



Literacies Across the Lifespan

Through the publication of peer reviewed empirical research, working papers on field-based praxis, and conceptual pieces, *Literacies Across the Lifespan* contributes to ongoing conversations about literacy across learners' lives, from early childhood to adulthood, and in contexts across home, school, and community settings. *Literacies Across the Lifespan* is run by graduate students at UIC's Center for Literacy.

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Thank you for reading the inaugural issue of *Literacies Across the Lifespan*, a peer-reviewed, graduate student-run journal published by the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

With the support of our faculty advisor, Dr. Kira Baker-Doyle, Director of the Center for Literacy and Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at UIC, we began working on this journal in the Fall of 2019. From the beginning, we were inspired by Dr. Baker-Doyle’s vision for this journal as something that would be both a resource for grad students at UIC and beyond, and also a venue for contributing to ongoing discussions in our field about literacy teaching, learning, and practice across contexts and throughout lifetimes. Our understanding of literacy is reflected in the name of this journal: we view literacies as multiple, hybrid, and ever-changing, situated in sociocultural context, and reflective of learners’ unique identities. We believe that while traditional literacy education has typically privileged a narrow set of skills and practices—which have upheld white supremacist ideas of what counts as worthy ways of communicating—the literacies that learners practice across their lifespans are vast and rich. From babies to elders, and everyone in between, all learners are engaged in making meaning with texts of various kinds, and as founding editors of this journal, we seek to participate in scholarly discussions among researchers, teachers, and community members about those literacies.

In this issue, readers will find “Connections” articles—conceptual or theoretical pieces. Nancy Domínguez-Fret’s literature review on dual language education, critical language pedagogy, and translanguaging engages that literature in order to make an argument that academics must do more to make research available to families, teachers, and administrators. Amanda Diaz’s literature review on culturally sustaining pedagogy and pre-service teacher education argues that teacher education programs must take up these pedagogical orientations in order to intentionally prepare teachers to support students of color. Both of these Connections articles use extant literature in order to advocate action on behalf of racially and linguistically minoritized learners. In this way, we find them to be dynamic contributions to the field.

Readers will also find “Notes From the Field” articles, or pieces that explore literacy pedagogy, curricula, and/or practice. In this issue, readers will find Michelle D. Nixon’s and Molly E. Walker’s article describing a critical literacy unit, using the book *Dreamers* and several class-wide multimodal literacy activities designed in order to support elementary students in Chicago’s Little Village neighborhood. Tiffani Nixon, Chris Norman, and Esmeralda Robledo detail in their article a framework for youth-led and youth-centered writing toward healing, including a set of prompts to initiate and support discussion and writing in k-12 classrooms. Both of these Notes From the Field articles offer concrete resources for teachers and community educators to adapt to their own contexts.

Finally, this issue includes a “Notes From the Field” piece in the form of a poem by Shelley Maxwell, who reflects on the literacy practices—especially music and song—which tie her family together across generations. We are proud to share this piece as a reflection of our vision for this journal to represent the multigenerational, multimodal, and expansive literacies practiced across lifetimes.

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Making Research Accessible to Communities Outside of Academia: Dual Language Education, Critical Language Pedagogy and Translanguaging

Nancy Domínguez-Fret

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2016), Latina/o/x and Black¹ students will comprise 44% of the U.S. student population by 2025. Although the majority of these students are bi-dialectal and/or bilingual, schools often perceive their “non-standard” and “non-English” language practices as a deficit to overcome. This positionality of bilingualism and bidialectism as a deficit is problematic. For decades, scholars have warned against deficit-based teaching practices that create language insecurities in Students of Color (Carreira, 2000; Delpit, 1995; Leeman, 2005; Martinez, 2003; Valdés, 1981). This research advocates for asset-based practices that value students' home language varieties and funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and push for their inclusion in school curricula. As a result, there has been a research shift to viewing students' home language varieties as a valuable resource (Ruiz, 1984) that can be used to leverage the acquisition of a “standard” variety of English and/or Spanish (Martínez, Morales, & Aldana, 2017).

Despite this asset-based research shift, the established process for disseminating scholarly research findings is problematic. Research findings are primarily published in scholarly journals, utilize specific content-area jargon and are typically only accessible free of cost to students and scholars in academia. Certainly, this process limits the accessibility of research findings to stakeholders outside of academia, which are oftentimes the individuals most impacted by the lack of access to this research. If our research purpose is to provide a more equitable educational experience to Students of Color, as scholars, it is our responsibility and should be our priority, to ensure our research findings reach communities outside of academia.

In this commentary, I will discuss three major issues in literacy research that should be more accessible to stakeholders outside of academia. First, research delineating the benefits of Dual Language (DL) education programs needs to be accessible to Latina/o/x parents. Second, research explaining the advantages of incorporating Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) in English Language Arts and Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) classroom should be available to educators. Lastly, research stating the benefits of utilizing translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in bilingual and mainstream classrooms should be acquired by all educators. Collectively, these literacy issues actively problematize the euro-centric curriculum that dominates U.S. school systems as well as push back against the deficit framing of the linguistic and cultural practices of Students of Color. Making these research findings accessible will serve as a tool of empowerment and activism for parents, students, and educators, and create more equitable educational opportunities for these student communities.

Dual Language Education and Latina/o/x Parents: What Parents Need to Know about Dual Language Programs

In recent decades there has been a boom of Dual Language (DL) immersion programs across the nation². In DL classrooms, minoritized language³ speakers and English-

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1. For the remainder of the paper, I will use the term Students of Color to be inclusive of other students who might not identify as Latina/o/x or Black but are also bilingual and/or bidialectal.
2. Some DL programs are known as One-Way and others as Two-Way bilingual programs. The first is typically made up of Spanish heritage/native speakers and the latter is typically made up of 50 present heritage/native speakers and 50 English native speakers.
3. This term is inclusive of students whose native/heritage language is not English. For example, some Latina/o/x/ students identify as Spanish native/heritage speakers.

speaking students work collectively with the end goal of bilingualism, biliteracy, cross-cultural awareness and high academic achievement (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). With respect to the Latina/o/x community, DL programs position Spanish and English as legitimate academic languages. The DL bilingual program model provides the best educational outcomes for minoritized language speakers (Lindholm-Leary, 2001), yet the majority of this student community doesn't have access to DL programs. Since early on, scholars like Guadalupe Valdés (1997) encouraged caution and interrogation into who these programs are ultimately serving.

In the contexts of Illinois, the boom of DL programs tends to be happening in white middle-class neighborhoods (Morales & Rao, 2015) and not in Latina/o/x communities. Morales & Rao (2015) argue that white middle-class parents have the cultural capital to access research on the benefits of bilingualism and as a result they choose to enroll their children in Dual Language (DL) programs. The authors further argue that in many cases, Latina/o/x parents don't have the same cultural capital to access this research and are unaware of the lack of DL programs in their communities. It is important to acknowledge that being unaware doesn't mean lack of interest or care for their students' education. In many cases, Latina/o/x parents trust that schools and educators will provide their children with the best education possible. Nonetheless, this trust is oftentimes violated at the expense of Latina/o/x language rights. Clearly, there is a disconnect between research on bilingualism and Latina/o/x communities, which researchers in academia should address if they truly want to impact the communities DL programs should benefit the most.

What Researchers Can Do

A way scholars can bridge their research into practice is by ensuring their research is accessible to Latina/o/x parents.

This can be accomplished by providing informational tools to facilitate their understanding of the benefits of bilingualism⁴, the difference between transitional bilingual programs (see Table 1) which are the most common bilingual education service in the U.S. (Freeman, 2004) and the benefits of enrolling their children in DL programs (see Table 2). Providing this information, in their native language and free of unnecessary jargon will provide Latina/o/x parents with the cultural capital needed to become activists for the linguistic rights of their children. Latina/o/x parents need to be presented with empirical evidence of the benefits of DL programs. This empirical evidence will serve as a tool for parents to better understand the benefits of DL education and provide them with the cultural capital to advocate for the implementation of DL programs in their neighborhood schools. It is also necessary to discuss the intersections of school choice and school funding to explain to parents why only certain schools offer DL programs. With this cultural capital, Latina/o/x parents will have more resources to navigate a school system that has unfortunately taken advantage of the trust the Latino/x community has granted it.

