama practices into classroom teaching.

**Drama Intervention Impact on Comprehension and Engagement**

We compared the performance of the students on the comprehension assessments looking at the differences in scores when they read under the drama versus control conditions. We found no statistically significant differences. We also compared performance on the books as a function of the condition read and found no statistically significant differences. These results are puzzling given the findings to be reported in the subsequent sections on the responses of the students to the drama conditions. We can only speculate that the assessment measures were not sensitive to the varying levels of engagement across the two conditions or, because we alternated drama and control conditions, it was not possible to capture any potential longitudinal effect of drama on students’ comprehension. For all students we compared the ranking of the favorite book with the condition for reading the book (drama or control). We expected that the drama condition would affect the ranking of the book, but the data did not support this expectation. The favorite book at the primary grades (Poppy at 40%) was the highest rated regardless of the drama or traditional condition. The least favorite book (The Hundred Dresses at 7.5%) was lowest rated regardless of condition. The same pattern held true with the 5th graders (Glory Be at 40% and Love, Ruby Lavender at 11%). Again, this result is not totally surprising given the substantial literature documenting the overwhelming influence of the book on response (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Roser & Martinez, 1999). Although the statistical analysis did not reveal differences in the use of drama, we did find substantial evidence for the effects of incorporating drama in other data sources.

**Students’ Responses to the Use of Drama in Read Alouds**

There was broad confirmation across multiple data sources (focal student interviews and teacher interviews) that the students enjoyed and valued the experiences with drama. In the post assessment, we asked if the students would like to continue to use drama. At the 5th grade level,
0% reported “No,” 41% said “Some,” and 59% said “A Lot.” At the 2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} grade level, 17% said “No,” 27% said “Some,” and 56% said “A Lot.” The response is overwhelmingly positive, but we were curious about the 17% who reported “No.” Teachers conducted follow-up interviews with the students who had indicated that did not want to use drama. In most of the dissenting cases, teachers reported there was a sense that drama slowed things down too much and those students just wanted to read more and faster. For example, Alex stated that he liked drama “but was frustrated because he wanted to read, read, read. He wanted to pursue the book at his own pace.” Gus stated that he liked all drama, “but wanted all the books to be as action-packed as Poppy.” Norah said that she liked drama, “but wanted to spend more time on tableaux and the reading – less time on reader’s theater and quick writes. She says that way we could read more books!” And “John says it must have been a mistake. He liked all of it. His favorite part was reader’s theater.”

There were no differences for gender, reading level, and emergent bilingual status in the preference for tableau, reader’s theater, or both. Yet, there was a statistically significant difference between grade levels in terms of a preference for tableau and reader’s theater. While more than the half of the students liked both tableau and reader’s theater, the lower grade students were more positive to tableau. There were some patterns in the data that seem to contradict some widely held beliefs (or perhaps myths) about drama in the classroom. There were no differences between grade levels in terms of a positive response to the use and participation in Drama in Dialogic Read Aloud activities. The upper grade students were as positive as the lower grade students. There were no differences in the response of the students classified as high medium or low skill level (in relation to grade level) or in emergent bilingual vs. non-emergent bilingual classification to participation and valuing of drama. There were no differences between gender in terms of participation and valuing of drama.

It is always a challenge to interpret ‘no difference’ findings in quantitative research. However, in this case and with these findings, we feel these ‘no difference’ findings suggest something very important about the uses of drama across different labels that are used to separate students. Enthusiasm and engagement were high for all students. With respect to gender, we had anticipated possible concerns for the students in stepping into a gender role different from their own identity. This was never an issue. The teachers also expressed some surprise that gender was not an issue in who played roles. One of the early grade teachers commented, “I didn’t have any gender issues at all. … it didn’t matter they just want to be a part.” Another teacher said, “Not at all a problem (gender) … when we had strong female characters in a story … like in the hundred dresses … the boys were like fighting, ‘I want to be Mattie!’”

**Students’ Explanations of the Impact of Drama**

Our analysis for this area focused on the students’ responses to two open-ended questions on the post assessment: “Why do you like (or not like) drama activities?” and “Which drama activities do you like most, and why?” We began our analysis through open coding of the
students’ responses in one of the classrooms. As we coded the students’ comments in other classrooms, we continued to compare the students’ responses to the existing codes and refine them. In the end, our team came up with a total of 263 student comments coded into six categories: Enjoyment, Embodiment, Comprehension Processes, Perspective Taking, Interacting with Audience, and Negatives. We broke down some of these categories, such as Comprehension Processes into additional subcategories. In reporting these areas, we will include the number of responses coded for that category as well as the percent of the total. The two largest categories were Embodiment (N=104; 40%) and Enjoyment (N=88; 33%) though a significant number of the students’ comments fell into the Comprehension process category (N=47; 18%). Our team used the individual interviews with students conducted at the end of each book, as well as focus group interviews with the students to confirm or disconfirm findings.

The Embodiment and Enjoyment areas included general comments about being able to perform (e.g., some students enjoyed reading lines, posing, disguising their voice), but other comments were focused on embodying the role of the characters. Some of the students enjoyed “getting to be” the characters. For example, Gina (3rd grader) stated, “you feel like you’re the characters.” Students expressed enjoyment about being able to perform in front of peers, but also suggested that taking on roles was sometimes an opportunity to embody the characters whose roles they were taking on. It appeared that taking on the role of the characters was more than simply getting to perform; to some students, it was a way to bring the characters and story into the real world.

The students were insightful and varied in the ways they linked the drama experience to their comprehension. One student, Ulrich (5th grader), said the drama activities helped “break it down for me.” Other students made more general claims, such as, “it helps me understand the story.” We found many students focused on visualization in their descriptions of how the drama activities had impacted their understanding of the stories. This subcategory of Comprehension included statements in which students described being able to see or imagine characters or scenes from the story better. Tricia (5th grader) described the activities as helping her “picture things about the book.” Francisco (5th grader) appreciated that the drama allowed students to “realize how it would be in real life.” One interesting aspect of these comments is that students often discussed this benefit in terms of both observing and performing, suggesting that the participants, as well as the audience, stood to benefit from the drama activities. Again, this appreciation for the way viewing and performing helped them imagine what was happening in the story was confirmed in the individual and focus group interviews with the students.

Students also made comments about the impact of Perspective Taking through the drama activities. Some students, such as Catalina (5th grader), felt viewing the drama activities helped them see “a different point of view.” Other students enjoyed seeing the “frozen” characters in the tableau. Comments coded Interaction with Audience focused on how the performers and the audience talked, reacted, or made meaning together. Some students appreciated the questioning and answering that occurred between the audience and the performers. Antonio (5th grader)
enjoyed “explaining” while Leo (3rd grader) appreciated being able to ask questions. It was clear some of the students appreciated these back and forth interactions, echoing Boal’s “Spect-actor” framework.

**Teachers’ Implementation of Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds**

The interviews, logs, and observations of teachers confirmed that the approaches had been implemented across the participating classrooms. The teacher interviews largely confirmed what the students said about their engagement in the experience with drama as well. Across the teacher interviews, there was a consistent report of the students, fairly quickly after the introductory unit, taking control of the drama. One teacher commented that once the process began, “I didn’t participate in that part [the guiding of drama work and discussion] at all. I just said it’s ok to talk to the characters and they would start off … Everyone had questions they wanted to ask.” Another teacher reported, “I didn’t have to do much once we got started. With the tableau all of the kids did it and I would just walk to each one and the discussion would start.” The data from the student responses suggested that the students enjoyed both of the formats. From the teachers there was appreciation for both in terms of good discussion of the stories, but some of the teachers felt that the tableau offered more open space for constructing meaning. One teacher commented, “My kids dug deeper with the tableau because they were having to create and to infer … and they would argue.” Another teacher described the affordances for the tableau in supporting visual imagery.

The teachers found the drama activities to be overwhelmingly positive in terms of how students engaged in the book. Teachers noticed that students were more enthusiastic and engaged when there were drama activities involved (and many students even complained when there were no drama activities). However, teachers also reported that the ways students engaged with the text was qualitatively different at times with drama. The conversations about what was happening in the tableau, how the actors had represented (or misrepresented) a scene, or their feelings about what was happening in the scene made the discussions powerful moments in which knowledge was co-constructed. In one 3rd grade tableau (from *The Hundred Dresses*), students chose to represent a split scene in which they showed a classroom with an empty chair and the young girl at home in bed. The chapter said nothing about the girl being sick, merely that she was not in class, and in fact, she was not sick at all. The actors explained that they chose a tableau that captured what they were imagining even though it was not written in the text. Some of the other children disagreed with their interpretation, but the drama itself created the opportunity to identify the group’s inference in order to allow discussion of their idea. Overall, teachers reported that drama not only increased students’ engagement with read alouds, but also allowed for qualitatively different discussions around text.

**Significance**

The evidence is clear that the drama strategy was successfully implemented as designed and that the engagement of these emergent bilingual learners was enhanced under the drama
conditions. We find the comments of the students describing the impact of the drama to reflect the theoretical frameworks we have adopted: the importance of enactment (“doing”) as a support for talk; the importance of iconic images; the importance of stepping into and out of characters; and the importance of thinking critically through multiple perspectives. These qualities of dialogism are supported in the flow of the dramatic experiences weaving throughout the text experience. Putting action into interaction yielded higher levels of engagement. Not surprisingly, we found the responses of the emergent bilingual students in schools serving economically disadvantaged communities to be similar to those from the students in schools serving high-income communities.

We feel that our study contributes to the existing literature and the findings from Belliveau and Kim’s (2013) synthesis. First, our study demonstrates the possibilities for engaging in drama within a common routine in the classroom, over an extended period of time, and drawing on the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Second, our study dispels some of the common myths around the use of drama (e.g., it is only for girls, young children, the language proficient, or the high-achieving students). Third, our study points to some specific growth (voiced by the students) around important comprehension strategies (e.g., visualization, embodiment) that were directly supported by the drama-based activities. Fourth, our study documents the potential for drama-enhanced read alouds in creating an active voice for emergent bilingual students in their learning.

Moving Forward

To be clear, we are not arguing that process oriented drama is all that is needed to support emergent bilingual students in the classroom. The evidence is clear that a balance of both interactive and more direct forms of instruction is important to the success of emergent bilingual learners (Goldenberg, 2008). We are arguing that the kind of drama work employed in this study can create a context that complements and informs direct instruction methodologies. We opened this study with a statement around the vulnerable position Black and emergent bilingual students often find themselves in the classroom—as silenced. The emergent bilingual students participating in this experience were far from silent. They were active, participatory, and intentional in using drama to express the important understandings they were making as they engaged with texts. They were passionate and creative as they explored the inequities, challenges, and injustices experienced by the characters in these books. We believe that these students who experienced Drama in Dialogic Read Alouds will go on to use the strategies they developed, as Boal (1985) suggests, to become more conscious of the inequities that exist in our society and begin to explore ways to push back on these inequities. Drama can be used to act on Cummins’s (2000) call for collaborative efforts to make classrooms into an “interpersonal space within which the acquisition of knowledge and formation of identity is negotiated. Power is created and shared within this interpersonal space where minds and identities meet” (p. 44). Through the engagement of the students in this project, we experienced drama as art form that
provided what Maxine Green describes as an intersecting space for social imagination and critical pedagogy (Kohli, 2016).
References


Transcribing Arts and Identities: A Case Study on Literacies at Guadalupe Middle School

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Abstract

Through single-case study research at a middle school site, students whose first language is Spanish gain instruction in an English language arts classroom using literary works with guided, close reading. Moreover, students’ background, cultural, and prior knowledge are consulted by the teacher as literature comes to life via socially responsible biliteracies, which value students’ identities and cultural and linguistic wealth in the presence of bilingual literary narratives. Through a teacher’s literary lesson planning that complements students' social interests, students are able to communicate their developing and bridging biliteracies, increase critical literacy awareness, and practice bilingual abilities through interactive instructional lessons with literary selections.

Keywords: bilingualism, case study research, critical literacy, English language arts, Latinx, literature, socially responsible literacy, Spanish language arts

Art is in all of us.

Sandra Cisneros (1984, p. 101)

Language left him gradually, a bit at a time. One would expect words to depart predictably, in reverse order—the way a row of knitting disappears, stitch by stitch, when the strand of working yarn is tugged off the needle—but that was not the case.

Stephanie Kallos (2015, p. xi)

To be literate means to question the world as one observes, listens, engages, reads, decodes, writes, revises, and reflects in the everyday world languages and affairs of life—whether in or out of school (Rodríguez, 2017). A literate life calls for social dialogue and engagement by citizens who rely on world languages and the arts for understanding and communication. Hence, languages, cultures, and society are interconnected and interdependent—across borders and boundaries—for civilizations and citizens to thrive. Students possess background, cultural and prior knowledge relevant and responsive to schooling and education (Valenzuela, 1999; Vasquez, 2014). At the same time, politics enters the realm of world
languages and instruction as borders and spaces are further defined and enforced by the state (García, 2009).

The presence of cultures other than a dominant one creates a pluralistic society that can function with multicultural perspectives and dialogic inquiry (Juzwik et al., 2013). Specifically, Wright, Boun, and García (2015) noted the implicit bias within nations themselves and how division and hierarchies form that enter our education systems. They argued,

Because education is most often the responsibility of nation states with artificial (and contested) geographical boundaries encompassing many—and oftentimes dividing—linguistic groups, decisions about bilingual and multilingual education are highly political, and influenced by a variety of historical, economic, and sociocultural factors. (p. 1)

The intersections of these influences cannot be overlooked in instructional planning, delivery, and assessment that value a multilingual and multicultural society. Thus, teachers’ knowledge of these intricacies of authority, power, and politics inform decisions as well as planning of instruction that favors students’ linguistic strengths and acumen in their lived lives as emergent bilinguals (García, 2009, 2014; Nieto, 2013). A literature review was prepared prior to introducing the study, methods, and parameters.

**Purpose and Significance of Research Study and Site**

To get a closer perspective and understanding of the arts in the lives of emergent bilinguals, research is needed that establishes key insights on teacher and student practices related to arts, identities, and literacies. Educators can benefit from more knowledge from both teaching that unfolds in the language arts classroom and how emergent bilinguals make meaning.

Of the five case studies completed during the 2013-2014 academic year, the following single-case study is based on mostly Latinx-origin students’ academic access and engagement in a language arts resource classroom at Guadalupe Middle School (pseudonym), which is a located in a high-rural, low-urban area southeast of Austin, Texas.

The middle school enrollment was 963 students; of these, 86 percent were identified as Hispanic, eight percent as African American, and five percent as White. Of the student population, 91 percent were identified as economically disadvantaged and 27 percent as emergent bilinguals. The majority of the students are of working-class background. The students identified as English language learners were also considered emergent bilinguals. They possess knowledge of Spanish and gained English-language learning that supported both languages in academic and social contexts. Of the professional staff, teachers were identified as 60 percent White, 30 percent Hispanic, 5 percent African American, and 5 percent Asian.

The central area of the community was once the Bergstrom Air Force Base, which operated from 1942 through 1993, with an airfield surrounded by public schools. The primary and secondary schools were later relocated when the land use was rezoned for the city’s new
international airport through a voter-approved bond program in 1997. Currently, the school
district, which spans 174 square miles, serves 12,000 students across seven civic communities
that are majority Latinx origin.