It is important for this research to be available to parents because often Latina/o/x parents do not enroll their students in bilingual education programs because of their personal experiences in transitional bilingual programs or the dominating myth that monolingual English instruction leads to higher academic achievement. Researchers need to ensure parents are aware that historically, most bilingual educational services available for Latina/o/x students have been grounded on deficit-based practices. There needs to be room for conversations around the constant placing of Latina/o/x bilingual students in English Only programs, where their native/heritage language is perceived as a deficit. Parents need to be aware that for decades, educational institutions disregarded research finding that when Latina/o/x bilingual students are

Table 1
Differences between Transitional Bilingual and Dual Language Programs

Transitional Bilingual Programs	Dual Language Programs
<p>Home Language: Used as a bridge to acquire English, home language use starts at 50%-90% and decreases to 10%</p> <p>Duration: 1-3 years, students tend to exit these programs by 3rd grade</p> <p>Goals: Acquisition of English, academic achievement solely in English</p> <p>Deficit framing of the home language of students</p>	<p>Home Language: Used as a bridge to acquire English, home language use starts at 90% or 50% with the ultimate goal of 50% home language and 50 % English language instruction.</p> <p>Duration: 1st-8th grade</p> <p>Goals: Bilingualism, biliteracy, and academic achievement</p> <p>Additive framing of the home language of students</p>

4. Some of the documented benefits of bilingualism: better performance on executive control tasks (Barac & Bialystok, 2012), increased auditory attention, greater metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2016), greater communicative sensitivity (Ben-Zeev, 1977), and an increase in creativity and problem-solving skills (Kharkhurin, 2015).

given enough time to develop their native/heritage language they can become biliterate (Escamilla 2000; Cummins, 1980; 1981). If scholars can facilitate these discussions, then parents can have the agency to decide whether or not to enroll their children in DL programs.

It is important for researchers to collaborate with schools in the dissemination of research findings to ensure parents not only have access to this information but also have a seat at the table and feel that their needs or concerns are being heard. A strategy can be to design a historical workshop delineating the different types of bilingual education programs. This can provide a context for Latina/o/x parents to understand that their children’s bilingualism is not a problem, but an asset that can be further developed through additive-based bilingual programs like DL programs. Scholars can start by learning from other parents like María Elena Meraz who co-founded the Parent Engagement Academy⁵ in California to ensure parents understood the importance of navigating the U.S. school system. Universities and school districts can partner up to create something similar where researchers, teachers and parents can work collectively to advocate for the implementation of DL programs in their neighborhood schools.

All of these efforts to bridge research to communities can be achieved by forming connections with the Local School Councils, Bilingual Advisory Committees and Parent Advisory Councils in Latina/o/x communities. This information can also be shared via podcasts like Entre Dos Podcast which is directed by two Latina moms raising bilingual children in the U.S. Similarly, universities can partner up with

local schools and create “bilingual education clubs” where Latina/o/x parents can explore already existing resources on the benefits of bilingual education, and create brochures and/or presentations in Spanish. In this way, parents have a voice and an active role in making this information accessible to other parents and community members in their neighborhoods. Lastly, scholars can also reach out to local social media mom groups like Chicago Latina Moms on Facebook and host virtual informational sessions on the benefits of bilingualism and DL programs.

Critical Language Pedagogies

What Educators Need to Know about Critical Language Pedagogy

Educational institutions in the U.S. play a key role in enforcing and reproducing the *standard language ideology*. This ideology positions “academic” and “standard” language varieties at the top of the linguistic hierarchy (Leeman, 2012). This enforcement communicates that there is only one acceptable way of speaking in school settings, categorizing all other language varieties as incorrect and inferior. As a response, scholars have proposed the inclusion of Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) in English Language Arts (ELA) and Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) classrooms. CLP is an anti-racist pedagogical tool that educators can use to facilitate students’ exploration of the presence and enforcement of systemic racism and deficit-based ideologies in school settings. CLP values the language practices students bring into the classroom and encourages students to critically analyze language ideologies imposed by powerful institutions (Godley & Minnici, 2008) and how these affect their lives. Through

Table 2
The Benefits of Dual Language Education

Benefits of Dual Language Education
Students in DL programs outperform students in a transitional bilingual program in both Spanish and English reading tests (Collier & Thomas, 2004).
DL students develop significantly higher verbal expression skills in the language other than English (LOTE) (Murphy, 2014).
DL programs can enhance math and reading achievement and growth (Marian, Shook, & Schroeder, 2013).
Students enrolled in DL programs perform the same or even at higher levels on standardized tests than their peers enrolled in monolingual classrooms (Lindholm-Leary & Block 2010).
DL students who receive math instruction in the LOTE perform at the same academic level as third-graders in a mainstream English classroom in tests administered in English.
DL fourth grade students present greater growth in math than students enrolled in mainstream English classrooms (Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2018)

5. More information about the Parent Academy can be found in the news article titled LA parent voice: What I learned in 25 years of being a Latino parent engagement advocate – ‘Knowing the school system can really transform everything’ "See link in the "Related Resources" Table on p. 10"

CLP, educators can engage in conversations with their students to problematize the misconception that in order to become a professional, students must completely stop speaking “non-standard” language varieties.

CLP also validates and encourages the use of students' entire linguistic repertoires. It also encourages educators to use sociolinguistic and historical tools necessary to empower students to gain agency to understand the social, political, and ideological dimensions of a language and how these factors affect their communities. Although there are proven academic benefits to the inclusion of CLP (see Table 4) in SHL and ELA classrooms, the application of CLP is not a common practice. A probable cause of this is that research on CLP needs to be better disseminated in order for it to reach K-12 educators. A starting point would be for educators to better understand what CLP looks like in practice and how they can incorporate it in their classrooms.

What Researchers Can Do

Scholars need to be aware that most pre-service and in-service educators do not have the opportunity to learn about CLP during their pre-service teacher preparation programs. Research needs to be not only accessible but also presented in practical forms in order for educators to begin incorporating this teaching approach in their classrooms. A starting point would be sharing the example Martínez (2003) provides utilizing the Spanish word *haiga*⁶, which is the stigmatized variant of *haya*⁷. Martínez (2003) argues, “If the students walk into the classroom saying *haiga* and walk out saying *haya*, there has been, in my estimation, no value added. However, if they walk in saying *haiga* and walk out saying either *haya* or *haiga* having the ability to defend their use of *haiga*

if and when they see fit then there has been value added” (p. 10). In sum, it is not enough to teach students a “standard” way of saying things. This is not empowering; it further reinforces linguistic hierarchies.

A language appropriateness approach to language teaching that often explains language variation using terms like “formal” and “informal” would suggest that *haiga* is an archaic form of the *haya*, technically not incorrect, but too “informal.” A CLP approach would take it a step further and reject *haiga*'s categorization as an archaism given that numerous Spanish speakers still use *haiga* on a daily basis. Similarly, there would be discussions around the sociopolitical and historical reasons *haiga* became the “non-prestigious” variant of *haya*. For example, students can explore the birth of the printing press in Spain and how it played a role in the standardization of the Spanish language. Prior to this time period, *haya* and *haiga* were used in free variation, almost like synonyms. Nonetheless, the printing press pushed back against language variation, and people in power determined that *haya* would be “correct” and “standard” and *haiga* the “incorrect” and inferior variant. In this sense, students can reflect on the constant categorization of *haiga* as deficient, understanding that this label is rooted in sociopolitical and socioeconomic, rather than linguistic reasons. Although this example is for an SHL course, it can be applied in a ELA classroom where students explore the socially ascribed differences between Black English “aks” and “standard” English “ask.” CLP then not only seeks to empower students to make their own linguistic choices, but also to provide them with the tools necessary to have the agency to defend their linguistic choices. In our current times where racism is constantly affecting the lives of our Students of Color, CLP can serve as a tool to facilitate

Table 3

The Benefits of Critical Language Pedagogy

Benefits of Critical Language Pedagogy
<p>Students in these programs may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that standard language ideologies function as a silencing mechanism (Godley & Minnici, 2008) • Acquire knowledge of language variation (Baker-Bell, 2013; Godley & Minnici, 2008) • Shift their own language ideologies (Behizadeh, 2017; Baker-Bell, 2013; Godley & Minnici, 2008) • Perceive more value in all language varieties (Baker-Bell, 2013; Behizadeh, 2017; Godley & Minnici, 2008) • Begin using “non-standard” language practices in their writing and learn when to use different languages and variations according to audience and context (Behizadeh, 2017) • Gain the agency to make and defend their linguistic choices (Holguín, 2018) • Increase critical thinking (Ali, 2011)

6. Stigmatized version of the present perfect verb “to have” typically used by lower-socioeconomic class Latina/o/x communities.

7. Prestigious version of the present perfect verb “to have.”

students' exploration of ideologies our school system embraces that directly impact their lives, academically and personally.

Aside from the previously discussed CLP theory and research, Leeman's (2005) article on critical pedagogy would be beneficial to share with educators in order for them to understand the historical factors explaining the necessity of transitioning from appropriateness to critical pedagogies. This article also offers pedagogical suggestions for implementing a critical perspective in SHL classrooms. First, Leeman (2005) suggests that educators are inclusive of reading materials that are representative of the language practices of their students. For example, it is suggested that educators include literature pieces where language is used fluidly and reflects the linguistic repertoires of US Latina/o/x communities. Through these literature pieces, students can work collectively to explore the rule-governed nature of their language practices. Another suggestion is the use of ethnography as a tool to explore the different language practices that students' communities engage in. Lastly, the use of *autobiografías lingüísticas* (proposed by Aparacio, 1997) is highly encouraged. Through this assignment students can reflect on the different languages and language varieties they speak, whom they speak them with, and where they speak them. Although these suggestions were made for the SHL classroom, they are practical activities that can also be used in ELA classes to discuss issues around AAE.

research they are engaging in with educators and administrators. An example of this is the Super Saturday conference which takes place yearly and is hosted by the University of Illinois at Chicago with the purpose of reaching Chicago Public School educators. In addition, universities can host free professional development monthly meetings (in-person or virtual) where educators can further explore CLP and receive professional hours for their participation. Forming these relationships with educators is crucial as it can create opportunities for action research projects where educators and researchers work together to further explore CLP

Universities can also make available courses and certificates that dive into critical perspectives to teaching languages and language arts. An example of an already existing online course titled Critical Approaches to Heritage Language Education offered by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Another example is podcasts, which are free of charge and accessible to educators at their convenience. These podcasts can be geared specifically for educators by clearly explaining the benefits of incorporating CLP as a pedagogical tool in their classrooms. In addition, the podcast hosts can recruit experts in CLP and to share their expertise with educators and provide tools for their classroom application. Lastly, scholars can also collaborate to create online modules delineating the tenets, research, and benefits of a CLP approach where educators can receive professional development hours and complete these modules at their own pace.

If as scholars we truly want our research to transform our society to a more socially just democratic society, we need to ensure the research we are conducting is reaching the communities which it directly or indirectly involves.

Researchers can also share resources and work closely with educators interested in transitioning their SHL programs and ELA programs to root in CLP. For example, they can use Holguín's (2018) article presenting a six course SHL college-level program that adopted a long-term Critical Language Awareness (CLA) perspective. This CLA grounded SHL program sought to foster the academic success and linguistic empowerment of students. In the article, issues surrounding the process of program design, curriculum design, professional development, and unit implementation are discussed. Similarly, scholars can work collectively to share their experiences implementing this approach and hold panel discussions where educators and administrators can be present.

Universities and local public schools can be in constant communication to ensure CLP research is bridged into practice. For example, universities can hold biannual conferences where professors and graduate students can share the

Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Tool in All Classrooms

What Educators Need to Know about Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a theory and a practice. As a theory, translanguaging holds that all individuals have one unitary language system where all their language varieties are stored and can be accessed to use language fluidly (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). In practice, translanguaging encourages educators to embrace and be inclusive of their students' entire linguistic repertoires. Orellana, Lee, and Martinez (2010) use the term "linguistic toolkits" to describe students' linguistic repertoires. Through a metaphor, the authors compare the linguistic tools that students have in their linguistic toolbox to the different tools a carpenter has in a carpentry toolbox. Orellana, Lee, & Martinez (2010) explain that a carpenter learns about the function of each tool through practice. If a carpenter only knows how to use a hammer (see Figure 1), despite how powerful and efficient this tool is, the carpenter will not reach their full potential and will not know how to

use other tools that are needed to be a successful carpenter. However, if this carpenter has the opportunity to learn how valuable each carpentry tool in their toolkit is (see Figure 2), they would be able to reach their full potential as a carpenter.

If educators begin to think about language in this way, they will understand that solely helping their students develop their “Standard Spanish” hammer (see Figure 3), is not creating a space where students can reach their full academic potential. Perhaps the student knows the content knowledge and can express it in U.S. Spanish, but if the student is not provided the space to use this linguistic tool/ language variety, how is this serving as a silencing mechanism? On the other hand, if students are in a pedagogical space where they are encouraged to use and value their entire linguistic toolkit (see Figure 4), students will feel comfortable using all of their linguistic tools and reach their full academic potential. Translanguaging pushes back against linguistic inequality in classrooms and encourages educators not only to perceive value in students’ entire linguistic toolkits/linguistic

Figure 1
The Carpenter’s Toolkit



repertoire, but also to make time to support students’ practice of each of their linguistic tools/language varieties in a classroom setting. Educators using translanguaging in their classrooms become advocates of the sustainability of all the language varieties of all students. It is important to note that educators do not need to be proficient in their students’ heritage/ native languages to enact a translanguaging teaching stance. They just need to provide a space where students can access resources in their heritage/native language and make meaningful connections to the content being taught in the classroom.

What Researchers Can Do

Although translanguaging as a theory is widely popular and respected in academia, translanguaging as a pedagogical tool hasn’t reached the majority of U.S. educators. The dissemination of translanguaging research findings needs to better target pre-service and in-service educators and policy makers in order for this pedagogical tool to be perceived as

Figure 2
The Carpenter’s Toolkit



Figure 3
Students’ Linguistic Toolkits



Figure 4
Students’ Linguistic Toolkits



8. These images were created by my niece, Jazmine Diaz a Latina middle school student.

valuable and reach more U.S. classrooms. In order for this narrative to change, scholars in Schools of Education and Language Departments need to advocate and ensure their pre-service teaching programs have training on translanguaging before leaving their programs. All education majors should graduate having knowledge of the history behind bilingual education in the U.S., the benefits of bilingualism and consequently the possibilities of translanguaging in their classrooms, regardless of their content area. In this way, scholars will be advocating for the inclusion of a socially just pedagogical tool via educators across content areas, and consciously become active agents of change and push back against monolingual language ideologies that have dominated our educational system and continue to marginalize Latina/o/x bilingual students.

Aside from pre-service education programs, translanguaging also needs to reach in-service educators and university professors across content areas. Researchers can begin by creating multimodal resources and educational modules explaining what translanguaging is and what it looks like in practice. For example, it is crucial that educators are provided with resources to help them take on a *teaching translanguaging stance* (García, Ibarra Johnson & Seltzer, 2017). The translanguaging stance requires that educators critically reflect on their own teaching practices and language ideologies. In order to create a classroom space that embraces and is inclusive of students' linguistic and cultural diversity, educators need to value students' entire linguistic repertoires and become co-learners in a democratic classroom where knowledge is collectively challenged and co-constructed with students. In sum, educators who take on a teaching

translanguaging stance are determined to create a more socially just classroom environment where knowledge is co-constructed and challenged with the end goal of respecting and valuing cultural and linguistic diversity.

It is crucial that research on translanguaging pedagogy is accessible to educators (see Table 5) inside and outside of academia in order for this pedagogical practice to become the norm in U.S. classrooms. If this research stays in academic journals and away from the local communities surrounding universities, then what change are we truly making? It is well documented that translanguaging provides a more equitable and critically empowering educational environment for Latina/o/x bilingual children that have traditionally been marginalized by the U.S. educational system. How are we ensuring that our research is providing these equitable resources for US school students?