The purpose of this research article is to reveal the ways multilingual language arts and
critical literacies are enacted for deeper questioning and reflection through the elements of
literacy, which can lead to acculturation, self-actualization, and self-fulfillment through language
learning and, too often, in the face of uncertainty, indifference, acculturation, and assimilation.
Ethnography research was adopted with key emphasis on document analysis, instructional
observation, and teacher interviews with non-participant observation. Twenty-three bilingual
(English and Spanish) students participated in the study with permissions from their parents as
well as the school district. Two research questions were addressed:

- How does a teaching and learning community involve the teaching of the arts (e.g.,
  language arts, performing arts, visual arts) for bilingual and bicultural students?

- Which adolescent and multimodal literacies are enacted in and out of school?

These two research questions guided the observations and data gathering to gain more insights
on the arts in instruction and students’ practices outside of school settings.

Weekly visits to the site were conducted with observations of lessons delivered by a
language arts teacher, administering focus group sessions, and leading structured pre- and post-
interviews. Data were collected, and transcripts and records were read and reviewed that
reflected students’ art forms, ranging from writing and visual arts to the creation of nonfiction
stories about their lives as artifacts. Students read about “defining moments” in their young
adolescent lives and how English and Spanish language arts inform their sense of place along
with identity and literacy formation and self-identification.

A previous assignment called for the students to write a reflection on what they would
tell themselves to affirm their language and literacy learning experiences and journeys. This
translated to students creating a linguistic inventory of their lives by completing an assignment
named “My Literacy Journey Box,” which supported transcribing and translanguageing with
teachers authoring themselves, students authoring their lives, and students including their
families and communities in their authorship for positive social and academic learning outcomes
(Fránquiz, Leija, & Garza, 2015). Students’ personal reflection and ownership of their story and
journey further communicated an interest in their lives and ways of narrating, speaking, and
writing about themselves.

Review of Literature

The literacy and artistic abilities of emergent bilinguals can be complemented by
culturally relevant and responsive teaching approaches that include authentic literary selections
and writing experiences (Nieto, 2013). In fact, young people’s ways of knowing about language
arts and literacies reveals how their adaptability will transfer to application in additional world languages (Vasquez, 2014). For instance, Edwards (2015) acknowledged:

In the context of literacy learning, children learning to read in one language will be able to transfer a range of skills to other languages. They understand, for instance, that print carries meaning, that the stream of print is broken up into words, and that print has directionality. (p. 77)

These understandings are relevant in the application of the elements of literacy, which include knowing, listening, memorizing, noticing, observing, performing, questioning, reading, speaking, thinking (metacognition), understanding (you: reader/thinker/literati), viewing, and writing (wonderment) (Rodríguez, 2017). Furthermore, these elements are essential in the development, bridging, and support of an active, engaged citizenry and must include the arts for academic and social acculturation and democratic participation (Selvester & Summers, 2012). In this article, I examine middle-grade level, Latinx students’ writing and visual arts in the creation of narratives about their lives. The students lived in high-rural, low-urban surroundings and revealed bilingual learning and biliteracies in practice.

Ways of engaging adolescents must also value their cultural ways of knowing, self-identity formation, and socially responsible literacies. Schools and civic communities in the United States continue to experience a “shifting linguistic landscape,” which reveals the cognitive assets and advantages of emergent bilingual learners as they mature and pursue postsecondary education and enter the workforce (Gándara, 2015, p. 61). In the epigraph that opens the chapter from Kallos’ novel Language Arts (2015), the reader is left to ponder what remains of one’s language and how it is affirmed and harnessed through a culturally sustaining approach or, to one’s detriment, lost in the world of language arts communication.

Can the language arts encompass a more expansive definition that leads to engagement and understanding for student learning? Emert, Macro, and Schmidt (2016) concede, “The evidence is clear: the arts positively influence reading and language skills, critical thinking, social skills, motivation, and the school environment” (p. 11). Indeed, the arts and language learning meet with culture and society influencing what we see and how we come to knowing and understanding. Instruction that values and promotes multilingualism in a pluralistic democracy engages human inventiveness with potential. In addition, students can adopt a questioning approach that values critical inquiry and dialogue about what one reads and how one interprets it in one’s own life.

McTighe and Wiggins (2013) identified essential questions to guide and stimulate dialogical and inquiry learning. They believed that such learning promotes a “provocative and generative” learning that leads to “uncovering depth” by students with their teachers, rather than “simply covering it” from a teacher’s point of view in a lecture-based, monologue role (authors’ emphasis) (p. 3). As an illustration, in language arts, McTighe and Wiggins recommended the
following essential questions that are “not answerable with finality in a single lesson or a brief sentence”:

1. What do good readers do, especially when they don’t comprehend a text?
2. How does what I am reading influence how I should read it?
3. Why am I writing? For whom?
4. How do effective writers hook and hold their readers?
5. What is the relationship between fiction and truth?
6. How are stories from other places and times about me? (p. 2)

These questions can guide and inform readers of all ages and abilities to think critically and to guide dialogue among students and between students and educators for deeper thinking toward civic and socially responsible literacies. Thus, instruction is no longer driven by rote learning or even one-way instruction. Instead, similar to sustaining students’ cultural and linguistic wealth, Juzwik et al. (2013) explain, “In culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, moreover, a dialogic teaching stance frames differences as resources for learning, rather than as problems to overcome. Teachers taking a dialogic stance weave languages [...] into the life of the classroom” (p. 4). So, too, dialogic teaching is as relevant as dialogic language and visual arts in the arts classroom.

**Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical stance, proposed by Django Paris (2012), culturally sustaining pedagogy “seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (p. 93). Granted, for language to be present and alive, the elements of literacy such as writing must be cultivated in support of world languages and literatures as resources for understanding and communications (García, Johnson, & Selzer, 2016). In the act of writing, the writer questions and persists through the tempest of words that arrive—and before they depart—in the making of meaning. By extension, the writer begins to craft a voice as a child and then as an adolescent in the public school classroom, or other spaces outside of school, to meet writing demands, expectations, and interests (Rodríguez, 2017). However, to achieve a writer identity across genres and modes, young writers must experience instruction and planning that favors thinking and reading like a writer with both students and teachers writing and discussing the deliberations of the writing process, especially when academic English language often dominates cultural discourses and instructional planning (Sassi, Gere, & Christenbury, 2014).

To write requires questioning through uncertainty, but especially persistence and resilience in the making of meaning and creating knowledge. In the book *The Habits of the
Creative Mind (2016), Miller and Jurecic noted the labors of “writers who practice working in the face of uncertainty” and added,

These writers ask genuine questions—difficult questions that can’t be answered simply by looking up facts—and they work to produce writing that is informed by deep learning and serious thought. They make connections between their particular interests and something bigger, something outside the sphere of their individual concerns. (p. 11).

The writers they describe are also young adolescents who create art to translate and transcribe their identities on canvas, paper, and the digital screen. Creativity, imagination, and intellect fuel ideas. These are found in all content areas and disciplines that welcome and nurture the arts.

Because schooling affects both learning experiences and expectations in the lives of young people, they often face “defining moments” in their childhood and adolescence. Also, in this article, English and Spanish language arts inform young people’s sense of belonging along with identity formation and self-identification with an asset-based approach, although deficit-oriented approaches remain present in arts education (Fenner & Snyder, 2017). Brown and Knowles (2014) observed, “Young adolescents who are from diverse ethnic backgrounds and/or English Language Learners (ELLs) have a greater challenge than European American Whites in finding a healthy identity in a majority White world” (p. 45). The dominance of White American identities in schooling narratives and literary selections can marginalize students with one dominant narrative unless there is flexibility in creating multiple literary narratives about cultural identities in adolescent development to belong and name oneself. Maintaining an awareness of how the arts can influence young adolescents’ intellect, creativity, and imagination reveals the ways that students experience the following: (1) see themselves for identity development, (2) practice their social responsibilities, and (3) enact their literacy formation.

Context of Study

Ms. Jordán, one of the English language arts seventh-grade teachers, worked with emergent bilinguals students who received additional learning support. Of Latinx descent, she had been teaching for eight years in the middle school level with emergent bilinguals, a term she favored over “limited English proficient,” she explained. As an emergent bilingual learner herself with public and bilingual schooling experience in the United States, she preferred favoring her students’ learning interests and desires in support of cultural inclusion, while not subjugating them to limitations and labels of indifference imposed by others not in the classroom.

Of her teaching processes and approaches, Ms. Jordán revealed: “The students have much to tell and show me about what they know and understand in their worlds and the ones I know when we study language arts and reading. We connect literacies to our own here in school, at home, and beyond. It isn’t enough to just read to read, but together we can make and sort meaning from what we read and have yet to experience” (Ms. Jordán, personal communications,
2014). She remained connected to the concepts that students must experience literature as a mirror, window, and door in the construction of meanings for and connections with themselves and their global neighbors. Ms. Jordán favored reading the literacies of power and assumption across societies and belief systems as advanced by Botelho and Rudman (2009). Her conceptual understanding of theories influenced her practice as demonstrated in the balance of texts and multiliteracies she supported among her students. The students were invited and permitted to share their past experiences with poetry and reading. Some of the students expressed interest in poems that rhyme, poems that include family, and poems that focus on the natural world.

In preparation for the language arts lesson under study, students were introduced to genres of writing that included poetry and prose poetry. In the course of the lesson, students learned that a poem can carry significant interpretations and meanings for readers. Interpretations and meanings alike vary based on connections, experiences, and identities the reader brings to a poem, which is a literary art form, in language arts. Additional understandings from the lesson included that the reader gives a poem, or any literary genre, a reading that reflects a meeting of author, text, reader, and society. Such a meeting is essential in the meaning making and toward developing a writer identity as revealed in the lesson.

By extension, in the book Identity-Focused ELA Teaching: A Curriculum Framework for Diverse Learners and Contexts (2015), Beach, Johnston, and Thein maintained,

The very notion of identity is a relatively recent phenomenon beginning with Greek drama and reflected in Shakespearean characters such as Hamlet, pontificating on his role and purpose in life. From this period to the 20th century, identity was often defined in terms of the metaphor of the “inner” versus “outer” self. (p. 3)

The lesson revealed that that art forms existed about identity and selfhood prior to classical definitions of Greek drama. Moreover, the symbolism and metaphors appear across world languages and literatures to define selfhood and community. For instance, in the making of a language arts canon in a Western tradition, some texts and even cuneiform, hieroglyphics, orature, and Sanskrit remain absent from curricula and instruction. At the turn of the century, these works are gaining more attention to articulate a more intercultural interpretation and understanding in the liberal arts without subordinated practices and bias (Dabashi, 2015; Mignololo, 2003).

**Cultural Knowledge**

As the lesson unfolded, key insights about what constitutes a text, which interpretations are valued, and whose cultural knowledge matters became visible by the teacher and the students. Granted colonization, imperialism, and acts of cultural superiority and erasure imposed a canonized set of texts and narratives in the making of an educated citizenry and civilizations to emulate. For instance, Huerta (2000) argued
To understand many of the Renaissance, neo-classical and even twentieth-century artists and writers we must know their referents in the Euro-classical world or we are not fully educated, we are told. But when do we learn about the Aztec God of the Sun, Huitzilopochtli or the Mother Goddess Tonantzin? Where do the accomplishments of the Aztec prince Cuauhtemoc come into play? What of his acts of bravery in the face of Spanish brutality? And reaching even farther back in pre-Columbian time, who knows about the gifts of Quetzalcóatl? (p. 16).

Of these gifts, students in language arts and other disciplines may not even study and meet in the pursuit of grade-level learning, understanding, and achievement. The inclusive study of mythologies and concepts native to the continental Américas may be absent, although many educators are beginning to recover the study of language arts toward an expansive and inclusive approach that includes the cultural heritages of their students and communities.

The strengths of Ms. Jordán’s teaching included dialogic engagement with students, resembled Paris’s (2012) culturally sustaining pedagogy, and favored conversation followed by writing and discussion among students and between teacher and students, with Ms. Jordán also writing with her student writers. Furthermore, her teaching can be described as “linguistically sustaining pedagogy,” which Valdés (2017) argued as favoring the students’ language assets and “invites students to value what they bring or to confidently continue to use features of their full linguistic repertoires in both formal and informal oral and written production for a variety of purposes in and out of school” (pp. vii-viii). In fact, what Ms. Jordán asked of her students she also engaged in doing and even shared her doubts through metacognitive practice and self-reflection.

“Think about what you are noticing as you are reading. Remember that we can use your abilities in English and Spanish to make sense as we read,” she stated.

Through a unit of study Ms. Jordán prepared a variety of inclusive texts that reflect students’ interpretation and translation abilities, community languages, high-rural environment, and cultural knowledge and interests in preparation of their learning about the environment for Earth Day in their social studies class. Various titles and copies of texts by the authors were in the school library, and some students had gained previous exposure to the authors’ works in other classes and library-based lesson plans. Thus, they had learned some key vocabulary terms and concepts connected with the planned unit for English language arts with an English as a Second Language approach that favored bilingual texts and bicultural knowledge. Identity formation and affirmation were part of the lesson that further increased their connections and interests in the study of literature.

**Bilingual and Bicultural Conversations with Vignettes**

While reading a vignette from Cisneros’ (1984, 1994) coming-of-age novel titled *The House on Mango Street*, twenty students experimented with guided close reading through a short vignette written as a prose poem. Next, students discussed the vignette and proceeded to create...
poems about themselves and the natural world they inhabit, explore, and revere in their everyday community life and coming-of-age adventures. Through an anticipatory instructional approach with a blend of prior knowledge and a pre-reading launch, Ms. Jordán encouraged students to describe outdoor spaces that fill their environment at home and the landscape surrounding Guadalupe Middle School. Moreover, her instructional approach permitted students to make use of their living environments, practice sensorial language biliteracies, and invited predictions about the texts they were to read and analyze individually and as a group.

In addition to other pre-selected readings, Cisneros’ vignette served as a mentor text—or a narrative to reread, study, and imitate—to model the discussion and guided close reading followed by students’ own literary production and writing processes. Significant connections to the novel’s protagonist Esperanza Cordero launched the pre- and post-reading dialogue. Students shared their experiences about living in the high-rural, low-urban communities of greater southeast Austin, Texas, and noted the similarities and differences compared to the main protagonist with inferences to politics, safety, and society. The dialogical inquiry further motivated students to persist in documenting their environmental surrounding and the significance via language arts application.

Cisneros’s writings supported language art instruction and the teaching of literary elements across the middle grades with emphasis on both literal and figurative language. In the following vignette excerpt from “Four Skinny Trees,” Cisneros’ main character Esperanza defines her sense of self and belonging alongside nature in an urban area ripe with change and also with key elements of synesthesia:

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Four raggedy excuses planted by the city. [. . .] Their strength is secret. [. . .] Four who grew despite concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be. (pp. 74-75)

Here, the students discussed personification and how a narrative can include elements of the environment and social awareness via poetry and prose. Ms. Jordán worked with the students in identifying Cisneros’s intentional use of fragments and how these are helpful in the effort to draft complete simple and compound sentences.

Students learned about audience, publication, and author intent with the creative freedom to express oneself with words and the arts in the world. Some of the students’ responses, included below, reflect in-and-out-school literacies, such as writing about their home environments and connections with their school setting, schooling experiences, and home-school understandings informed by translanguaging:

**Julie (age 12):** I got trees like that at my house. *Tengo bastantes. ¿No me creen? Eh, ¿por qué no me creen ustedes? No los cortamos sólo para cortarlos.* (I have
many trees. You don’t believe me? (Sighs.) Why don’t you believe me? We don’t cut down any trees with no purpose.] Me and my mom planted them.