Conclusion

It is evident that a great portion of educational research conducted in the last decades consistently pushes back against deficit framings of Students of Color. Nonetheless, as argued in this paper, this research oftentimes doesn't reach individuals who benefit the most from these research findings. Three literacy issues that have not reached critical audiences are the benefits of DL education for Latina/o/x communities, the benefits of CLP in ELA and SHL classrooms, and the benefits of utilizing translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in all classrooms. If as scholars we truly want our research to transform our society to a more socially just democratic society, we need to ensure the research we are conducting is reaching the communities which it directly or indirectly in-

Table 4
The Benefits of Translanguaging

Benefits of Translanguaging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases participants' metalinguistic awareness (García-Mateus & Palmer 2017) • Fosters the development of critical and cultural awareness (Prada, 2019) • Potentially contributes to empowered bilingual identities (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Prada, 2019) • Serves as a tool to challenge "standard" and "monolingual" language ideologies that contribute to the deficit framing of the language practices of Latina/o/x/ students (Prada, 2019) • Contributes to literacy development (Bauer, Presiado & Colomer, 2017; Hornberger & Link, 2012) • Serves as a meaning-making resource during class lessons as well as during their English writing process (García & Kano, 2014) • Enables participants' awareness of differences present in English and Japanese texts, which leads participants to produce better written texts in English (García & Kano, 2014) • Improves inference-making (Mgijima & Makalela, 2016) • Serves as a tool for scaffolding subject-matter knowledge, as well as "exploratory talk" which led to subject-matter learning (Duarte, 2019)

volves. As previously mentioned, there are diverse ways to disseminate research findings which consist of researchers engaging in critical conversations with parents, students, and educators in order to collectively push back against deficit framings of Students of Color that continue to marginalize and impact their educational experiences. I will conclude with some questions scholars can use to reflect on their research practices:

1. How is my research impacting the communities this research affects the most?
2. How am I sharing these research findings with these communities?
3. How are the voices of the communities in which I am conducting research being heard?
4. How is my research going to impact policy?

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Related Resources

Dual Language

Podcasts: [Entre Dos Podcast](#)

Documents: [Guía para padres y maestros de niños bilingües](#), [Guía para padres de estudiantes que aprenden inglés](#), [¿Quiéren que sus hijos hablen el inglés y el español?: Un manual bilingüe](#)

News Articles: [Los estudiantes de CPS que están aprendiendo inglés van a la par de sus compañeros, según estudio](#), [Cómo los programas de lenguaje dual desnudan \(e intentan resolver\) las desigualdades sociales](#), [LA parent voice: What I learned in 25 years of being a Latino parent engagement advocate – ‘Knowing the school system can really transform everything’](#)

Translanguaging

Books: [The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning](#), [En Comunidad Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students](#)

Curriculum Guide: [Translanguaging in Curriculum and Instruction: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators](#)

Short Readings: [What is Translanguaging?](#), [What Is Translanguaging in the Classroom?](#), [Translanguaging: Practice Briefs for Educators](#)

Video: [Translanguaging](#)

Critical Language Pedagogy

Podcasts: [The Vocal Fries](#), [Teaching Literacy Practice](#) and [We Teach Lang](#)

Books: [Critical Language Pedagogy: Interrogating Language, Dialects, and Power in Teacher Education](#), [Speaking Spanish in the U.S.: The sociopolitics of Language](#) and [Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity and Pedagogy](#).

Course: [Critical Approaches to Heritage Language Education](#)

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Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy in Teacher Education

Amanda Diaz

U.S. classrooms are increasingly diverse. It is predicted that fewer than half of U.S. students will be white by 2026 (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017); however only slightly more than 17 percent of U.S. teachers are non-white (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017). For 20 plus years, culturally relevant pedagogy, which “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 382), served as a model for the education of students of color. Although research on cultural pedagogical ideologies has flourished, teachers continue to enter the field unprepared to serve non-white students (Whipp & Geronime, 2017).

Educational researchers now agree that a culturally relevant approach to teaching is no longer sufficient and have called for culturally *sustaining* pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012; Paris, & Alim, 2014), which “seek to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). If culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) are the new model of successful teacher practice, then we must ask, how are teacher education programs (TEP) preparing preservice teachers (PSTs) to be culturally sustaining pedagogues? In this literature review I examine the ways TEPs in the United States deliberately prepare educators to be practitioners of culturally sustaining pedagogies.

Framework

In addition to Paris’ 2012 explanation of CSP, I also use the expanded definition of CSP explained in Paris and Alim’s 2014 text which clarifies that the ways young people embody their plural cultural identities evolve; therefore the ways we educate them must too. Part of this evolution is the recognition that *relevance* is not sufficient in meeting language, literacy, and cultural educational goals. Rather, schools must go beyond merely giving value to students’ cultures and communities, and must provide “skills, knowledges, and ways of being needed for success in the present and future,” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 89) particularly when our nation is shifting towards a more multicultural and multilingual society. By removing the dominant white gaze--the persuasive assumption that white is the default--from schools, Paris

and Alim argue schools could sustain heritages, languages, and community practices.

McCarty and Lee (2014) expand on the notion of CSP by using the phrase culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSR/P). The addition of the word revitalizing is essential in their work with Indigenous communities whose tribal sovereignty has been threatened by centuries of colonization. McCarty and Lee outline three tenets of a CSR/P framework: (1) expressions of Indigenous education sovereignty; (2) a need to reclaim what colonization has disrupted and displaced; and (3) community-based accountability which includes caring, respectful, reciprocal and responsible relationships (p. 103). Though only three studies presented examine CSP or CSR/P with Indigenous communities, the tenets of self-determination, decolonization, and respectful community partnerships are essential in the majority of studies presented.

Methods

I began this review with a Boolean search for peer-reviewed articles at the intersection of CSP and teacher preparation using a combination of the terms *culturally sustaining pedagogy* and *teacher preparation/teacher education/teacher preparedness/preservice teachers/teacher readiness* in EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and JSTOR search engines.

This produced limited relevant matches, so I then conducted a search using Google Scholar. I first searched for “What Are We Seeking to Sustain Through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy? A Loving Critique Forward” (Paris & Alim, 2014) as it serves as a landmark piece of CSP. I used Google Scholar’s “search within citing articles” function to find published work that references Paris and Alim (2014). This produced 522 results. Within these results I used a Boolean search for the phrase “teacher education programs” leaving 429 results.

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I then read through the abstracts of each of these pieces and removed publications beyond the scope of this review (e.g., articles focused on CSP outside of TEPs). This resulted in 27 peer-reviewed papers: 20 empirical studies and seven other. I attributed this limited number to the recency of CSP. I read across the 27 texts. I utilized descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) to identify patterns across the literature. In a second round of coding categories were collapsed into five key components in the preparation of culturally sustaining teachers: (1) establishing a rationale for CSP; (2) critical reflection; (3) integration of cultural knowledge; (4) purposeful cross-cultural field placement; and (5) tensions.

Establishing a Rationale for CSP

Before TEPs can begin to coach PSTs to be practitioners of CSP a clear rationale must be established. TEPs currently enacting CSP interrogate systems in which schools operate and examine institutionalized discriminatory practices in schools, businesses, real estate, laws, and the justice system while PSTs examine their own identities including their privileges and disadvantages in these systems.

One way teacher educators (TEs) establish a rationale for CSP is by providing an explicit framework aligned to the tenets of CSP (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Kumar, 2018). In their writing on foregrounding equity, Dyches and Boyd (2017) provide a framework for social justice and equity-based TEPs. Central to their framework is establishing a rationale for equity-based teaching which includes social justice knowledge related to Discourse, critical and epistemological stance theories, and “histories which have created and contributed to the types of oppression that social justice seeks to disrupt” (p. 482). This framework lays the foundation for PSTs to build social justice content knowledge and develop an equity-based pedagogy.

Another way TEs establish a rationale for CSP is by having PSTs situate their own histories and identities within the communities they will be teaching. Vinlove (2017), in her work with PSTs in an Alaskan community with a large Indigenous population, begins her course by providing activities to facilitate students’ understanding of CSP and the need to incorporate local cultural knowledge to the academic curriculum. Her work starts by having PSTs situate their own identities and family habitation and connection to the community. Here, Vinlove aims to have PSTs understand how one’s connection with a place “influences the types and depth of local knowledge individuals hold” (p. 154). Next, Vinlove has PSTs consider their own habitation history in the community they are currently placed for field work as well as the habitation histories of the students they work with. After placing themselves and their students on a continuum ranging from “‘new to the community’ to ‘established but not Indigenous’ to ‘Indigenous to place’” (p. 155), PSTs engage in discussions

of the roles and orientations of teachers. This discussion includes recognizing gaps in their own knowledge of community and identifying areas where they can learn from students and community members to incorporate local knowledge into their curriculum.

Finally, TEs establish a rationale for CSP through the use of readings and assignments which explore and complicate issues of race and society. Marx and Pecina (2016) found that the utilization of such readings when accompanied with reading responses and class discussions “emphasize historically significant challenges to the racialized spaces of the city [where PSTs will work] and its socioeconomic impact in the development of the metro communities” (p. 349). It is important to note that such readings occur in conjunction with other practices aimed to prepare PSTs to be culturally sustaining, which I explain in other sections.

Critical Reflection

Critical reflection, the purposeful and deliberate act of inquiry into one’s own thoughts and actions, as well as classroom protocols and dilemmas (Berghoff, Blackwell, & Wisheart, 2011; Kalchman, 2015), is an important practice for all educators, but has been shown to be of particular importance in terms of preparing teachers to be practitioners of CSP. The consistent and repeated engagement of critical reflection in TEPs disrupts the hegemonic ideologies of traditional schooling. Reflections, particularly those guided by TEs, force PSTs to “observe their positionality in relation to their most challenging students and how their current planning might exclude those students from learning opportunities” (Smith, 2016, p. 142-143).

A study on critical reflection at one Midwestern University examined PSTs’ beliefs about students in an urban setting before and during their placement with a collaborative teacher in urban schools (Kalchman, 2015). PSTs reported negative assumptions about students’ abilities. These feelings were intensified while working with their collaborative teachers, who often spoke poorly of their students and students’ families. Following their initial field placement, teacher candidates were placed in an urban after-school math program for additional fieldwork. Critical reflection was an integral part of the alternative field placement. As part of this reflection PSTs rated themselves in accordance with Liston and Zeichner’s (1991) reflective teaching model. Following this alternative fieldwork model, PSTs revised their expectations of students in urban schools. They were more reflective of their own role as educators and became more adaptive in their fieldwork instruction. In the reflective setting, they saw the potential of their students’ academic capabilities, whereas in the nonreflective setting their primary focus was on student behavior. Additionally, PSTs in the reflective setting reported being more confident in their abilities to teach in urban set-

settings (Kalchman, 2015).

Durden & Truscott (2013) found that while critical reflection did reveal a growing critical consciousness among PSTs, it did not in itself cause PSTs to demonstrate CSP in their practice (p. 77). Another study (Durden, Dooley, & Truscott, 2016) found that critical reflection could serve to develop TCs' racial identities, which in turn positively shaped their view of CSP.

It is necessary to note that a “sunshining process” (Thomas & Liu, 2012) of spinning experiences and observations to be more positive than they were can occur when critical reflection is executed in an inauthentic manner. When this occurs actual reflection does not. Instead, PSTs tend to over rely on buzzwords, shift blame, tone down negative events (Thomas & Liu, 2012), and provide descriptions rather than provide introspections. Thomas and Liu note that is could be due to the fact that PSTs view reflective writing as “an evaluation tool so that assignments related to [reflective writing] were just requirements for them to complete” (p. 321).

Thus, it is important for the TEP to provide PSTs with supportive communicative environments in which the role of reflection is not only made clear but modeled and practiced.

community gathering areas, areas of community controversy, and the local polling station. Once PSTs realized “local knowledge exists in abundance, the final step in cultivating culturally sustaining teachers is to help them learn how to utilize this information purposefully” (p. 163). Vinlove describes how PSTs used this local knowledge to select a topic for a social studies and English language arts (ELA) unit that they developed. Units were required to include a series of lesson plans designed to target a state ELA standard. Lesson plans integrated local and community resources, often in the form of research projects and writing prompts, and led to a culminating student product.

Neighborhood walking maps were also created by PSTs in an urban TEP in the Midwest (Marx & Pecina, 2016). PSTs went into local urban communities and created walking maps containing community information about schools, service agencies, parks, businesses, historical information, and general data. Marx and Pecina found that these walks provided PSTs with insights that ran across four themes: “shattering stereotypes through a critical pedagogical lens, facing societal realities through experiential learning, new learning through funds of knowledge, and professional implications with critically sustaining pedagogy” (p. 350). This experience gave PSTs a greater understanding of communities' assets and benefits. All PSTs planned to use their newly acquired local

To sustain culture, educators must have an understanding of student culture and integrate it into classrooms. PSTs must be taught/supported to develop relationships with their students and communities.

Integration of Cultural Knowledge

In the CSP classroom, teachers not only reference the cultural knowledge of students but seek to build upon and sustain this knowledge. TEs often rely on activities and assignments which require PSTs to explore the neighborhoods in which they will teach to meet this goal.

One example where PSTs visited communities where they conducted student teaching comes from Vinlove's (2017) work with PSTs in Alaska. This activity was centered around the belief that the “knowledge of students' cultural communities should be gathered, honored, and used in the classroom” (p.149). Such knowledge was accumulated through the creation of interactive and evolving community maps. PSTs used Google Maps to create and annotate maps which contain geological, ecological, cultural, historical, social, and economic information about the communities in which they were placed. Information for annotations was gathered through PSTs' visits and exploration of communities where they mined for information. Maps contained at least 25 items, including the school, significant landmarks, local animals, plants, places of historical and economic significance,

knowledge in their future classrooms in the community, and a majority, 92%, of PSTs “spoke to the value of accepting, integrating, and building on cultural strengths of students into the classroom” (p. 353).

Though Johnson and Newcomer's (2018) study did not include the creation of a neighborhood map, they did find that having PSTs engage in neighborhood walks with students provided PSTs with opportunities to better know students; aided in PSTs selecting topics/themes for instruction which were meaningful to students; and allowed students to share their own expertise with PSTs (p. 9-10). Afterwards the PSTs in this study designed literacy-based lessons for the students. The authors share the example of a pair of PSTs creating a lesson focused on symbolism in which students participated in a gallery walk where they used sticky notes to jot down responses to familiar images from their culture and community (i.e. a local park, the school mascot, etc.). Ultimately, the neighborhood walks provided PSTs with the opportunity to better know their students and their community and then meaningfully incorporate the knowledge into their teaching.

Purposeful Cross-Cultural Field Placement

The strategic placement of PSTs during their internships can provide the opportunity for exposure to urban and culturally diverse settings. If TEPs want to foster culturally sustaining teachers who “no longer assume that the White, middle-class linguistic, literate, and cultural skills and ways of being” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 89) are necessary for success, then placing PSTs in environments that expose them to such non-dominant cultures while they learn to disrupt the norm of the white, middle-class gaze is essential. However, the mere partnering of TEPs with schools which have diverse student bodies is not sufficient. Coursework should support PSTs in their field placement as they work towards becoming culturally sustaining teachers.

One instance of purposeful cross-cultural field placement comes from a one-year multiple-case study (Ramirez, Gonzales-Galindo, & Roy, 2017). In this study the authors investigate the influence that field placement had on six PSTs and their beliefs regarding linguistically non-dominant learners. Prior to their placement, the TE introduced PSTs to a “culturally and linguistically embedded teaching framework... analyzing factors outside the classroom that shape students’ language development and academics and that foster their cultural heritage” (p.252). In this course, PSTs were assigned a research project with the objective to “better understand [the] factors influencing the trajectory of [English Learners (ELs)] with the hope that this experience could shape their emerging mindset, ideologies, and pedagogy in relation to ELs” (p. 253). PSTs were interviewed and observed several times during their placement. Before their placement PSTs held deficit-oriented beliefs about ELs and had not previously considered how language develops outside of the classroom. PSTs were also unaware of the vast multi-cultural resources ELs had outside of school and how such resources could be used to support students in school. Overall PSTs “demonstrated a shift in their own beliefs about ELs” (p. 264). Through the examination of their own assumptions and beliefs about ELs, PSTs worked towards being more culturally conscious. The authors report through their placement and project PSTs “were able to examine, via classroom practices, student interaction, and the complexities of second language development, their teaching praxis as well as their philosophical understandings of how effective instruction with ELs can and should take place” (p. 265).