**Marcos (age 12):** Oh, I can write like that [Cisneros], Ms.

**Nora (age 13):** Why did the city plant them, and then they don’t care? *No les importa nada del medio ambiente.* [They don’t care at all about the environment.]

**Perla (age 13):** Look, the point is the trees can keep growing no matter what. *Van a crecer si no los cortamos.* [The trees will grow if we do not cut them.]

**José (age 13):** Trees [get] cut a lot.

**Toby (age 13):** So, maybe the trees won’t bully her. She can be whoever she wanna be.

To further advance the dialogue, students were invited to read selected vignettes of the Spanish-language version *La casa en Mango Street*, translated by Elena Poniatowska (1994), and to note any uses of language that stood out for them in their second reading. Ms. Jordán explained the authors’ collaboration in the making of a Spanish-language book, which was originally published in the English language. She provided a brief reference to the section named “*Agradecimientos*” by author Cisneros who thanks the translator Poniatowska for her “*continuo amor, solidaridad y apoyo hacia mí y otros escritores chicanos*” [ongoing affection, solidarity, and support of me and more Chicana and Chicano writers] (p. xii).

Ms. Jordán explained, “Underline a word or phrase you like. Circle a word or phrase you want to talk about later.” An excerpt from vignette, which is highlighted here, appears with the Spanish-language diminutive suffix of “flaco,” or skinny, as “*Cuatro árboles flaquititos*” in Poniatowska’s version (1994):

Son los únicos que me entienden. Soy la única que los entiende. Cuatro árboles flacos de flacos cuellos y codos puntiagudos como los míos. Cuatro que no pertenecen aquí pero aquí están. Cuatro excusas harapientas plantadas por la ciudad. [. . .] Su fuerza es secreta. [. . .] Cuatro que crecieron a pesar del concreto. Cuatro que luchan y no se olvidan de luchar. Cuatro cuya única razón es ser y ser. (pp. 76-77)

The students’ reading of the vignette in Spanish solicited new ideas about translanguaging, interpreting, and translating with adjectives, nouns, suffixes, and diminutive usage. They annotated, or labeled, text with pencils, pens, and highlighters and even coded terms in the vignette in the language of their choice. The students distinguished among adjectives and nouns and the use of prefixes and suffixes as well as literary terms such as catalogue and repetition. Ms. Jordán shared with the students the difficulties that some interpreters and translators face to make meaning in two or more world languages. Her attempts were to make connections to students’ own translanguaging struggles and triumphs to make meaning.
The Making of Poems and Identities

Some of the students’ written poems revealed their conceptual understanding and even identities and care for the environment, as revealed in the poems written in both English and Spanish. The critical literacies found in Spanish and English language arts, culture, and society appeared in the poems. One poem to note was titled “El árbol perfecto,” or “The Perfect Tree.” A student named José joined self and nature to name the world he inhabits through words and visual arts and with affirmations:

The following translation is provided, although much of the cadence and rhythm remain in the original Spanish-language version.

Tree, from my patio, you have saved me.
When I am about to fall, you
reach with your branches and hold me.
Tree, when I am bored, I climb
and I am comforted. When I need inspiration
I climb and you give me all
the inspiration. Thank you, tree.

The poem appeared in Spanish and was featured on local transit buses on a large placard for passengers to read across the city routes for a literacy awareness campaign and to promote poetry reading in urban, public transport.

José’s poem reveals connections with the natural world through a tree that supports and gives, yet is interconnected to him as he attempted to make meaning and connections to understand his own identity in a changing world with unpredictability. The gratitude expressed further communicates his awareness, stewardship, and social responsibility, too. Although Cisneros’ text is fiction, elements of nonfiction are present that transport the reader to one’s own
environment and circumstances. The character Esperanza also questions municipal motives with civic responsibility and concern. As a result, the text is not absent of society, but in the challenges of belonging and making sense of civic-based life. Later in the extended unit under study during the semester, Ms. Jordán also introduced students to the allegorical and symbolism-filled books *El árbol generoso* (2011) and *The Giving Tree* (1994) by Shel Silverstein and *Hatchet* (1987) by Gary Paulsen. Through this approach, Ms. Jordán supported a text set focused on critical literacies, environmental awareness, and self and community responsibility that translates to a multilingual, translanguaging, and transcribing environment.

Luis, an advanced bilingual writer with independent assignments provided by Ms. Jordán, read an excerpt from Paulsen’s novel *Hatchet* and was asked to write in response to a prompt on surviving an accident and being in an unknown space: the wilderness. Luis’s reading experience is noted here. The first novel in a book series, *Hatchet* is an engaging novel with themes of survival, divorce, and early adolescence. As a reader and writer, Luis further elaborated on his authorship role by practicing summary and action verbs in the unfolding plot about a boy named Brian Robeson who ends up spending 54 days in the wilderness. Brian’s only form of survival after a plane crash in the wild is a hatchet, which was given to him by his mother before his trip. A brief excerpt from the transcript between Luis and his teacher Ms. Jordán appears here:

**Luis (age 13):** I like the book a lot, because I’m from a big *ciudad*, and this take place in the woods. The only time I get to see some of the woods is when I am with my family in Nuevo León [México]. There’s adventure on a family ranch I like.

**Ms. Jordán:** Luis, do you think you’ll read another book by Gary Paulsen?

**Luis:** *No sé.* **Bueno, creo que sí.** [I’m unsure. Well, maybe I will.] This book got me interested in reading. I want to read more by the author. The librarian told me I could read it in Spanish if I want to. That’s a good idea to find out how it sounds in Spanish.

**Ms. Jordán:** It sounds like the book connected with you a lot.

**Luis:** It did. I like how Brian is able to survive even when it gets hard for him.

In the composition excerpt, which appears in Luis’s handwriting and as a transcript, note how Luis applies a reading summary with his interpretation of the novel.
The boy named Brian Robeson who’s [sic] family is divorced. He is going to Canada to visit his dad. But the pilot suffers a heart attack. Brian figures out how to control the plane[,] but the engine then goes into malfunction. So[,] he must drive the plane down into a lake. He barely gets off in time[;] but he is the only one that survived.

He is using supplies in his pocket to help him. But first he was very thirsty, but didn’t know what to do. He was so thirsty he decided to drink from the lake. Then[,] he needed some food[;] he found some berries and ate a few every day. Then[,] he worried about at night time on how he needed to get fire. At one moment when he couldn’t think[,] he got so mad he threw his hatchet at a rock.

Luis described the plot and also analyzed the circumstances that lead to Brian taking action for his survival in a new, difficult environment following an accident. In the classroom, discussion centered on how students’ own rural and urban lives compete with a life of survival in the
wilderness that resembled some of their own coming-of-age hardships at home. They spoke about limited resources in their environments and the inner and external conflicts that young people and adults face. In addition, the meanings Luis interprets from the novel excerpt detail his interest in sequencing the story in his own voice. His narrative included emotional descriptions with understanding about basic human needs for survival in a harsh, underpopulated environment.

Making Meaning

How do we support meaning for learning in students’ lives? Vasquez (2014) explained, “A critical literacy curriculum needs to be lived. It arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live. As such, it cannot be traditionally taught” (p. 1). The lived lives of the students were consulted and considered in Ms. Jordán’s instructional planning, delivery, and assessment. She used oral assessment and also narrative-based assignments to determine students’ comprehensions and expository writing techniques. Ms. Jordán’s application of critical literacies, which is informed by Vasquez’s research, revealed that reading words and worlds that were mirrored in their oral production and expository writing offered value and voice to their lives. In fact, students can question and transform the conditions in which they live to create a more just society through the arts.

Schools and classrooms can expand the concepts of literacy—at macro and micro levels—to define what constitutes becoming learned in a changing, competing society. Identities are just as significant whether through labels or self-identification and literature can complement the study of community and its community members to gain deeper understanding with empathy and about ethics. In Stop Stealing Dreams (What Is School For?) (2012), Seth Godin advised, “Make school different” (p. 35). As demonstrated in the selected vignette, conversation, and writing, students possessed transcribing tools they enacted as strengths through their literacies and beliefs. In a supportive environment with their teacher and among their peers, students can transcribe their language and literacy lives by enacting socially responsible literacies for a more just world that honors and respects the Earth as well as their cultural, linguistic, and community-based literacies and lives.

Moreover, young adolescents can be guided through instruction to notice the intersections of identity, literacy, power, privilege, and society in their lives, question how these inform their habits and practices as active citizens, and understand their connections to the world. The emerging literacies students possessed are similar to those advanced by Edwards (2015), which emphasize transferable concepts and high expectations that education professionals must espouse daily for their students. Students enact various language learning practices with their teacher to establish contexts and become each other’s linguistic and cultural resource through the arts and across the content areas and disciplines.

In A Search Past Silence: The Literacy of Young Black Men (2013), Kirkland explains, “Then the study of literacy is incomplete until it folds together the doing and the being, the
struggle and the sacrifice—unless the story of literacy becomes the story of us, the *literate*” (p. 13). In fact, adolescents attempt to grasp the culture of meanings and interpretations, even in moments of ambiguity and (mis)understanding, that considers both the spoken and unspoken to make meaning through orality, print, and the arts. Ms. Jordán’s instructional unit values students’ knowledge—both cultural and familiar—in becoming literate and engaged in the telling of one’s story that connects with others in society. In short, students’ linguistic and cultural strengths are additive and essential for naming their worlds and those they encounter in their schooling to make meaning and gain their identities.

**Toward a Conclusion**

In the introduction to the 10th anniversary edition of *The House on Mango Street* (1994), Cisneros responded to questions she receives often from readers and even poses questions for consideration and action in dialogical form as advanced by Fecho, Falter, and Hong (2015). Cisneros elaborated:

> Am I Esperanza [Cordero]? Yes. And no. And then again, perhaps maybe. One thing I know for certain, you, the reader, are Esperanza. So I should ask, What happened to you? Did you stay in school? Did you go to college? Did you have that baby? Were you a victim? [. . . ] Will you learn to be the human being you are not ashamed of? Did you run away from home? Did you join a gang? Did you get fired? Did you give up? Did you get angry?

> *You* are Esperanza. You cannot forget who you are. (pp. xix-xx)

The questions posed by Cisneros and the closing statement from the novel are reminders of the transcribing that students can experience in their identity and literacy formation in classrooms, schools, and communities that value multilingualism and multiculturalism for the making of a democratic society.

By consulting students’ background and prior knowledge, literature and the arts can come to life in varied forms that value students’ cultural and linguistic wealth and sustains their identities and literacies for a pluralistic democracy. Actually, by extension, students are able to communicate their artistic biliteracies, increase critical literacy awareness, and practice bilingual abilities through interactive instructional lessons. Students as self-authors is empowering and can translate to emerging writers gaining voice and scribal identities across content areas, while experiencing the cultural knowledge and strengths of their community languages. When students have the opportunity to transcribe the words and arts in their worlds, they make meaning and connections with concepts that are relevant to their everyday lives and experiences. In short, language and visual arts offers opportunity with an additive, asset-based approach that values what they know.
To transcribe the arts and our students’ formation and evolution of their identities requires reflection and action. Ek and Chávez (2015) argue, “When we make meaning of ourselves, we are authoring ourselves. […] Authoring, then, is how actors respond to the world” (p. 137). The self-authoring students embark upon promotes a writer identity for themselves and for their teachers, too. Together they can transcribe identities, perceptions, and realities on paper and the digital page as they create bicultural meanings and connections about the world they name and inhabit. Students who experience writing their own biliterate narratives and who are guided by literary work that confirms and validates diverse voices of speaking, knowing, and writing across language arts gain more pathways as emergent bilingual writers to practice their writing craft (Rodríguez, 2017).

Bilingual and multilingual approaches that favor an additive model for language maintenance, resources, and support value human inventiveness and world languages that intersect with and complement the study of English (Valdés, 2017). Along the same lines, the perspective of emergent bilinguals and emerging writers supports community language participation from families, schools, and communities (Nora & Echevarria, 2016). Some of the core themes and premises, or realizations, from the single-case study include the following and list examples of practice across the arts:

- The dimensions of literacy and literacy events were interconnected through our understanding of students’ social practices and behaviors in the making of meaning that included multimodal literacies. For example, this includes students experiencing the elements of literacy such as oral performance and speaking in a social exchange with their classmates and teachers.

- Literary selections that mirror students’ interests in cultural knowledge and popular culture possessed more writing sustainability over time than those assignments driven by formulaic, systematic, or categorized as mandatory reading. For instance, this includes students experiencing their immediate civic and schooling communities in print and as readers in self-selected texts and even in the pre-selected texts by teachers for study, such as in Cisneros’s vignettes.

- Students’ use of Spanish as their community language meets a cultural and linguistic wealth competency when paired with Latinx-themed literary texts and instruction. As an illustration, today more texts appear in bilingual format as well as author interviews that reveal how they practice biliterate communications and adopt culturally linguistic innovations in digital and non-digital formats to engage young readers and thinkers across all ages, backgrounds, interests, and origins.

- A range of mentor or paired texts for student reading can enliven contemporary classics across all the elements of literacy: knowing, listening, memorizing, noticing, observing, performing, questioning, reading, speaking, thinking (metacognition), understanding (by
reader/literati), viewing, and writing (wonderment) in students’ lives (Rodríguez, 2017). To take a case in point, consider digital and non-digital forms of communications to enter the classroom to demonstrate to students that, like the world, a text is not flat and absent from society, but a living text and moving document that spans various digital, literate, print, reader, and scribal cultures and identities. This was shown in Cisneros’s vignette and also by the questions posed by students about adults’ decision-making and the care for the environment (trees). Lastly, the student’s art work with a vignette of his own demonstrated cultural knowledge, identity development, and literacy formation in the arts as a steward of one’s community and environment.

The realizations presented here confirm the need to create more inclusive, interactive, and reciprocal exchanges for teaching and learning with students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. More specifically, Malott and Paone (2016) declared, “The question, Who are Latino/as?, could fill an entire library” (p. 5). In Ms. Jordán’s classroom, every student possessed linguistic and cultural wealth resembling a library or museum and, consequently, background and prior knowledge become instructive and engaging for learning and understanding.
References


Supporting Teachers in Arts Integration Strategies to Foster Foundational Literacy Skills of Emergent Bilinguals

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Abstract

Oral language skills are essential to the future literacy of students in kindergarten and first grade, especially emergent bilinguals (EBs). Yet, U.S. teachers receive few professional development opportunities that prepare them to use effective strategies for promoting oral language development. Since teacher education is compartmentalized into curricular silos, methods for literacy instruction are taught in one course, methods for arts instruction in another, and so on. This article argues that well-designed arts integration can meet a key need of young, linguistically diverse students by providing opportunities for oral language practice across content areas. Experimental evidence that arts-based instruction benefits the speaking skills of EBs is presented; the underlying mechanisms are explored. An example of a fieldwork program that provided pre-service teachers with hands-on experience in K-1 classes is included, showing how they learned to enhance the verbal skills of EBs through integration of drama, music, and movement.