In another example of cross-cultural field placement Jester (2017) conducted a qualitative study with 60 PSTs placed in rural Alaska Native villages in schools with enrollments ranging from 10 students to 302 and where over 90% of students in the schools were Alaska Natives. Seven of the eight districts taught, in some capacity, the local Alaska Native language. This ranged from loosely organized activities,

such as the singing of songs in the local language, or having local Elders serving as visiting teachers, to more structured language classes, some of which were taught via live streaming with other schools, and immersion and dual language programs. While in this placement, PSTs observed both examples and non-examples of CSP:

They witnessed legacies of colonization playing out through disturbing attacks on Indigenous languages and cultures and a striking disconnect between many non-Native teachers’ classrooms and the local culture. At the same time, many [PSTs] reported vibrant revitalization efforts by Alaska Native educators and Elders, and in some cases non-Native educators, that exemplified culturally sustaining/revitalizing practices. (p. 141)

PSTs’ personal reactions to colonizing and assimilationist practices revealed their rejection of such practices and demonstrated their own growing awareness of the power of schools as well as communities’ struggles against dominant ideology. Some PST did report the sustaining of culture and language in schools and were able to witness “concrete examples of connecting students with their cultures and language” (p. 141).

Butler, Coffey, and Young (2018) write about PSTs who completed field work in addition to their traditional field assignments. In this study PSTs enrolled in an elective Citizenship and Education course, part of which required 25 volunteer hours in an urban middle school. During these hours PSTs tutored, mentored, and planned community activities with eighth grade students. The authors found that PSTs who engaged in this work “shifted from a very deficit orientation of urban schools to a more inclusive one with heightened sensitivity to and awareness of diverse learners” (p. 16).

As was the case in Jester (2017), field placements presented problems because of the assimilationist and deficit-based structures of schools and beliefs of some cooperative teachers. Placing PSTs in these environments has the potential to perpetuate the cycle of poor instruction and culturally diminishing practices. TEPs have an obligation to support PSTs to examine these institutions and practices critically and encourage them to work in these settings as change agents. As Jester notes, these observations and reflections regarding culturally diminishing teaching have the potential to “serve as catalysts for shifts in perspective, self-awareness, and consciousness of the broader sociocultural and political contexts of schooling” (p. 143).

Tensions

Research surrounding the preparation of PSTs with a CSP framework heavily reports on the training of white PSTs, most of whom are female. While this reflects the enrollment

of TEPs, often the voices and perspectives of PSTs and teacher educators of color are left out of the discussion.

Jackson's work (2015) provides an underrepresented perspective of PSTs of color in a predominately white TEP which seeks to provide culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Though the TEP uses a culturally *relevant* theory, the findings suggest important implications for TEPs that wish to use a CSP framework. In Jackson's study 68% of PSTs of color reported that they did learn about CRP; however, 61% of participants felt that their TEP did not have a commitment to CRP. The PSTs viewed CRP as a superficial add-on rather than a foundation of their program. They also reported a disconnect between CRP, course diversity-related statements, and the reality of their experiences. Feelings included believ-

research focused on asset pedagogies, cultural pedagogies, and practices of social justice also frequently take place in urban settings. This may be because the word urban, as Chou and Tozer (2008) note, "is often a coded marker for conditions of cultural conflict grounded in racism and economic oppression" (p. 1), which are the very conditions social justice oriented research seeks to disrupt. The phrases "urban schools" and teachers in "urban settings" often appear in the literature reviewed. This is a reflection of the status of research in regards to CSP generally and in terms of teacher preparation. While I do not question the importance of CSP in urban schools, I want to clarify that CSP is appropriate, and needed, in all places where culturally nondominant people reside. The use of the word "urban" in this literature review reflects the use of the word in the literature.

[Colleges of education] also need to recruit, support, and mentor educators of color into graduate school to become teacher educators and educational researchers.

ing minority student presence was "only for statistics and not the well being of those students" (p. 231); that some white teacher educators, though well intended, were not connected to CRP; and that some professors were dismissive of the topic altogether. PSTs also reported a lack of alignment between the little attention CRP received in their course work and the key role diversity had on ways they were assessed. Jackson's work reveals that TEPs are not teaching PSTs of color in ways which are culturally relevant or sustaining for them. Jackson explains TEPs are "trying to prepare teachers (of color and white) to teach in culturally responsive ways (which many of them did not experience) with a professoriate that lacks racial and ethnic diversity, [and] is uncomfortable with and/or lacks knowledge of cultural diversity" (pg. 233). Smith (2016) echoes these findings. She states PSTs of color felt "marginalized" and noted the absence of professors and faculty of color in the TEP (p. 144).

Another tension in the implementation of CSP in TEP is that the majority of the literature reviewed represents work of only one faculty member. If the TE delivering CSP knowledge is a person of color, then this sets them up to be in conflict with their majority white PSTs and potentially their white hegemonic ideologies. This point is illustrated in Smith's work (2016) which shares her experiences as a teacher educator of color in the Southeast region of the United States. She reports receiving course evaluations in which students rate her as bigoted, racist, and incompetent. Additionally PSTs complained that asset pedagogies are "'biased teaching, reverse racism' and unfair to the White students in their classrooms" (143).

Another tension is that research regarding CSP is often situated in the context of urban schools. Educational

Implications & Conclusion

As student populations continue to diversify, with the teaching force remaining largely white, the need to prepare and support teachers to be culturally sustaining increases. When I began this review, I sought to understand the ways in which TEPs are preparing PSTs to be culturally sustaining pedagogues. In short, I found that many are not. Rather, individual teacher educators have taken up CSP and are working individually, or in small partnerships, to prepare PSTs to be practitioners of CSP. This is not sufficient in preparing PSTs to be enactors of a CSP. Entire programs must shift towards a CSP framework to fully prepare PSTs to be culturally sustaining pedagogues.

As Colleges of Education work to shape their teacher education programs around a culturally sustaining framework, they should consider the components described above and be cognizant of potential tensions. TEPs should work to continually establish a rationale for CSP in both theory and methods courses. This is the work of all teacher educators, and programs must be mindful not to delegate this task to a select few instructors. Tenets of CSP should be incorporated into the classroom and fieldwork in meaningful ways which support TCs' critical consciousness. PSTs should also receive frequent feedback regarding their integration of CSP into their coursework and field placements.

Critical reflection is a common practice in TEPs. However it is important that reflective work is meaningful, connected to practice, and guided by TEs who provide feedback and push PSTs to move their practice into the realm of CSP. Gay and Kirkland (2003) note the importance in TEs sharing their own critical self-reflections with PSTs. They recommend TEs demonstrate this in their own teaching by

stopping and engaging in group reflective debriefs where TEs name and discuss “personal feelings and biases; share [their] own introspective thoughts, questions, and insights provoked by the discussion; and assess the adequacy and completeness of [their] instructional delivery” (p. 185). They also identify barriers to meaningful reflection and pose some solutions. They suggest TEs make reflection the norm and demonstrate this with PSTs. This can take the form of independent writing; class and group discussions; group drafting of educational position statements; role-playing and simulations. Beneke (2020) provides a rich example of critical reflection through the use of journey mapping where PSTs “visually and verbally narrate experiences talking about race and dis/ability in educational practices” (p. 7). Reflecting on their own educational experience PSTs use markers and crayons to draw pictures, flow charts, diagrams, and other visual representations to illustrate the relationship between their identities and school experiences shaped their understanding of the experiences of marginalized students. This activity was paired with an interview in which PSTs narrate their maps and share their insights.

When placing PSTs in the field it is important for teacher educators to know the culture of the school their PSTs will be working in. The reality of the work is that not all PSTs will be placed in ideal classrooms with CSP models and asset-based cooperative teachers. It is for this reason that coursework should be tailored to support PSTs in their field placement. This may mean having PSTs evaluate and critique the schools they are placed in or rewrite deficit-based observations in a culturally sustaining manner.

To sustain culture, educators must have an understanding of student culture and integrate it into classrooms. PSTs must be taught/supported to develop relationships with their students and communities. Because culture is dynamic and evolving, this is a skill which must be used every year, and throughout each year, even if teachers stay at one school for the entirety of their careers. Instructors of methods courses are especially responsible for this component and should consider the integration of cultural knowledge in assignments where PSTs interact with or plan for interactions with students.

As CSP is taken up across education there is a need for more empirical studies which look at the ways TEPs embed CSP not just into individual courses, but into their programs as a whole. Additionally, there is a clear need for more PSTs and TEs of color. Not only do Colleges of Education need to actively recruit and support people of color into TEPs, but they also need to recruit, support, and mentor educators of color into graduate school to become teacher educators and educational researchers.

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Healing Homes for Latinx School Communities through Critical Literacy Theory

Michelle D. Nixon and Molly E. Walker

In this paper we detail a critical literacy unit designed to offer opportunities for conversation and healing within early elementary classrooms (pre-kindergarten through second grade), particularly within Latinx communities. These activities are inspired by a mentor text, *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales, and are designed to create a space for young students to contemplate and explore the concepts of home and safety, as well as to discuss and heal from the traumatic experiences caused by fear of home loss initiated by the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Introduction

Little Village is a predominantly Latinx neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. In the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, administrators in Little Village elementary schools were concerned ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) would secretly come to the buildings to arrest and deport undocumented persons. For teachers, these people were the parents of our students, coworkers in their education. Everyone's emotions were on high alert as administrators and families prepared for potential ICE raids. Primary school students were the unintentional recipients of adults' fear. Children may not have understood hushed parental conversations about deportation, but they could feel the fear of loss of home and security. This palpable fear affected school and classroom environments as students strove to make sense of what Donald Trump's election meant for their families, friends, and communities.

The fear and uncertainty felt in our classrooms in the wake of the 2016 election inspired us to design a healing-focused literacy unit for early childhood classrooms (specifically pre-kindergarten through second grade) called the Healing Homes for Latinx School Communities through Critical Literacy Theory. This literacy unit encourages young learners to explore and engage with concepts of safety, home, and identity in partnership with classmates and educators. Centered around the text *Dreamers* (*Soñadores* in Spanish), written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales, students will use their expert knowledge on language, culture, and traditions to discuss and create a framework in which their literacies and experiences have value within a classroom setting. This unit

includes opportunities to engage in creative writing, music exploration, and art activities, and culminates in a community-building activity in which students share their favorite projects from the unit with the larger group.

Though our curriculum was developed specifically in response to the challenges and concerns of Chicago's Latinx community, we feel these activities are widely applicable and could be used in diverse communities and educational settings. This curriculum was developed, in Garcia and Dutro's words, "to recognize the increased stakes for students and families who were already marginalized in the United States and to address the needs of all students in our English classrooms today" (2018, p. 376).

Relevant Theoretical Frameworks

The development of our unit was deeply influenced by critical literacy theory, which "involves raising awareness of and reflecting on systems of oppression in learners' lives and lived experiences and moving from there to transformative action" (Handsfield, 2016, p. 80). In this way of thinking, it is not teachers' responsibility to impart knowledge to their students, but rather to facilitate a classroom environment which values and expands the knowledge of all students, particularly as they relate to the outside world and with a lens focused on understanding and addressing societal systems.

Critical race theory also contributed significantly to the development of our project. CRT "is grounded largely on questioning of White, male, and heteronormative ways of knowing" (Handsfield, 2016, p. 92). Particularly within English classrooms, which have historically valued works by cis-

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gender white men, CRT seeks not only to decenter those texts while centering other voices, but also to question and explore why those texts have been deemed more valuable within our society. In their article “Even Cinderella is White,” authors Young, Foster, and Hines (2018) refer to critical race feminism as “a tool for understanding anti-Black female experiences in school and in particular in English education” (p. 104). They emphasize the importance of a wider representation in classrooms of stories and texts featuring Black girls specifically. Similarly, Reese (2018) writes of the need for classrooms to improve their study and representation of Indigenous peoples and communities. She mentions specifically the value of critical literacy even in early childhood to encourage “children to read between the lines and ask questions when engaging with literature: Whose story is this? Who benefits from this story? Whose voices are not being heard?” (2018, p. 390).

Literacy is often thought of as something developed and explored only within a classroom setting. If we instead conceive of literacy as a set of skills and knowledge used to navigate the world, this allows us to consider how our environments shape our literacies, and vice versa. As authors Vaughan, Woodard, Phillips, and Taylor (2018) argue, students should have opportunities “to make use of their knowledge about their own neighborhoods, positioning them as experts about the places they inhabit” (p. 27). If one of the goals of education is to enable students to be successful in the world, then we must acknowledge and seek to incorporate our students’ identities and experiences as they exist outside the classroom as well.

[The Healing Homes for Latinx School Communities] literacy unit encourages young learners to explore and engage with concepts of safety, home, and identity in partnership with classmates and educators.

Curriculum: A Healing Homes for Latinx School

Communities

With a focus on home as identity, and within the framework of critical literacy theory, we offer the following curriculum for early elementary (PK-2) classrooms. These activities are meant to be used as a framework within which educators can then further develop their own curriculum. These activities center around *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales as a mentor text, but many activities could be adjusted to pair with other texts exploring similar themes. These activities are grounded in different subjects in order to allow for students to engage and develop multiple literacies. We also highly recommend that teachers participate in these activities and discussions alongside their students, as modeling our own vulnerabilities and literacies can encourage our students to feel more comfortable doing the same.

Mentor Text

Dreamers by Yuyi Morales tells the story of the author’s journey with her son to the United States. The text’s art and language make it clear that as an immigrant, she brings her gifts, talents, and ways of knowing in her journey to the United States. Yet the language and customs are unfamiliar, and she “made lots of mistakes.” The author and her son become *caminantes* (walkers) until they find a home within the confines of the library, an “unimaginable, unbelievable” place where books became their language and their home. It is this feeling of trust and safety that we hope to encourage and inspire in our students.

Vocabulary: immigrant, *caminantes*, *amor*, *soñadores*/
dreamers

Discussion questions:

- What are the woman’s dreams in this story?
- What does a “home” need to be safe? How does your family make home safe for you?
- What are some motifs in this book that represent home to you? (i.e., sugar skulls, heart/*corazon*, butterfly) What images/motifs would you use to represent your home?
- What does it mean to be a dreamer?
- How does the author learn the value of her voice? What does it mean to make our voices heard?
- What is the message in the text?

Supporting Activities

Letter Writing Activity

Objective: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to teach the components of letter writing.

Students will write a letter to Yuyi Morales or an author of a comparable text. Students will write their reaction to the text and/or what the text means to them. Students may include images and visual motifs that represent their home lives. The teacher will then mail the letters to the author. (Alternatively, letters could be exchanged with another classroom at the same or a different school.)

Writing and Art Exploration

Objective: Actively engage in group reading and comprehension activities.

Centered around the question “What does home

mean to you?” students will use various art supplies to draw and label a representation of their home, including who lives there. This can mean their house, neighborhood, community, or other location signifying “home.” Students will share their illustrations with classmates. These artworks can be displayed in the classroom or bound into an anthology for all students to “check out.”

Show and Tell: Classroom Museum

Objective: Summarize and write informative non-fiction.

Students will bring culturally representative items from their home to school. Students will write a museum label to describe their artifact(s). The teacher will display these items in a classroom museum. Students will have the opportunity to explore their classmates’ artifacts.

Geography Exploration

Objective: Develop map literacy skills.

Students will explore maps of different communities, including their own, and learn about the different parts of a map (e.g., key, scale.) They will engage in small group dis-

cussions about what they see in their own communities on a daily basis. Students will then draw and label their neighborhood and/or communities. All maps will then be posted on the wall; students will discuss commonalities and recognizable landmarks as well as what is different about the maps.

Music Exploration

Objective: Develop musical literacy and relate central themes across media.