Keywords: elementary teacher education, classroom drama, arts integration, primary grades, linguistic diversity, emergent bilinguals, English learners, diversity, teacher preparation, kindergarten

In a recent interview, a school district curriculum specialist casually observed, “I got a chance to talk to the literacy department, finally. Our department (Visual and Performing Arts) had never been able to get an audience with them!” This seemingly innocent comment alluded to a culture of content area compartmentalization that has become characteristic of U.S. public school districts (Augsburg & De Barros, 2011). Ironically, when educators and researchers are asked to explain what qualities make for good teaching, a majority mention educator
collaboration and curricular integration (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002). Yet, such integration remains rare.

Grinning, the arts specialist described the outcome of her meeting with the reading specialists: “[We] talked about creating robust vocabulary lessons through integrating singing and drama. They went to a classroom, watched what the kids were doing, and loved it! So now they are saying, ‘This is really good stuff.’” The lesson the reading specialists had observed was part of a professional development program that equipped K-2 teachers in diverse urban schools with arts-based strategies created to promote the oral English development (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013) of emergent bilinguals (EBs). Designed to engage all children in classroom dialogues as part of a standards-based drama and dance curriculum, these strategies have been found to significantly enhance the oral language skills of EBs (Greenfader, Brouillette & Farkas, 2015; Greenfader & Brouillette, 2017).

Despite the consensus among researchers that a child’s oral abilities in the early elementary grades are critical to his or her future literacy and overall academic success (August & Shanahan, 2006; Hoff, 2013; Snow & Dickinson, 1991), newly certified teachers continue to arrive in schools with little experience in encouraging oral interactions among K-2 students. Given the strong pressure to prepare children to do well on written standardized tests, teacher credential programs tend to spend little time on teaching effective strategies—such as dramatic play—for promoting oral language development. In this article, we argue that this disadvantages EBs in the primary grades.

**Understanding the Needs of Young Emergent Bilinguals**

Across the United States, students who are still developing proficiency in English comprise a large and growing subpopulation. The number of school-designated English learners enrolled in public schools nationwide increased by 51%—from 3.5 million to 5.3 million—between the 1997-98 and the 2008-09 school years (NCLEA, 2011). These young EBs have unique learning needs. Not only are they learning a second language, but they are also developing proficiency in their home languages (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). EBs need frequent opportunities to engage in structured academic talk with teachers and peers who know English well and can provide accurate feedback (Francis et al., 2006; Wong-Fillmore, & Snow 2000). Most experts agree that oral English proficiency is an essential first step toward English reading development (Goldenberg, 2008). Early intervention is pivotal since oral language has been found to predict future literacy, overall academic success, and improved social dispositions (Spira, Bracken, & Fischel, 2005). Yet, paradoxically, the national focus on reading—enforced by standardized tests—has come at the cost of time spent on oral language (O’Day, 2009).

It is not surprising that EBs do not initially perform on par with monolingual-English speaking students on English-language assessments (August & Shanahan, 2006); many of these children come from homes where little or no English is spoken. What is concerning is that the
vocabulary gap between EBs and non-EBs that exists at kindergarten entry (Hoff, 2013) persists throughout schooling (Lee & Burkam, 2002; NCES, 2013), despite the fact that many EBs acquire vocabulary at a faster rate than their monolingual-English peers (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011; Snow & Kim, 2007).

Bilingual and monolingual-English learners follow similar trajectories in language acquisition, except for usage of background English vocabulary knowledge (Snow & Kim, 2007). Monolinguals often rely upon prior vocabulary knowledge to map new vocabulary words and concepts, boosting their comprehension. However, EBs—who are still building their English vocabularies—are unable to utilize this strategy and therefore must turn to different strategies to achieve comprehension (Snow & Kim, 2007). Yet, the fact that EBs may not understand certain English vocabulary words does not mean that they cannot recognize the object or idea that the word represents. Indeed, many EBs possess conceptual vocabulary knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the vocabulary in their home language or English) on par with monolingual English-speaking students (Mancilla-Martinez & Greenfader, 2014). For example, a young EB from a Spanish-speaking home may know “mesa,” the Spanish word for “table,” but not yet know the English equivalent. This child’s abilities differ from those of a child who does not know the word for “table” in any language; the implications for educators also differ.

Classroom teachers must have access to meaningful activities that engage young EBs and allow them to tap into such conceptual abilities. Additionally, teachers of EBs must approach English language development in a way that recognizes these young students’ assets. As articulated by the “funds of knowledge” framework, EBs possess a wealth of knowledge and competencies that come from life experiences (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2013; González et al., 1994; Moll, 1994). Yet these skills might not be accessed in typical English-only classroom interactions (Meyer, 2000). In order to narrow the achievement gap between EBs and their peers, it is therefore pivotal for teachers to be able to implement methods that draw upon young EBs’ skills and knowledge.

Leveling the Playing Field through Arts Integration

Teachers and school districts often feel the need to make tradeoffs between instruction in reading and/or math and instruction in the arts. Yet arts experiences can be especially important to children from linguistically diverse families—or with diverse capabilities—as these children are less likely than their peers to have attended preschool (Laughlin, 2013), primarily due to lack of access (Greenfader & Miller, 2014). So EBs may have had little exposure to English outside of school; many of these children, especially those who struggle with language learning, might benefit from arts integration activities to foster English language development. There is an urgent need to provide effective ways of enabling these children to master English, so that they can go on to successfully learn other subjects. Ironically, the time spent learning English while at school limits their capacity to learn other content areas (Newhouse, 2007). However, well-designed lessons in math, reading, and science that integrate the arts to help bridge the language gap can
provide emergent bilinguals with a highly motivating first step (Brouillette, Childress-Evans, Hinga & Farkas, 2014).

Too often children who have language delays—or speak a language other than English at home—become isolated from much of the literacy curriculum. Although they may receive differentiated instruction, in practice these lessons tend to be watered down. Children who also have decoding challenges may receive additional support in word recognition and spelling, but they do not generally get the same instruction in comprehension skills as typically achieving children. As a result, they are inadvertently deprived of needed assistance in constructing meaning from text. For these children, arts-based instruction can prove invaluable. Drama activities have been shown to boost emergent literacy skills (Podlozny, 2000; Mages, 2006); also, dramatic play comes naturally to young children, providing rich opportunities both for expressing themselves and for interacting with others.

EBs need frequent and structured opportunities to use and respond to oral language (Hoff, 2013). Arts lessons provide this, along with rich opportunities for vocabulary development. In contrast to contrived vocabulary drills, classroom drama activities help to significantly increase vocabulary in authentic and meaningful contexts, while also enhancing the higher-level thinking skills needed for deeper understanding. The challenge is for K-2 teachers to learn to deliver such lessons effectively, as few have had much arts experience. Even teachers who are enthusiastic advocates of such scripted activities as readers’ theatre may be unfamiliar with the improvisational classroom drama techniques that can help young children to improve their oral language skills.

Successful arts integration programs show teachers how to create a bridge between the arts and the language arts aspects of the curriculum, so that arts integration amplifies English language development and learning in the language arts. This provides additional support for EBs by enriching the curriculum with visual images, creative movement, and interpersonal interactions, along with memorable rhythms, rhymes and patterns. Such support accelerates the learning of children who are not yet fluent in English and therefore struggle with the language-based explanations they encounter in English immersion classrooms.

Well-planned theatre/drama and dance lessons that are linked to the English language arts (ELA), English language development (ELD), and visual and performing arts (VAPA) standards can provide all students with the opportunity to meaningfully respond. Further, cognitive research on multimodal learning suggests that incorporating movement, gesture, and expression supports language comprehension and retention (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Hardison & Sonchaeng, 2005; Kress, 2009; Rieg & Paquette, 2009; Silverman, 2007). Arts activities then become a tool for enabling EBs to engage, on a deeper level, with the same curriculum content as other students.

Arts activities can also be strikingly efficient. In traditional instruction, the teacher questions only one student at a time. In contrast, drama activities can allow many children to
respond at once, enabling a teacher to assess the comprehension of all students in the class at the same time. When checks for understanding show that EBs are becoming confused, scaffolding can be provided, enabling EBs to gain access to the curriculum on an equal basis with native speakers. Here is an example from a drama-literacy integration lesson from the Teaching Artist Project (TAP), discussed earlier.

“Actors – stand up and make a circle!”

Twenty kindergartners eagerly jump up and form a circle, standing in “5-point position,” with their hands at their sides, head high, feet together. The teacher who directs the drama lesson is using complex vocabulary words. However, the children follow along easily because he is simultaneously demonstrating the posture. Many observers would not guess that most of these children speak a language other than English at home.

“Stretch your right hand toward the middle of the circle.” As they begin the warm-up exercises, some children have trouble telling their right from their left hand. When this happens, the teacher walks around the circle, gently showing those children which hand is right or left. Most easily follow along. The children pretend to be “raisins,” then “grapes.” When they are raisins, students “shrive up” (by squatting down with their arms tightly wrapped around them). Then they grow into big grapes (by standing tall with their arms outstretched). Their giggles and smiles make it clear that the theatre/drama class is one of the high points of the week. State literacy tests affirm that these children are learning English vocabulary quickly.

In another TAP class, children learn a literacy lesson taught through dance. This restless group of kindergartners missed recess due to rain and need to work off their pent-up energy. Before starting the lesson, the teacher shows the children how to avoid collisions with classmates by creating their own personal “body bubble.” Each child pretends to blow a soap bubble large enough so that he or she can stand inside it with arms outstretched. To keep the bubble from popping, each child must stay far enough away from other children so that their bubbles do not touch, activating multisensory processing from both the children’s visual and kinesthetic intelligences (Gardner, 2006). This not only avoids collisions but also enhances each child’s awareness of space and respect for the personal space of others.

The teacher encourages the children to experiment with comparison/contrast. As the music starts, each child mirrors the teacher’s motions. They reach high and bend low; first they wiggle, then they freeze. Following the movements of the teacher, the children experiment with ascending movements (moving upward like smoke, a flower, a bird) and descending movements (melting, sinking, spiraling). At the same time, children learn the basic vocabulary of dance by carrying out movements that are “high,” “middle,” and “low” with respect to the floor. They also do axial movements in which the body stays in place (swinging, swaying, wiggling, bending, stretching). By first grade, this practice is transformed into a vocabulary lesson, where students silently portray adjectives such as proud, scared, grumpy, tired.
As they become more comfortable participating in group movement, the children are invited to experiment with *locomotor* movements where they walk, hop, slide, bounce, shuffle, skip, etc. This allows for a greater level of creative spontaneity. By second grade, this locomotor activity will be turned into a grammar lesson by expanding the discussion to the pairing of verbs and adverbs. Any locomotor movement can be modified, at the teacher’s suggestion, by matching it with an appropriate adverb such as *quietly, angrily, happily, smoothly, sluggishly* (e.g. *shuffle sluggishly*).

**Impact of Classroom Drama/Theatre and Dance.**

Winner, Goldstein, and Vincent-Lancrin (2013) found strong evidence that enacting stories in the classroom (i.e., drama) strengthens verbal skills. A handful of studies has also linked dance activities to language skills. Church and colleagues found that Spanish-speaking first-graders performed better on English comprehension of math topics when instruction included gesture (Church, Ayman-Nolley, and Mahootian, 2004). All students, and especially EBs, were able to utilize cues from motions and expression to aid their comprehension. In our previous research, K-2 teachers have reported that dance is effective in boosting EBs’ language comprehension skills (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013). Teachers cited increased engagement and the comprehension that resulted from students “physicalizing” language as mechanisms that facilitated vocabulary growth.

Further, arts activities are fun for all students; they spawn creativity (Dewey, 2005; Greene, 1995) as well as promote positive social interaction (Brouillette, 2010; Catterall, 2009). Previous research has shown that incorporating arts activities into early elementary classrooms can boost all students’ engagement (Brouillette et al., 2014) and help foster positive social-emotional development (Brouillette, 2010). The idea that the arts are tied to emotional development is not new. In 1897, Leo Tolstoy shocked the literary world when he published the book *What Is Art?* Upending Plato’s dictum that art is the imitation of nature, Tolstoy called into question the creative merits of Shakespeare, Dante, and even his own novel *Anna Karenina*, arguing that true art is not the production of pleasure or pleasing objects. Instead, he saw the essential role of art to be providing a vehicle for communication and empathy among human beings, so that individuals were joined together in the same feelings. Given the importance of this role, Tolstoy saw the arts was indispensable to progress toward the well-being of individuals and humanity.

Through learning to recognize, label, manage, and communicate about their own emotions, then to perceive and try to understand others’ emotions, children build skills that connect them with family, peers, and teachers. These developing capacities help children to negotiate increasingly complex social interactions, participate effectively in relationships and group activities, and reap the benefits of the social support that is crucial to healthy human development. Young children who exhibit healthy social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment are also more likely to do well academically in elementary school (Cohen, Onunaku, Clothier, &
Poppe, 2005; Zero to Three, 2004). Therefore, implementation of an arts-based curriculum that promotes healthy social-emotional development may also boost academic achievement in schools.

**Effective Teacher Professional Development.**

EBs constitute one in nine students in the United States; in California they represent one in four students (ETS, 2009). Yet, many teachers feel—and are, in fact—underprepared to teach these students (Téllez & Waxman, 2005). More than two-thirds of American teachers report that they have not had even one day of professional development in supporting the learning of EBs during the previous three years (Hirsh, 2009). Yet, we know that some professional development methods do work.

Classroom-based coaching has been shown to be effective in helping teachers to expand skills, sustain change over time, and improve student achievement (Speck & Knipe, 2001). Other research (Veenman, Denessen, Gerrits, & Kenter, 2001) suggests that for coaching to be most useful, it may need to be embedded in broader efforts to build professional knowledge. As Guskey (2000) noted, quality professional development is “a process that is (a) intentional, (b) ongoing, and (c) systemic.” Teachers find it difficult to apply new knowledge from professional development programs unless it is both ongoing and job-embedded (Sparks, 1994).

Effective professional development programs must also provide sufficient contact hours for teachers to become proficient in using new skills. An analysis of well-designed experimental studies found that a set of programs offering substantial professional development contact hours (ranging from 30 to 100 hours in total), spread over six to 12 months, showed a positive and significant effect on student achievement gains (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). Unfortunately, few teachers in the United States receive such support. On the 2003-04 National Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a majority of teachers (57 percent) said they had received no more than 16 hours (two days or less) of professional development during the previous 12 months on the content of the subject(s) they taught (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

The challenge then becomes, given the budgetary constraints currently faced by public schools, how a cost-effective coaching model may be designed to provide sufficient hours of professional development to teachers to raise the total to the level needed to boost student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007), while also providing learning that is both ongoing and job-embedded (Sparks, 1994). One successful program, the K-2 Teaching Artist Project (TAP) in San Diego, addressed this problem by bringing teaching artists with specialized preparation into the classroom as coaches (Brouillette, Grove & Hinga, 2015). TAP was funded by a USDE Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) grant. Therefore lesson plans and videos of the lessons have been made available to all teachers, free-of-charge. (Please see Note at end of article).
Following a two-day introductory workshop held just before school began in fall term, professional development activities took place primarily in each teacher’s own classroom. Eight teaching artists (TAs) across the two disciplines (drama/theatre and dance) implemented 28 lessons in all of the schools that received the TAP lessons. The consistency in the curriculum, teaching artist expertise, and the professional development that TAs received helped ensure fidelity of implementation. The 14 weeks of drama lessons focused on enhancing EBs’ speaking skills (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013); the 14 weeks of dance lessons were designed to enhance the children’s listening abilities as they responded as a group to the artist’s directions. Both types of lessons included a debrief section, where students openly shared their experiences. As the series of lessons unfolded, the teachers took a more and more active role in co-teaching the lessons. The teachers also received continuing support from the district’s resource teachers during each classroom teacher’s second year in the program.

Our research on the 2010-13 San Diego K-2 Teaching Artist Project (TAP) (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2013) showed that teachers found it easier to remember and implement arts integration strategies if: 1) a limited number of strategies were presented at a time; 2) most of the professional development was carried out via collaboration with a teaching artist in the teacher’s own classroom; and 3) video clips of lessons and other implementation materials were made easily accessible for review online. Through working with teaching artists, teachers learned the skills and strategies needed to integrate standards-based visual and performing arts lessons with the English language arts curriculum they were already teaching. Also, teachers learned how to use arts-based strategies to increase the level of verbal interaction in their classrooms, thus providing EBs with effective nonverbal arts-based cues as to the meanings of words.

**Establishing Causality**

Two studies (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2017; Greenfader, Brouillette & Farkas, 2015) have been carried out to evaluate the impact of the K-2 Teaching Artist Project. In both of these studies, we used scores from the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) as outcome variables to determine the impact of the intervention on EBs’ early literacy skills. The CELDT evaluates the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills of EBs; it is given yearly to all California EBs who are not yet English-proficient. Reliability of the CELDT, as measured by Cronbach’s α, ranges between .73 and .92 (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009). Our previous analyses have focused on the speaking and listening subtests; the listening subtest assesses how well students comprehend information heard in English.

The first pre/post study focused on the results of the first two waves of the research project (Greenfader, Brouillette & Farkas, 2015), examining each teacher’s first year in TAP (when weekly visits from trained teaching artists ensured that the lessons were administered consistently). Results showed that, after controlling for prior achievement, K-2 EBs who participated in TAP (N = 902) performed marginally better (β = 0.06, p = .05) on the CELDT speaking assessment than those students who did not receive the TAP lessons (N = 4,338). We
did not find a significant difference between the listening scores of participating EBs and those of the comparison group.

A second study focused on the results of the third wave of the same research project (Greenfader & Brouillette, 2017). This study differed from the study discussed above in two ways: 1) in the third year, participating teachers taught a second arts lesson per week on their own, so that students received two arts lessons per week instead of one; 2) the study focused on Hispanic EBs, as opposed to EBs of all ethnicities. The speaking abilities of 3,792 K-2 Hispanic EBs (TAP group: N=497; comparison group: N=3,295) from five Title I schools were examined. The TAP group was found to significantly outperform the comparison group (β = 0.13; p < .05) on CELDT speaking scores. To investigate whether these findings were due to the focus only on Hispanic EBs, we conducted a post-test on the full sample of EBs of all ethnicities; the findings mirrored the initial findings that focused on Hispanic EBs.

These findings are in line with earlier research on classroom drama, which suggests that such activities boost literacy skills and facilitate English oral language development (Hanna, 2008; Mages, 2008; Podlozny, 2000). Yet, such research has not generally attracted the attention of reading specialists or researchers who focus on the English development of young emergent bilinguals. Curriculum silos in teacher education programs may contribute to this.

**Silos within Universities**

The curricular design of teacher education programs, which separate foundational and methods courses, contributes to the construction of silo cultures in education (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), creating a fissure between conceptual ideas and practical lessons and applications. Compounding this separation, teacher preparation is segregated by specialty, e.g. special education, bilingual education, general education, multicultural education (Rueda & Stillman, 2012). This compartmentalization of pedagogy and curricula results in a failure to provide pre-service teachers with an integrated set of tools to meet the needs of the linguistically and culturally diverse students whom they will face in contemporary public schools (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). By approaching content areas separately (in different courses), future teachers lose the opportunity to explore connections between content areas – especially how skills acquired in one content area might reinforce learning in another area – that they may have discovered had courses emphasized cross-disciplinary exploration and applications.

This is evidenced by how teacher credential programs tend to approach literacy instruction. Even though oral language is part of the English language arts curriculum, the pressures exerted by the test-driven K-12 curriculum have caused teacher education programs to increasingly ignore listening and speaking skills, focusing instead on reading and writing. As research increasingly shows the critical importance of oral language to the academic success of young readers, especially EBs (Hoff, 2013), it becomes ever more important to tap into the skills nurtured by a related content area (e.g., drama) to find the needed expertise in supporting oral
Concern about the compartmentalization of teacher preparation programs – and the subsequent costs – is not new. There is a growing body of research that looks at ways to prevent and deconstruct intellectual silos. Much of this research is grounded in a framework that: (1) emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation courses that synthesize core concepts across subject areas, providing a rationale for educating teachers in effective ways to integrate curriculum (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009); and (2) addresses the linguistic and cultural needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Rueda & Stillman, 2012).

This body of research complements a related line of inquiry on culturally relevant and linguistically relevant teaching (Banks & Banks, 2012; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Lucas et al. (2008) postulate that general education teachers should receive professional development in specific academic pedagogies that teach them how to be linguistically responsive to all students. They suggest preparation in classroom activities that include: modifying oral language practice, giving students time to pause, practice, and repeat; increasing social activities and time for students to work with each other; and utilizing creative scaffolds to help students. Performing arts activities provide teachers with practical tools that support such practices, so it would be useful for teacher educators to utilize arts-based literacies as they prepare pre-service teachers.

**Student-borne costs**

As a result of the segregation of teacher education programs by specialization, new teachers enter K-12 classrooms with compartmentalized mindsets, unknowingly and unwittingly replicating and reproducing the silos they encountered in teacher education programs. This creates an environment of isolated practices, which stifles integration and collaboration. Math is taught separately from science and theater is taught separately from the oral language portion of the English language arts curriculum. The impact not only handicaps teachers, but also is felt by students.

Young learners do not receive instruction in important cross-disciplinary skills that could be critical to their future success (NRC, 2012). Oral language practice, interactive learning, and engaging projects are especially important to emergent bilinguals, who are deprived of much-needed opportunities because of curricular silos (Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; O’Day, 2009). As a result, they struggle academically. Evidence that the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of the public school population are not being adequately served is clearly apparent in the persistence of the achievement gap in U.S. classrooms (Howard, 2010).

**Integration through Teacher Preparation in the Arts**

Previous research on teacher preparation and professional development in arts-based activities suggests how professional development in the arts can provide educators with tools and strategies to bridge curricular areas and meet the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse...
body of students (Medina & Campano, 2006). For example, arts activities promote oral language practice and opportunities. Research supports the necessity of oral practice (e.g., reading out-loud, phonics practice) for literacy learning and language development (National Reading Panel, 2000). Beginning readers need to hear speech sounds to understand sound and symbol relationships and pair verbal instruction with non-verbal cues (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). Students without English-speaking backgrounds need such practice even more; an interactive language environment is essential if they are to build early literacy skills (Goldenberg, 2008).

The sound-manipulative nature of many performing arts activities highlights an important component of oral language practice, phonemic awareness, which is “the understanding that speech is composed of a series of individual sounds” (Yopp, 1992, p. 696). Having this awareness allows students to recognize the sounds that letters make individually and together when creating words (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). To distinguish between the 44 English sounds or phonemes, students need to engage in sound-manipulative activities. For example, in a TAP lesson, children are guided through a bear hunt, inserting their own sounds to create the setting. Similar to what many children commonly do with their parents (Brouillette, 2010a), they learn to first create the sound of rain with their hands – patting their legs softly at first and then loudly as the rain gets heavier. Next, they play with vocalizations for squishy grass, gooey mud, deep river, dark cave, etc. But, unfortunately, it appears that such “oral activities are being seriously neglected” (Armstrong, 2003, p. 116). Arts activities are an excellent way in which to incorporate oral practice opportunities throughout multiple curricular content areas. It is therefore essential that teachers have opportunities for professional development that acquaints them with methods and strategies for utilizing such activities.

Now, more than ever, youth require cross-disciplinary, 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking (NRC, 2012). Also, teachers need ways to cultivate and hone these skills in their students. Classroom arts activities foster the development of interdisciplinary skills, encourage supportive oral language practice, and promote student collaboration. Yet aspiring teachers do not receive instruction in how to utilize such strategies in traditional preparation programs (Brouillette, 2010b). Few in-service professional development opportunities are offered and research on utilizing arts-based teaching as a means to both effectively integrate curricular subject areas and appeal to an increasingly diverse cultural and linguistic population of students is scant.

**Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries**

Shulman (1986) proposed criteria for scholarship on teaching and learning that may be helpful in assessing the value of interventions created to bridge the interdisciplinary silos that grew up in the wake of the fracturing of teacher education along disciplinary lines. He argued this work 1) must be made public, 2) must be available for peer review and critique according to accepted standards, and 3) must be made available in such a way that other scholars are able to reproduce and build on the work. The K-2 Teaching Artist Project in San Diego met each of
these standards. Of course, TAP is not the only project that has done so. Others, such as the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education, have proven their value. The important question is: How might the arts integration strategies utilized in such successful projects be transmitted to pre-service teachers, so that they can be better equipped to work with young emergent bilinguals when they begin teaching?

In the next section we describe a small, qualitative pilot study that looked at a fieldwork class that was part of a program for aspiring teachers at the University of California, Irvine. This class combined field experience with arts-based methods for teaching K-1 literacy skills. In contrast to the K-2 Teaching Artist Project, the arts integration aspect of this program was not created in-house; it was made available through a partnership with the Reading in Motion (RIM) program in Chicago. Aspiring teachers carried out their fieldwork in K-1 classrooms at a local school with a linguistically diverse student population.

**Pre-service Practicum using Reading in Motion**

Research suggests the importance of including units on cross-disciplinary planning, as well as pre-service practice, in teacher preparation programs (Cheng, Chan, Tang, & Cheng, 2009; Nilsson, 2008). This fieldwork program provided university students with the opportunity to teach weekly arts-and-literacy lessons to children who spoke a language other than English at home. The K-1 Reading In Motion (RIM) curriculum was an arts-based, early literacy intervention designed to boost literacy achievement in inner city Chicago schools. The curriculum was shared with UC Irvine through the ArtsBridge America service learning program.

Previous research on RIM established its effectiveness as an early reading intervention (McMahon, Rose, & Parks, 2003). RIM provides children with the opportunity to verbalize using dance-based strategies that use the whole body, utilizing muscle memory to support rehearsal of oral language skills. Like TAP, the K-1 RIM program targets oral language; it makes use of rhythm, tempo, and call-and-response lyrics embedded in a series of sequential lessons to target three areas of phonetic awareness: (1) initial sound fluency (ISF); (2) phoneme segmentation fluency (PSF); and (3) nonsense word fluency/word decoding (NWF). For EBs and children with language delays, lack of attention to these pivotal components of literacy development can limit further progress. But, when well taught, each step builds upon the previously mastered skill, laying a foundation for proficient reading. Language is not only understood but it is retained, enabled and reinforced by multimodal inputs (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Hardison & Sonchaeng, 2005; Kress, 2009; Rieg & Paquette, 2009; Silverman, 2007).

For the aspiring teachers, using the RIM strategies for integrating music and movement with literacy instruction provided a tool to make sure that struggling students were not inadvertently left behind. The carefully designed, sequential RIM lessons served as an effective learning aid for the future teachers, who are able to see how one skill built on another. They saw how children who began the year significantly behind their grade-level peers began to steadily
close the gap in literacy skills. Through teaching the concepts through enjoyable lessons infused with rhythm and music, the pre-service teachers gained confidence in their ability to support a wide range of learners in attaining a grade-appropriate level of reading fluency.

Learning to Recognize Children’s Needs

This section examines the experiences of four undergraduate students who were given the opportunity to teach 20 weekly, 45-minute RIM lessons to emergent bilinguals and children with language delays at a local elementary school. The undergraduates in the UC Irvine project implemented the RIM lessons in two different classrooms: (1) a combined Kindergarten/First Grade class of EBs; and (2) a combined Kindergarten/First Grade special day class (SDC) that served students with learning disabilities. These two classrooms were chosen because the children in both classrooms needed additional practice in oral language skills. Prior to beginning the RIM lessons, each undergraduate visited the classrooms, met with the classroom teachers, and observed typical daily activities, familiarizing themselves with student abilities and needs.

While engaged in this project, the undergraduates were also enrolled in a weekly seminar where they became familiar with the literature on arts education, language development, and early literacy. The undergraduates also discussed the progress of children participating in their RIM lessons, sharing their observations and reflections on the needs of particular students. This primed the pre-service teachers to be observant and sensitive to the children, while also gaining confidence in their ability to effectively tackle classroom challenges. After collectively reflecting upon the prior week’s experiences, they developed an action plan for the following RIM session, adjusting their teaching strategies to accommodate the needs of individual children. Finally, they rehearsed the arts and literacy activities planned for the upcoming RIM lesson.

Interviews with the undergraduates who participated in the RIM pre-service fieldwork study, along with an analysis of their written logs, revealed a transformation in their attitudes as they gradually became more sensitive to the needs of individual children over the course of the year. The aspiring teachers also reflected on their own future use of arts integration strategies. One of the undergraduates noted: “The greatest benefit for me, as someone who is becoming an educator, is how… musical activities can be beneficial for helping children remember language/literacy patterns.”

Another university student noticed that the emergent bilinguals often exhibited low levels of energy. Through consultation with the classroom teacher, she determined that the children were spending too much time in the carpet area; they were typically seated on the carpet when the undergraduates arrived and remained there after the RIM lessons. To provide more variety, the undergraduates revised the RIM lessons so that they could 1) be partially taught outdoors and 2) include time with children sitting at their desks, where cues in a song gave them a chance to alternately stand and sit at their desks.
In contrast, the children in the special day classroom found transitions very difficult. Many were bothered by loud noises. To replace the noisy rhythm sticks, the aspiring teachers purchased popsicle sticks and painted them blue. Each child received one smooth popsicle stick and one ridged popsicle stick, so that they could simulate the effects of rhythm sticks without the banging. The university students also decided to sing most of the songs *a capella* (voices only, without instrumental accompaniment) to facilitate a quieter atmosphere and allow for a more flexible pace.

Interview data (from participating undergraduates and the classroom teachers from both settings), along with analysis of the undergraduates’ weekly logs, indicated multiple benefits of the program. Not only did the undergraduates gain valuable classroom teaching experience, but they also learned how to implement strategies that integrated arts and literacy, transcending traditional curricular silos. In the process, they learned to connect with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Involvement in this integrated music and literacy intervention also afforded prospective teachers with the opportunity to learn arts-based tools for responding to the special needs of both emergent bilinguals and students with disabilities.

Classroom teachers found the RIM project beneficial and were willing to allocate classroom time to implement the RIM program in part because it included kindergarten and first grade music activities that are often not available in contemporary classrooms (Grey, 2009). For the undergraduates, the impact of the arts integration component of this program could not easily be separated from the reflective teaching (Calderhead, 1989; Dewey, 1933; Richards, 1991) and action research (Mertler, 2009) elements. However, the arts integration component provided a pathway for these aspiring teachers to learn to integrate knowledge and skills that are traditionally isolated in content area silos.

**Discussion**

As the student population in the United States becomes more linguistically and culturally diverse, changing demographics raise the costs that both teachers and students incur from the current silo structure in education. Now, more than ever, teachers require creative strategies and methods to meet the needs of a changing student population (Howard, 2010). Shulman introduced the idea of pedagogical content knowledge back in 1986, pointing out that there is no universal mode of representation by which educators influence learners. He argued that, lacking a single proven methodology, teachers should be well-versed in a full palette of instructional methods and strategies, so as to have a large set of the tools at their disposal.

Unfortunately, in the ensuing decades, the portion of that palette that represents the arts has been shrinking. Since 2007, almost 71% of schools nationwide have reduced – or eliminated – instructional time in such subjects as arts, music, history, and language (Grey, 2009). Because there is now less demand for teachers with skills in the arts, new teachers have received less arts coursework in their credential programs. In interviews, one of the most common reasons (next to time constraints) that TAP teachers gave as to why they had not utilized – or had *underutilized* –
arts activities in the past was their feeling that they lacked experience in teaching the arts.

A veteran second grade teacher remarked that, although she was a 42-year veteran, it was not until participating in TAP that she saw the arts as an effective literacy instruction tool. “I never thought of arts as standards-based. I never even thought about what it was you were supposed to teach in arts.” Theatre lessons helped her students to learn and to practice language skills. “This is fun learning! They actually know stuff, they know vocabulary words. Characters have a voice.” Dance helped to foster a sense of camaraderie among her students, allowing for a more productive learning environment. “It built such a sense of community for our class…There's not so much meanness. Even the kids that don't get along so well, still get along better than if they hadn't been in dance, drama.”

Implications for Practice and Policy

When teachers lack preparation in helping children integrate what they have learned across content areas, the result is learning that remains compartmentalized, with little relevance to life outside of school. This works to the detriment of all students, but is especially harmful to EBs who must continually struggle to find connections between new and familiar experiences (Medina & Campano, 2006). Not only can arts integration be utilized to dismantle content area silos, but carefully crafted arts activities can also serve to engage and support diverse learners.

Arts-based teaching strategies provide a ready means for teachers to draw on the experiences and perceptions that all children bring with them into the classroom. Rueda and Stillman (2012) call upon teachers to teach culturally, not to simply instruct about culture. In discussing culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1995) stresses that it should not be merely a “feel good” pedagogy, but rather a rigorous method of teaching that 1) focuses on important skills and 2) has high expectations of all students. Proponents of arts education intuitively understand this directive; art is oftentimes disparaged as superfluous – merely a fun activity that allows students to feel good. Yet, as many studies (Catterall, 2009; Deasy, 2002) have shown, arts activities can also boost academic performance and foster important skills.

Teacher education that focuses only on knowledge and theory is insufficient. Prospective teachers need practice-focused experience in a professional setting if they are to be adequately prepared to serve diverse students (Loewenberg, Ball, & Forzani, 2009). When pre-service teacher development programs provide effective preparation in arts integration, it serves two purposes. First, as Loewenberg, Ball, and Forzani (2009) argue, it provides an avenue for incorporating practice into the teacher preparation curriculum. Second, arts integration promotes the kind of collaborative thinking that deconstructs curriculum silos. In the words of Mark C. Taylor, “responsible teaching and scholarship must become cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural” (2009).

Conclusion

There is a consensus among stakeholders in education—researchers, policy-makers,
administrators, teachers, and parents—that we need proven, effective strategies to help meet the language needs of the growing number of emergent bilinguals. Researchers know that oral language practice is critical, yet it has all but disappeared from elementary classrooms (August & Shanahan, 2006). Paradoxically, the very strategy that schools adopted in an attempt to raise test scores—having early elementary children focus on reading, while spending little time on building oral language skills—may have undermined the literacy achievement of all students. Most significantly, it has undercut the progress of emergent bilinguals, who must depend on learning oral English at school.

It is our hope that integration of arts and literacy activities will increasingly be seen as a viable way to promote the oral English skills of young EBs, providing educators with an effective strategy for fostering rich verbal interactions and narrowing the achievement gap between emergent bilinguals and their monolingual classmates. By understanding the benefits of such practices, i.e., the specific mechanisms through which arts activities impact cognitive-linguistic development, educators can put the “arts” back into “language arts” in a way that highlights social interaction and taps into multimodal processing. Policy-makers may facilitate such advances by recognizing the effectiveness of specific arts integration strategies and supporting their use via curriculum standards.

Note

1. TAP lesson plans, videos of lessons, and extension activities can be accessed by anyone, free-of-charge at the following URLs: http://sites.uci.edu/class/theatre-grades/ and http://sites.uci.edu/class/dance-lessons-grades/

2. Videos of university students implementing and discussing Reading in Motion activities they implemented in public schools through ArtsBridge America service learning activities: http://www.artsbridgeamerica.net/home/reading-in-motion/reading-in-motion-lesson-videos/
References


Brouillette, L., Childress-Evans, K., Hinga, B., & Farkas, G. (2014). Increasing the school engagement and oral language skills of ELLs through arts integration in the primary grades. *Journal for Learning through the Arts 10*(1): [https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8573z1fm](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8573z1fm)


Greenfader, C. M., & Brouillette, L. (2017). The arts, the common core, and English language development in the primary grades. Teachers College Record 119(9).


Abstract

This concluding article builds on the ideas developed throughout this special issue by providing a wide range of resources to enrich arts-based work within the field of literacy development with families and communities of emergent bilinguals. We include a bank of resources that may serve as the beginning of an archive. Coming from three different fields, with varying professional experiences, the sources we find helpful intersect and diverge. To honor this range of possibilities, we have taken an expansive approach that includes poets, visual and performing artists, arts and cultural organizations, literary associations, language learning standards and anti-bias and critical pedagogy sources. While expansive in content, this list is limited, based on sources that have inspired and shaped our work. We invite you to explore it, edit it, add to it, develop your own and share it.

Keywords: Emergent bilinguals, language acquisition, culturally responsive teaching, drama, photography, poetry, visual art, music, dance, arts advocacy

What I have been proposing is a profound respect for the cultural identity of students—a cultural identity that implies respect for the language of the other, the color of the other, the gender of the other, the class of the other, the sexual orientation of the other, the intellectual capacity of the other; that implies the ability to stimulate creativity of the other. (Freire cited in McLaren, 2000, p. 139)

Art is a language and a holder of culture, it provides another way of telling. When we think about art as voice it becomes clear that artists’ works are a crucial resource, not only for inspiration but also as a way to connect to and understand the complexity of culture, voice and language development. Artists’ works provide stories that can connect to student experiences, making diverse stories and cultures visible in the curriculum. As artists make meaning and share their stories through their work, they provide a model for students to use their voice and tell their own stories, expressing ideas in both oral and written language as well as in other artistic forms. Moreover, art can also be a way to create new spaces where students can reclaim and reconstruct
their own (hybrid) culture in a new context. For this work to be meaningful to students, families and communities, it must reflect a wide range of artists with diverse experiences and must expand well beyond artists of the historical past that represent the Western European cannon.

Just like the artists that may serve as exemplars and resources, students, families and communities can experiment, imagine, express, document, share and inspire through making and responding to art. They can develop and use their voice, both literally and figuratively, to exercise agency as they investigate their worlds, experiment with content, share their own stories and interrogate others. As artists and teachers, we can provide not just the resources but also the spaces, prompts, questions and structures to invite these voices to understand, celebrate and build on what students know and love. Through the richness of the arts we can help students see the importance of all they know and to develop the motivation to speak their worlds.

This concluding article builds on the ideas developed throughout this special issue by providing a wide range of resources to enrich arts-based work within the field of literacy development with families and communities of emergent bilinguals. We include a bank of resources that may serve as the beginning of an archive. This resource list is anything but neat. Interdisciplinary work makes classification necessarily difficult. Coming from three different fields, with varying professional experiences, the sources we find helpful intersect and diverge. To honor this range of possibilities, we have taken an expansive approach that includes poets, visual and performing artists, arts and cultural organizations, literary associations, language learning standards and anti-bias and critical pedagogy sources. While expansive in content, this list is limited, based on sources that have inspired and shaped our work. We invite you to explore it, edit it, add to it, develop your own and share it.

Our intent in this concluding chapter is to lead with the arts. The list begins with poetry since it so easily bridges art and literacy, and is followed by other art forms and educational resources. There is no particular order, as we find all of these resources relevant. We link to websites to make the resources easily and immediately accessible. And we conclude with a bibliography that provides both structures and necessary academic research to support the use of these arts resources.

with much respect,

Vivian, Berta, y Amanda
Poetry Foundation
A great resource to find all kinds of poets and their work, including poets writing about immigration (see link below).
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets

Poems of Immigration
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/144265/poems-on-immigration

Richard Blanco
Poems about family, place, cultural and sexual identity, and belonging.
A memoir The Prince of los Cocuyos, A Miami Childhood
http://richard-blanco.com/bio/
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/richard-blanco
Connecting poetry to educators and communities: http://richard-blanco.com/blog/
Bridges To/From Cuba blog in collaboration with writer Ruth Behar: http://bridgestocuba.com/
Inaugural poem, second inauguration for Barack Obama: For all of us, One today
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkSRy8SGTEE

Martín Espada
Author of many books of poems including Vivas to Those Who Have Failed. Some of his poems include "Jorge the Church Janitor Finally Quits", "My Name is Espada" and "Coca-Cola and Coco Frío." Also wrote a book of essays Zapata’s Disciples, banned by the state as part of the Mexican American studies program in Tuscon, Arizona.
http://www.martinespada.net/
Poems: http://www.martinespada.net/poems.html

Tony Medina
Author of 17 books for adults and young readers including Committed to Breathing, Follow-up Letters to Santa from Kids who Never Got a Response, Broke on Ice, An Onion of Wars, The President Looks Like Me & Other Poems and Broke Baroque
http://coas.howard.edu/english/faculty&staff_medina.html

Noel Quiñones
Afro-Boricua writer, performer and educator working in Brooklyn, NY poems include False Tribute to Abuela brooklynpoets.org/poet/noel-quinones/
Perfection https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAst86cFdh8

Nikki Finney
Born in South Carolina her poetry explores connections between art, history, politics, and culture. Her books of poetry include Rice and The World is Round and she has a limited-edition box of three of her poetry volumes titled Sweet Box of Words. http://nikkyfinney.net/
Danielle Legros Georges
Poet and educator born in Haiti and raised in Boston, Legros Georges is the author of two collections of poetry The Dear Remote Nearness of You and Maroon. She is also the second Poet Laureate of the City of Boston:

*Praise song for Boston*  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqqYcQI-n5U
https://www.lesley.edu/stories/danielle-legros-georges
http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/gallery/samples/12_POE_DanielleGeorges.pdf

Gustavo Perez Firmat
Born in Cuba and raised in the United States, Perez Firmat writes poetry and non-fiction in both English and Spanish. His books of poems include *Carolina Cuban, Bilingual Blues* and *Scar Tissue*. His non-fiction works include *Life on the Hyphen, A Cuban in Mayberry, Tongue Ties*, and his forthcoming book *Sinlengua, deslenguado.*

http://www.gustavoperezfirmat.com/
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/gustavo-perez-firma

Denice Frohman
Poet, performer and educator whose work looks at the intersections of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. She is the author of *Accents, Dear Straight people* and other spoken word poems.

http://denicefrohman.com/poems

Nikki Giovanni
Black poet whose work spans genres including fiction and non-fiction, poetry and children’s books such as *Grand Fathers: Reminiscences, Poems, Recipes, and Photos of the Keepers of Our Traditions* and *Hip Hop Speaks to Children*. Giovanni has multiple volumes of poetry starting with *Black Feeling, Black Talk* in 1967 to her latest collection *Chasing Utopia: A Hybrid* (2013) and many other books such as *Shimmy Shimmy Shimmy Like My Sister Kate: Looking at the Harlem Renaissance Through Poems*

http://www.nikki-giovanni.com/
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/nikki-giovanni

Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan
Muslim poet and writer, third-generation Pakistani born in the UK. Her work reflects on race, gender, feminism and Islam, colonialism and more. Her poetry includes *This Is Not A Humanising Poem:*  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9Sz2BQdMF8
She also has a Blog:  https://thebrownhijabi.com/

Jamila Lyiscott
Poet, activist, educator who writes about language, race and social justice. Her poem *3 Ways to Speak English* is featured in a Ted Talk and her blog deals with social justice education.

http://jamilalyiscott.com/
http://jamilalyiscott.com/blog/
Sonia Sanchez
Poet, playwright, activist, her first book of poetry *Homecoming* was published in 1969 and her most recent in 2010 *Morning Haiku* honoring African American figures. She is a leading figure in African American studies and her work explores blackness, racial justice and women’s liberation.
http://soniasanchez.net
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/sonia-sanchez

Virgil Suarez
Cuban born poet, lived in Spain and grew up in Los Angeles, has written various novels including *Latin Jazz* and multiple books of poetry that include *In the Republic of Longing, Guide to the Blue Tongues* and *90n Miles*
https://www.poemhunter.com/virgil-su-rez/

Found Poetry Review
This is a great resource about found poems (includes kinds of poems and guidelines for fair use). Be sure to check some poems in the ‘Volumes Tab’
http://www.foundpoetryreview.com/about-found-poetry/
*Found and Headline poems* from the New York Times
Great resource for writing found poems about current events.

Digital Storytelling and Multimedia

Digital Storytelling Tools
Developed by NYC Librarians, these web-based learning opportunity includes resources and how they can be used in k-12 settings.
https://cooltoolsforschool.net/

Storycenter
Digital story telling website featuring stories by themes including political strife, harm, healing, etc. They also support individuals and organizations in telling and sharing stories.
http://www.storycenter.org/stories/

Storyology: Digital Storytelling by Immigrants and Refugees
Short films: https://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=E085E2DF04ADFB63
Ninety English Learners Tell Their Stories of Challenge and Triumph
4th to 8th grade emergent bilingual students over the course of a summer program share their stories of challenge and triumph through spoken word, video and hip hop.
http://msp.soe.umich.edu/?p=424
Frederick Luis Aldama – Professor Latin X
Latin X writer of comics and non-fiction including Latin X Comic Book Storytelling, Latino/a Children & Young Adult Writers on the Art of Storytelling and Latin X Superheroes in Mainstream Comics.  
Also has a blog on Latin X comics http://professorlatinx.com/blog/

The Red Road Project
A collection of inspiring stories and images of Native American people.  
http://www.redroadproject.com/

We Still Live Here
A documentary telling the story of the reclamation of the Wampanoag language, the Native American Tribe, whose language was silenced for more than 100 years.  
http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/we-still-live-here/  
https://itvs.org/films/we-still-live-here

Oral History Association
The VOCES Oral History Project documents and creates a better awareness of the contributions of U.S. Latinx’s of the WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War generations.  
http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/  
VOCES Oral History Project - University of Texas Libraries  
www.lib.utexas.edu/voces/

Teaching for Change - “Tellin’ Stories” Parent Program
Encourages family involvement through gathering multilingual family stories in a quilt and storytelling project. It builds community across race, class and cultural difference.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRNZZiyYJv4&feature=youtu.be

Janet Liu – My Immigrant Story
Storyteller Janet Liu tells the story of her family's immigration from Taiwan to the United States.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI6kxr_8OCg

DIYDS (Do It Your Own Damn Self) National Youth Film Festival
A film festival developed by teens who saw themselves misrepresented by the media and took matters into their own hands. They curate a reel of short films by teens from across the country and internationally. You can see the 2017 winners here and other year’s winners under ‘archives’.
http://www.diyds.org/2017-winners

I America; I Too
20-minute film by the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA).  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA1AY5-ZIOw
Visual Art

Immigrant Experience Through Political Posters
Political posters depicting themes such as immigration in the U.S. and Europe.
http://hyperallergic.com/198051/considering-the-immigrant-experience-through-political-posters/

Art 21
Extensive resource for contemporary art that include videos as well as learning guides to integrate contemporary art into teaching.
Extensive list of contemporary artists https://art21.org/artists/
http://www.pbs.org/art21/about-art21

Hung Liu
Artist Hung Liu was born in China and based in California. She is a prolific painter making complex work about a wide range of historical subjects from the U.S. and China, always relevant to the present moment.
http://www.hungliu.com/bio.html

Chika Modum
Using familiar objects, Chika Modum explores issues of individual and collective identity as well as race, nationality and gender.
http://www.chikamodum.com/about

Judy Baca
Painter, muralist and educator, Judy Baca’s work explores community issues. Her work includes the Great Wall of Los Angeles, Gente de Maiz and The Extraordinary Ordinary People of Richmond.
http://www.judybaca.com/artist/page/artist-statement/

Drawn to Comics
8 Queer/Feminist Comics to Get Your Friends Into Comics.
https://www.autostraddle.com/drawn-to-comics-8-great-comics-to-get-your-friends-into-comics-366644/

Jessica Sabogal
http://www.jessicasabogal.com
First generation Columbian American muralist, who uses art to represent the silent voices of oppressed groups, such as women, children and immigrants.
Photography

**Literacy through Photography for English-Language Learners**

Presents practical uses of photography in schools so that students can share images that they have photographed as a tool for telling their own story.


**Photovoice: Photography for Social Change**

Organization dedicated to providing a venue for social change through participatory photography. [https://photovoice.org/](https://photovoice.org/)


**Photoexchangers**

Young people from Cambridge, MA and Tamale, Ghana explore and share their culture with each other through photography.

[http://www.photoexchangers.org/Welcome.html](http://www.photoexchangers.org/Welcome.html)

**Mary Beth Meehan**

Three different projects: Undocumented (photographs), City of Champions (works and installation) and Seen/Unseen (blog and installation)


[http://cityofchampionsproject.com](http://cityofchampionsproject.com)


Meehan also collaborates with the International Charter School in Rhode Island in a project where third grade students use photography to document their cultural communities as part of a Social Studies unit.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_rgxRblJfc&feature=youtu.be&list=UU4LtLbQFqaCDSEQAMuwC2dw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_rgxRblJfc&feature=youtu.be&list=UU4LtLbQFqaCDSEQAMuwC2dw)

**Carlotta Cardana and Danielle SeeWalker**

Cardana and SeeWalker expose their photographic journey toward mutual understanding. Eight inspiring pictures from two women on a mission to break Native American stereotypes.


**Love and Black Lives, in Pictures Found on a Brooklyn Street**

A discarded photo album reveals a rich history of black lives, from the segregated South to Harlem dance halls to a pretty block in Crown Heights.

Building Photo Collection for the new African American Museum
Beautiful photos and interesting interview about how museums create narratives.

Just a Girl and The Heroine Project
Two projects where photographers photograph their daughters, telling a story of heroes and the power of family.

Jaime Moore – Just a Girl
http://www.jaimemoorephotography.com/2013/05/09/not-just-a-girl/

Marc Bushelle – Heroine Project
http://www.marcbushelle.com/the-heroines-project
article http://www.upworthy.com/a-dad-took-photos-of-his-daughter-as-history-making-women-and-they-are-incredible

Emily Anne Epstein and Daniella Zalcman
Created mashups of photographs submitted to the Atlantic Monthly in response to the question: What does success look like? Article and sample mashup of photo responses found below.

Photographing of The American Dream

Life in the Native American oil protest camps - images
Charlie Northcott from the British Broadcasting Network went to North Dakota to meet the protesters and discover what goes on in camp.

The New York Public Library
Nearly 200,000 images you can use for free:

Music and Sound

Smithsonian Folkways
“Music by and for the people” Includes a wide range of music from multiple cultures and countries including children’s music, hip hop and jazz anthologies and soundscapes.
https://folkways.si.edu/ Soundscapes: throat singing from three cultures, the Tuva, Inuit and Xhosa
https://folkways.si.edu/throat-singing-unique-vocalization-three-cultures/world/music/article/smithsonian
And more information on throat singing and its history here
https://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/jun/02/throat-singing

TEDx talk – Returning music to the children of Afghanistan
Professor Louise Pascal of Lesley University, and also a former Peace Corps volunteer and teacher in Afghanistan in the ‘60s, returned to Afghanistan with the silenced songs that had been missing for many years.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1UWvPJ5WcU

Sol y Canto
Pan-Latino band that plays music for all ages in both English and Spanish. Their children’s CD’s include El Doble de Amigos/Double the Friends and their latest Saboy y Memoria: A Musical Feast in Seven Courses.
http://www.solycanto.com/
Below is an introduction to the members of the ensemble where you can also find some of their bilingual audio books for kids.
http://www.solycanto.com/about.html

HarmoniousELA
A website where different forms of music are used to teach literacy.
https://sites.google.com/site/harmoniousela/music-and-phonemic/onset-and-rime-songs

Using Music and Rhythm to Help Kids with Grammar and Language

8 Songs by Native American Rappers That Deserve to Be Heard
Prayers in a Song
https://mic.com/articles/116942/8-songs-by-native-american-rappers-that-deserve-to-be-heard#.iiRdEwTod

Tall Paul
Paul uses his voice to name the links between landscapes, identity, language and culture.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61V69jRF5ys

Westward Expansion - Native American Rap
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqCO1fMWeOM

Los Van Van - Somos Cubanos
Performance in Cuba’s Karl Marx theater of one of Cuba’s premier contemporary bands.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiQJGogjCoo

Orishas – Emigrante
One of Cuba’s best known hip-hop bands explores the topic of leaving and returning to your land. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7NmTAau13k
Juchirap
Students in Mexico save an Indigenous language with rap.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quON8TIY0C4

6 Latin American Artists Who Rock In Indigenous Languages: Alt.Latino: NPR
http://www.npr.org/sections/altlatino/2015/03/05/390934624/hear-6-latin-american-artists-who-rock-in-indigenous-languages

Mitu
Cousins rapping in their Indigenous language to preserve their culture.
https://wearemitu.com/mitu-world/these-cousins-are-rapping-in-their-indigenous-language-to-preserve-their-culture/

The Periodic Table (Rapping the Elements!)
Oort Kuiper uses rap to remember the periodic table.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lDp9hUf_SV8

Websites for learning English, featuring music to support learning English
http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2008/01/30/the-best-music-websites-for-learning-english/

Miss Christee Lee
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNACDc8c0DM

Drama

Anna Devere Smith
Playwright, actor and educator performs community issues, such as race and other social justice themes, using voices of individuals to develop her one woman plays. Her works include Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities and Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education about the school to prison pipeline.
http://www.annadeaveresmith.org/

IDEA International Drama/Theatre and Education Association
Projects from many countries examining human relationship to land/place and sustainability.
https://ideadrama.org/pages/projects-1

Integrated Drama in Education
Lesley University Resource list of drama resources including journal articles, websites, books and more http://research.lesley.edu/content.php?pid=22247&sid=159118
Total Physical Response (TPR)
An example of how to use Total Physical Response to teach languages. Although the video is considerably old, it can give language teachers ideas of how they might use TPR in their own classrooms.

Drama Warm-up Strategies
A site that includes various drama strategies that could be used throughout the curriculum with emergent bilingual students.
https://sites.google.com/site/awagerdramawarmups/

The Vocabulary Parade
Example of teaching vocabulary through drama in a second-grade teacher’s blog.

Drama Resource
Games, strategies, resources, courses, etc.
http://dramaresource.com/

Journal for Learning Through the Arts
http://escholarship.org/uc/class_lta

Community Arts Network – Reader’s Theater
Definition, examples and tips for using reader’s theater strategies.
http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/programs/whatisrt.htm

TDR The Drama Review
Journal presenting cutting age performance work in a socio-political context.
http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/dram

National Drama Magazine for Professional Practice
Publication by UK association of theater and drama educators.
http://www.nationaldrama.org.uk/nd/index.cfm/publications/

Drama Australia
Journal from Australia with examples of publications using drama throughout the curriculum.

And extensive resource that gathers information on Mantle of the Expert drama strategy by Dorothy Heathcote.
http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/
Dance
Peter Anderson – Movement and Language Learning
Professional dancer, Anderson, offers suggestions on how movement can engage students like him, with language learning challenges, to succeed in academic settings.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRjhb-3pzUE

Elsa Kim – Learning Language Through Motion
This talk offers ways that words can be taught through movement using the ideas presented in a program called Words With Bears.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8ZBo3pykzc
English Language Learners Work Together to Create a Dance Phrase
https://artsconnection.org/english-language-learners-work-together-create-dance-phrase/-

Gangnam Style - The Learning Network - The New York Times
After watching the “Gangnam Style” videos, students who speak different home languages discuss them in small groups in English and prepare their own imitation videos.

Nel Shelby, Jody Gottfried Arnhold and Joan Finklestein
PS Dance! Dance Education in Public Schools
Research-based demonstration of how weaving dance and academic learning builds students’ overall success in schools. Dance and classroom teachers collaborate to enhance both social and cognitive skills as well as brain function

Young Girls Learn a New Language Through Dance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLnLi7ly_3M
In DELLTA (Developing English Language Literacy Through the Arts)
This source includes resources and videos in dance and other art forms including drama for project based learning in the arts.
https://artsconnection.org/resources/deluta/

This Feels Like Home: A Dance & Language Performance Project for New Americans
Children’s Books

The Colours of Us
A website of books comprising a wide range of experience and organized both by ethnicity and age, ranging from birth through young adults. Also includes a blog with new books, author profiles and book reviews.
http://coloursofus.com/

50 Multicultural Books Every Child Should Know
https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/detailListBooks.asp?idBookLists=42

Best Multicultural Books for Children
Goodreads list that include only books that empower and represent children’s cultures in accurately and in sensitive ways AND have strong literary quality.
https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/3721.Best_Multicultural_Books_for_Children

Multicultural Children’s Book Day
Includes lists of a wide range of diverse books searchable by cultural group, continent, religion, genre and more.
http://multiculturalchildrensbookday.com/about/

We Need Diverse Books
A grassroots organization that promotes the publishing of children’s literature with diverse characters and how to get those books to children.
http://weneeddiversebooks.org/where-to-find-diverse-books/

Unite For Literacy
An excellent resource that includes written and oral recordings of 100’s of children’s books in English and up to 37 other languages.
http://www.uniteforliteracy.com/

The Classroom Bookshelf
A School Library Journal Blog dedicated to reviewing recently published children’s books and providing ideas and resources for incorporating them into K-8 classrooms.
http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com
The Coretta Scott King Book Awards
http://www.ala.org/emiert/cskbookawards

The Horn Book
The premiere journal for reviews of children’s and young adult literature
http://www.hbook.com
American Library Association
The world’s oldest and largest library association, publishes annual “Best of” lists in different genres. http://www.ala.org

Association for Library Service to Children
Awards several prestigious honors in children’s literature, including the Caldecott Medal, the Newbery Medal, the Pura Belpre Medal, the Geisel Medal, and the Sibert Medal. http://www.ala.org/alsc/

Children’s Literature Assembly

Cooperative Children’s Book Center
A comprehensive resource that compiles theme- and topic-based recommended booklists, publishes “Book of the Week” reviews, and awards the Charlotte Zolotow Award. https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/

School Library Journal
The world’s largest reviewer of books for children and young adults. http://www.slj.com

Organizations and Cultural Resources

Culture Strike
Empowers artists to dream big, disrupt the status quo, and envision a truly just world rooted in shared humanity. http://www.culturestrike.org/

Illinois Resource Center
Center dedicated to supporting the teaching of linguistically and culturally diverse students. http://irc2.thecenterweb.org/site/

Conversation Questions for the ESL/EFL Classroom: A Project of The Internet TESL Journal
Habla – The Center for Language and Culture
They have a handbook of best practices with great arts based ideas for language learning.  

Local Learning Network
Has a toolkit and other resources for investigating your local community.  
http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/education-resources/local-learning-toolbox/

Place Matters
A joint project of City Lore and Municipal Art Society – great examples of documenting a place, specifically places in New York city but provides an interesting model for documenting communities.  http://www.placematters.net/tours

Arts in the Public Interest
Arts resource for community and social issues.  
http://www.apionline.org/

Researching Multilingually at the Borders of Language, the Body, Law, and the State
Case studies by interdisciplinary researchers from seven different countries who investigate the borders.  http://researching-multilingually-at-borders.com/?page_id=46

Rethinking Schools
On-line Archive focused on equity and public schools with subscribers all over the United States and Canada.  http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/index.shtml

Rethinking Schools Bilingual Education Resource
https://www.facebook.com/rethinkingbilingualeducation/posts/1610319792421108

Facing History and Ourselves
Organization that promotes education for diverse students with a focus on history, literature and ethics.

School: The Story of American Public Education

PBS: In Chicago, preparing teachers for the classrooms that need them the most
Example of how teachers can better create family and community engagement to serve their culturally and linguistically diverse students.  
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/videos/#191557
Precious Knowledge
A film about the Mexican American studies program that was banned in Arizona.
http://www.preciousknowledgefilm.com/

PBS: Mendez v. Westminster: Desegregating California’s Schools
A video about a class action suit by Mexican Americans to desegregate the schools.
https://mass.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/osi04.soc.ush.civil.mendez/mendez-v-westminster-desegregating-californias-schools/#.WcHnZYprwVw

Arts Advocacy

Americans for the Arts
http://www.artsusa.org/about_us/

Advocate for the Arts through their Arts Action Center
http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocate.asp

Arts Education Advocacy Toolkit
Great resource with instructions for various levels of advocacy and leadership.
http://education.kennedy-center.org/pdf/education/partners/ArtsEducationAdvocacyToolkit.pdf

Advocate for the Arts through their Arts Action Center
http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocate.asp

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
Support the arts in your state. This organization works in Washington to influence federal policy and provide research in multiple arts related fields. It also has a helpful ‘advocacy’ tab that provides tools that are concise and helpful.

ESL Standards

WIDA 2012 Amplification of 07 Standards (Free download):
https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx#2012

WIDA Can Do Descriptors (Free downloads):
https://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/


Berriz, B. Boston Teachers Union News: A series of letters to teachers: The ABC’s of Teaching Immigrant Students; African American History is My History Too; We Must Take Back Our Classrooms for Our Students’ Sake; The Tests Are Upon Us Again.


Brown, S. A. (2011). English Learners discover literacy through graphic novels and blogging. Chicago, IL: NCTE


Glossary

activism
Direct vigorous undertaking in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)
Termed coined by Jim Cummins to differentiate between social and academic language acquisition. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations.

bilingual
The ability to speak in two languages fluently.

biliterate/biliteracy
The ability to read and write in two languages fluently.

code-switching
The practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation.

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)
An approach that was created specifically for emergent bilingual students. There are three modules of CALLA, which include learning strategies, development of academic language and a related curriculum. Many public schools incorporate this into their ESL programs.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
Termed coined by Jim Cummins to differentiate between social and academic language acquisition. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) are language skills needed in formal academic learning, as opposed to BICS above for social learning.

critical framing
From the New London Groups concept of Multiliteracies, in critical framing students are guided to analyze designs critically in relation to whose interests are served by the meanings (ideology), and by considering the audience to whom the meanings are directed. Learners consider how these meanings relate to the cultural and social context of designs.
collaboration
Interpersonal collaboration is a style of direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared or joint decision-making as they work toward a common goal. (Adapted from a definition by Joanna D. Bertsekas, Lesley University)

Community-based Language Learning (CLL)
A language-teaching method in which students work together to develop what aspects of a language they would like to learn. It is based on the counseling-approach in which the teacher acts as a counselor and a paraphraser, while the learner is seen as a client and collaborator.

comprehensible input hypothesis
A hypothesis first proposed by Stephen Krashen (1981) who purports that EBs acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level.

critical literacy
An instructional approach, stemming from Marxist critical pedagogy and Paulo Freire (1970), which advocates the adoption of "critical" perspectives toward text. Critical literacy encourages readers to actively analyze texts and offers strategies for what proponents describe as uncovering underlying messages.

critical pedagogy
A teaching approach inspired by critical theory and other radical philosophies, especially that of Paolo Freire’s (1970) Pedagogy of the Oppressed, which is a teaching method that aims to help in challenging and actively struggling against any form of social oppression and the related customs and beliefs.

cultural capital
Acquired tastes, values, languages, and dialects, or the educational qualifications, that mark a person as belonging to a privileged social and cultural class…. it is unconsciously learned… “It is the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital.” (Pierre Bourdieu, p. 246)

cultural competence
A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

culturally relevant/responsive teaching
A pedagogy grounded in teachers' displaying cultural competence: a skill at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. They enable each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context.
culture
The values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class or religion (definition by Sonia Nieto).

discrimination
The differential allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitations of access to full participation in society based on individual membership in a particular social group.

dual language program
A form of education in which students are taught literacy and content in two languages. Dual language programs generally start in kindergarten or first grade and extend for at least five years, although many continue into middle school and high school.

dynamic bilingualism
The intermingling of past and present language practices, or the multi-competence of holding two languages at the same time, pushes us to understand the complexity of languaging in an increasingly multilingual global village. Dynamic bilingualism results when engaging our varying languages, past and present, in order to communicate across social contexts.

emergent bilinguals
Refers to culturally and linguistically diverse individuals who are utilizing their native language in the process of becoming dynamic bilinguals. The linguistic repertoire of these students taps into both languages as resources and students can be in developing stages of the native language and/or the second language. This term is used as a way to reject the deficit-oriented terminology of LEP (Limited English Proficiency), ELLs (English Language Learners), or ESL (English as a Second Language) students (García & Kleifgen, 2010). “One of today’s most misunderstood issues in education throughout the world, and particularly in the United States, is how to educate students who speak languages other than English. In the United States, these students are most often referred to as English language learners (ELLs) by educators or as Limited English proficient students (LEPs) by legislators and the federal government. I argue here that emergent bilinguals might be a more appropriate term for these children. Labeling students as either LEPs or ELLs omits an idea that is critical to the discussion of equity in the teaching of these children. When officials and educators ignore the bilingualism that these students can—and must—develop through schooling in the United States, they perpetuate inequities in the education of these children.” (García, 2009)

English as a Second Language (ESL)
Refers to the teaching of English to students with different native or home languages using specially designed programs and techniques. English as a Second Language is an English-only instructional model, and most programs attempt to develop English skills and academic knowledge simultaneously. It is also known as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), English as an Additional Language (EAL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).
**English Language Learner (ELL)**
A deficit-based term, used by most state departments of education and school districts, to mean emergent bilingual learner.

**ESL pull-out**
The pull-out method consists of the ESL teacher pulling students out of their general education classes to work with the teacher either one-on-one or in a small-group setting.

**ESL push-in**
Some schools prefer for ESL teachers to work directly in students' classrooms, providing instruction in a push-in setting.

**empowerment**
When members of oppressed groups refuse to accept the dominant ideology and their subordinate status and take action to redistribute social power more equitably.

**ethnicity**
Social construct, which divides people into smaller social groups, based on characteristics such as nationality, ancestral geographical base, language, religions, socioeconomic status, and shared values.

**funds of knowledge**
Defined by researchers Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma González (2001) “to refer to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). When teachers shed their role of teacher and expert and, instead, take on a new role as learner, they can come to know their students and the families of their students in new and distinct ways. With this new knowledge, they can begin to see that the households of their students contain rich cultural and cognitive resources and that these resources can and should be used in their classroom in order to provide culturally responsive and meaningful lessons that tap students’ prior knowledge. Information that teachers learn about their students in this process is considered the student’s funds of knowledge.

**heritage language**
In foreign language education, heritage language is defined in terms of a student's upbringing and functional proficiency in the language: a student raised in a home where a non-majority language is spoken is a heritage speaker of that language if she/he possesses some proficiency in it.

**L1**
A first language, native language or mother tongue (also known as father tongue, arterial language) is a language that a person has been exposed to from birth or within the critical period.

**L2**
The second language learned by an individual.
Latinx
We use the term Latinx when referring to communities and people in order to signal inclusivity instead of more ‘genderized’ terms such as Latin@, Latina/o.

language immersion programs
An approach to foreign language instruction in which the usual curricular activities are conducted in a foreign language. This means that the new language is the medium of instruction.

Limited English Proficient (LEP)
A deficit-based term used by the federal government to mean emergent bilingual learner.

limit-situations
In Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1992, p. 89) Paolo Freire characterizes limit situations as barriers imposed on the oppressed that prevent them from being humanized. They can be effectively eliminated by educating those who are oppressed by these limit situations using the problem posing method of education.

linguicism
According to Skutnabb-Kangas, this term refers to “ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basics of language.” (Sonia Nieto, p. 384)

microaggressions
Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

multilingual
The ability to speak in more than two languages fluently.

multiliterate/multiliteracy
The ability to read and write in more than two languages fluently.

multiliteracies
Refers to two major aspects of language use today. The first is the variability of meaning making in different cultural, social or domain-specific contexts. These differences are becoming ever more significant to our communications environment. This means that it is no longer enough for literacy teaching to focus solely on the rules of standard forms of the national language. Rather, the business of communication and representation of meaning today increasingly requires that learners are able figure out differences in patterns of meaning from one context to another. These differences are the consequence of any number of factors, including culture, gender, life experience, subject matter, social or subject domain and the like. Every meaning exchange is cross-cultural to a certain degree. The second aspect of language use today arises in part from the characteristics of the new information and communications media. Meaning is made in ways that
are increasingly multimodal—in which written-linguistic modes of meaning interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial patterns of meaning. This means that we need to extend the range of literacy pedagogy so that it does not unduly privilege alphabetical representations, but brings into the classroom multimodal representations, and particularly those typical of the new, digital media. This makes literacy pedagogy all the more engaging for its manifest connections with today’s communications milieu. It also provides a powerful foundation for a pedagogy of synesthesia, or mode-switching (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). The multiliteracies pedagogical approach involves four key aspects: Situated Practice, Critical Framing, Overt Instruction, and Transformed Practice.

multimodal literacies
First proposed by Professors Gunter Kress and Carey Jewitt, is about understanding the different ways of knowledge representations and meaning-making. Multimodal literacy focuses on the design of discourse by investigating the contributions of specific semiotic resources, (e.g. language, gesture, images) co-deployed across various modalities (e.g. visual, aural, somatic), as well as their interaction and integration in constructing a coherent multimodal text (such as advertisements, posters, news report, websites, films).

native language literacy program
Programs that emphasize the importance of meaning, place learners' native language and cultural background and experiences at the center of the educational program, using them for instruction. This project allowed them to use and develop both first language (L1) and second language (L2) literacy skills (Rivera, 1999b).

new literacies studies
“New literacies” that arise from new technologies include things like text-messaging, blogging, social networking, podcasting, and videomaking. These digital technologies alter and extend our communication abilities, often blending text, sound, and imagery.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
The No Child Left Behind Act, created during the Bush administration in 2002, authorized several federal education programs that are administered by the states. The law was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Under the 2002 law, states are required to test students in reading and math in grades 3–8 and once in high school.

oppression
A systemic social phenomenon based on the perceived or real differences among social groups that involve ideological domination, institutional control, and the promulgation of the oppressors’ ideology, logic system, and culture to the oppressed group. The result is the exploitation of one social group by another for the benefit of the oppressor group.

Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)
Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching emergent bilingual learners, which integrates language and content instruction. The dual goals of sheltered instruction are: to provide access to mainstream, grade-level content, and to promote the development of English language proficiency.
**sheltered instruction (SDAIE)**
Sheltered Instruction, also referred to as SDAIE in California, is a teaching style founded on the concept of providing meaningful instruction in the content areas (social studies, math, science) for transitioning EB students towards higher academic achievement while they reach English language proficiency.

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)**
The SIOP model is a research-based and validated instructional model that has proven effective in addressing the academic needs of emergent bilinguals throughout the United States. The SIOP Model consists of eight interrelated components: Lesson Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice and Application, Lesson Delivery, Review and Assessment

**situated practice**
Originally formulated by the New London Group (1996) as one of the related components of Multiliteracies Pedagogy, is constituted by immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners who are culturally and linguistically diversified.

**transformed practice**
When students recreate and recontextualize meaning (Cope & Kalantzi, 2000; New London Group, 1996).

**Transformative Intercultural Pedagogy**
This stance, which Cummins (2000) calls Transformative Intercultural Pedagogy, requires educators’ appreciation of family involvement as a mutual border crossing and a shared responsibility (Bartolomé, 2006; Nieto, 1992, 2000).

**Transitional Bilingual Program (TBE)**
A Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program facilitates the transition of emergent bilingual learners into the all-English curriculum. Instruction in the students’ native language ensures that students learn subject matter in the language they understand best. Classes in the native language continue as students acquire English language skills sufficient to function successfully in English-only mainstream classrooms. Transition to the English-only classroom is expected to occur within three years

**translanguaging**
Includes code-switching but goes beyond this concept. For example, reading in one language and using another language to take notes, discuss, or write (García & Kleifgen, 2010).

**Two-way Bilingual program (TB)**
A Two-way Bilingual (TB) program develops full bilingualism for all participants, regardless of their linguistic background. These programs serve emergent bilingual learners, both English language learners and native English speakers, who are seeking to learn a language other than their first language. All students receive instruction in English and a second language from the outset. Typically, native English-
speaking students come from middle-class homes where parents understand the long-term value of investments rendering their children bilingual.

**Unz Initiative**
"End bilingual education in California by June 1998." That's the slogan of the Unz ballot initiative that was entitled English for the Children. In November 1997, California's Secretary of State certified that anti-bilingual activists had collected at least 510,796 petitions from registered voters – more than enough to qualify the measure for the primary ballot. The campaign was led by Ron Unz, a Republican candidate for governor in 1994 and a multimillionaire software developer, who funded the bill to get passed. Due to the results of the Unz Initiative in the early 2000s, California, Arizona, and Massachusetts restricted the implementation of bilingual education. As a result of this policy, in 2011 the US Department of Education and the US Justice Department found that Massachusetts had failed to adequately prepare teachers and school departments to implement English-only instruction (Berriz, 2006; Vaznis, 2011). Fortunately, California recently voted for the return of bilingual education in November 2016 and in Massachusetts, the bilingual education LOOK Bill passed in November 2017. It also passed a bill that puts the Seal of Biliteracy (https://languageopportunity.org/seal-of-biliteracy/) on graduation diplomas of high school students, in recognition of those who speak, read, and write proficiently in a language other than English. Progress on recognizing multilingualism as an asset is slowing emerging in the United States.

**Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**
Psychologist Lev Vygotsky coined the term “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) in the 1930s to describe where instruction is most beneficial for each student – just beyond his or her current level of independent capability.
Art as Voice: Creating Access for Emergent Bilingual Learners
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Engaging Children in Social Emotional Learning
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In many developed countries, including the United States, public schooling curriculum in the 21st century values traditional subject matter more than social and emotional skills. This focus on academic learning comes from the narrow view that schooling be for economic purposes and global competitiveness. While these are valuable goals, education must also have goals centered on equipping the next generation with skills for living a healthy and productive life. This entails learning how to make good judgements, calm fears and anxiety, self-regulate, demonstrate leadership, and think critically and creatively.

As a parent and professor of elementary education, I want my child and all children to develop skills for living a happy and productive life in an ever changing world. Parents and educators must teach our children social and emotional learning (SEL) in our homes, classrooms, and athletic-fields. The authors of Child’s Social and Emotional Well-Being: A Complete Guide for Parents and Those Who Help Them give us a valuable resource for engaging in this work. Their book centers on SEL to prepare children for well-being. They define well-being as “the psychological capacity to cope with the demands arising across time, circumstances, and setting” (Dacey, Fiore, Brion-Meisels, 2016, p. 2). In the book, the authors give step-by-step instructions for exercises that foster children’s SEL. While the audience for the book is parents, the exercises are adaptable for classroom teachers, coaches, and counselors working with children ages four to sixteen.

The book’s introduction links environment with brain development, as well as discusses “the interdependence of academic learning with SEL” (p. 7). It also gives a brief history of the SEL movement. A catalyst for this movement was Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences. Daniel Coleman build on Gardener’s views of intelligences and coined ‘emotional intelligences’ and furthermore with the assistance of others developed the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Following the introduction, the book is divided into five parts: Part I Self-Awareness, Part II Self-Management, Part III Social Awareness, Part IV Relationship Skills, Part V Responsible Decision-Making, and Part VI Achieving Your Goals Even More Effectively. Parts I through V describe sets of skills for building character; practicing mindfulness; calming fears and anxiety; independent thinking; self-regulating; competing and cooperating; preventing being bullied and not becoming a bully; building successful friendships; demonstrating leadership; thinking creatively; and thinking critically and wisely. Within each part, the authors discuss the
sets of skills through their experiences, expertise, and pertinent professional literature. In doing so, the authors share this important information in an unambiguous and pragmatic way. Exercises are given for parents to use to engage children in SEL. An average of nine exercises are supplied for developing each skill set. For each exercise, the authors give a recommended target age range, goal or desired outcome, materials needed, script, and ideas for adapting the exercise with a different age group. The exercises are well explained and seem engaging for children.

In Part VI, the authors give concrete actions for parents and educators to take in order to achieve their goal of supporting the social and emotional development of their children. As a parent and educator, this section resonated with me as it highlighted the value in collaboration. We often tackle endeavors on our own, and this reminded me of the importance of seeking support from other parents, caregivers, and educators. It also reminded me to harness the valuable resources of organizations. This work is very important and challenging, so we must seek opportunities for collaboration.

The authors conclude the book with a positive look to the future of SEL. They state that “the beginning of a tidal wave of support for SEL can be discerned in scholarly journals, professional blogs, newspaper articles, on the agenda of parent-teacher organizations, and in conversations along the sidelines at school sports events” (p. 221). While I admire the authors’ wishful thinking, and keeping with the authors’ use of the metaphor of a tidal wave, I believe that the massive wave of support for SEL is still merely ripples in a sea of schooling initiatives and learning expectations. These ripples do lapse the coastline in the form of dedicated parents, caregivers, and educators seeking opportunities to support children’s SEL. However, the tidal wave of support for SEL will not hammer the coastline of public education and erode the beachfront of academic curriculum anytime soon. This will likely not happen until policymakers and legislators see that schooling purposes are broader than merely economic goals and global competitiveness. Until this shift in thinking occurs, I advocate for parents and educators to make a conscious effort in supporting the development of children’s social and emotional well-being. Dacey, Fiore, and Brion-Meisels’s book is an invaluable resource for those seeking to engage in this important work.

References