The teacher will share 2-3 examples of songs with themes related to home, identity, and/or belonging. Students will discuss common themes and what songs bring to mind the image of home for them. How does music relate to our sense of home and belonging? Students will bring in recordings of songs to share with the group that speak to these themes. In a large group the class will discuss common themes and differences and compare these themes to those discussed previously.

Language Exploration

Objective: Familiarize students with acrostic poems.

Students will read examples of acrostic poems and discuss differences and similarities to other types of poems. Students will then write their own acrostic poems using words

related to home such as family, *amor* /love, and safety. Students are encouraged to use words in any language(s) they speak. Students will share their poems with the class and discuss common themes.

Culminating Activity: Inside/Outside Circle

Objective: Build a classroom community around reading.

As a culminating activity, the use of this discussion technique allows young students to engage with several of their peers to share information gathered during this unit. Students create two concentric circles. The students in the inside circle are given the opportunity to share the Healing Homes activity of which they are most proud with a student in the outside circle. On the teacher’s signal, the outer circle moves in one direction, enabling students to engage with a new student. Students’ choice of song, art, writing, or simply a family story or tradition can be a powerful way to connect with peers and strengthen a sense of healing in their school community. (Possible extension: students will interact with 1-3 peers and then share one thing they remember from each interaction with the larger group at the conclusion of the activity.)

By highlighting and exploring texts which center Latinx experiences, and through various curricular activities to support this exploration, educators can foster spaces which value and center the identities of otherwise marginalized students.

Conclusion

Our understandings of home, safety, and belonging, as well as our ability to access them, are central to our experiences and identities. This sense of security within Chicago’s Latinx community has been repeatedly threatened since the 2016 U.S. election. The uncertainty and trauma associated with this has real and devastating impacts on students, families, and school communities. The Healing Homes curriculum seeks to increase the representation and visibility of the diverse student experiences in English classrooms, as well as to provide students with language and tools to speak about and explore their literacies and identities. By highlighting and exploring texts which center Latinx experiences, and through various curricular activities to support this exploration, educators can foster spaces which value and center the identities of otherwise marginalized students.

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Youth-Led and Youth-Centered Writing: A Practice of Healing

Tiffani Nixon, Chris Norman, and Esmeralda Robledo

Preface - Our Why

As people of color, we found it difficult to obtain agency and express ourselves in our schooling experiences. As students, we were either taught one specific way or our opinions and perspectives were not validated in the classroom. As an African American girl, Tiffani oftentimes did not see a reflection of herself in fairytale stories. Many times the voices of Black girls are silenced due to the stereotypes of Black girls not being seen as humans. Based on her experiences, Tiffani believes students of color need their perspectives embedded in their learning to create a space of healing. Chris, an African American man, grew up in a predominantly white middle class suburb where he was forced to connect with the culture and perspectives of his white peers over his own. Esmeralda, the daughter of Mexican immigrants and raised in a Spanish-speaking home, was seldom given learning opportunities in the classroom to draw from her cultural and linguistic knowledge and experiences. In college, when these opportunities were presented, Esmeralda explored her identity as Mexican-American and cultivated a deeper understanding of her background. These collective schooling experiences demonstrate the need for youth-led and youth-centered writing practices for underrepresented students.

As educators, we want to focus on a strategy that provides that agency that we missed as students, as well as honor the perspectives of all students. Youth-centered writing has the power to bring students' experiences to the forefront. This pedagogical practice can be adapted by PreK through 12th grade classroom teachers. It outlines the importance of youth-led and youth-centered writing in the classroom. Through the intentional incorporation of such writing, students are given the opportunity to engage in critical thinking and action, and claim and explore their identities as writers. Youth-led and youth-centered writing can also serve as tools for social transformation and action in the classroom and beyond. Guided by theory, we present the need for youth-led and youth-centered writing and provide a diverse list of prompts that can be used in the classroom for students to begin writing, either individually or collaboratively (see Appendix A).

Introduction

Oftentimes, teachers teach literacy and writing from their own voice or lens, which is often a product of the ways they were raised and taught, and their experiences. This can create a disconnect between the students and teacher because students' shared and lived experiences (schema) are not the same. Students may come from different backgrounds and grow up in different contexts (environment, time period, background) than the teacher. This can be problematic when teachers come from privileged backgrounds and are teaching students in disadvantaged schools and communities.

Teachers can create a disconnect in the classroom, whether directly or indirectly, by incorporating specific classroom activities and teaching that students' voices and perspectives do not matter. Oftentimes, students in disadvantaged areas and students of color are taught and learn from a perspective that is different from their reality. As a result, students who do not believe their voice or perspectives matter can disengage from their work and from the class. As educators, we have heard (and may even say), "This is important! You will need this later in life!" while neglecting the lives that students are living right now.

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Transparency for Transformation

The pedagogical practice we present requires teachers to be transparent about their own identities as individuals and educators, and their teaching practices. Through transparency, teachers explore how their own positionality informs their teaching and interactions with students. Similarly, teachers must take the initiative to learn about and understand students' races, cultures, languages, and communities. Only when this occurs can teachers encourage students to think critically about their own lives and implement meaningful writing activities for students to reflect on and express their personal experiences.

The idea of transparency is reflected in Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen's (2015) *Pose, Wobble, Flow*, which provides a pedagogical model for teaching English Language Arts in ways that are culturally proactive and responsive. Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen highlight the importance of a teacher's commitment to their students as well as to social transformation. "Everyone is part of the system, and we all have to push back against it if we are going to transform it," they state, reminding teachers of this responsibility (p. 20). They urge teachers to reflect on their identities, recognize how racist and oppressive practices impact them and their students, and what they can do to dismantle these practices alongside students. With transparency, teachers can employ an informed teaching stance that stems from both their realities and the realities of their students.

By collecting, creating, and disseminating counterstories through youth-led and youth-centered writing, teachers can learn from and uncover valuable knowledge about students who are often seen as threatening, arrogant, disdainful of authority, or uncontrollable. Youth-centered and youth-led writing puts students' lives at the center and encourages them to think critically about their lives, the world, and how they intersect. Simultaneously, the more youth-led writing activities teachers design to embrace and reflect students' identities, then the more likely students will be active participants in their writing and transform their understanding of themselves and the world.

Youth-centered writing is a practice designed to place value back on students and their stories, and promote healing and social transformation.

Youth-Led & Youth-Centered Writing

Youth-centered writing is a practice designed to place value back on students and their stories, and promote healing and social transformation. This practice includes prompts designed for students to write from their point of view and provide their personal perspective. It aims to help

students see themselves as writers by valuing their stories. It removes the racist and biased teaching practices that exist in many classrooms as well as give voice back to the marginalized students and the students who do not see themselves as writers. Haddix (2018) writes that youth-led and youth-centered writing is a practice that validates students' personal experiences while leveraging their writing practices that they already engage in (p. 8).

Youth-led and youth-centered writing aligns with cognitive constructivist theory in its emphasis on students' cognitive processes as they bring their own experiences and understandings of the world to bear on texts. Students' learning is built on what they already know and have learned to support them as they grow as learners and writers. Through these writing opportunities, students are able to develop and strengthen their skills, and apply the necessary skills to their individual needs and interests. Students' learning is actively based on what they already know and have learned. Youth-centered writing honors and embraces their funds of knowledge and focuses on building on students' schemata or personal experiences. As a result, students are enabled to consider the types of writing they want to engage in and the types of writers they want to become.

With this practice, teachers have an opportunity to bridge community literacy practices with school expectations. "Writing is one way that students can give voice to their experiences and think critically about how their personal perspectives are part of a broader dialogue" (Haddix, 2018, p. 10). Youth-led and youth-centered writing is a practice that transcends ethnicity, religion, region, race, culture, social class, sexual orientation, and political affiliation. This practice can be implemented and practiced in all grade levels and in all content areas, and there are many ways teachers can incorporate youth-led and youth-centered writing into their daily practices. Some examples of implementation include supporting students in responding to events that have occurred in or outside the classroom, engaging and connecting content with their experiences, or reflecting on their own lived experiences.

It is not enough however, to just provide students with the opportunity to engage with these practices to only check off a box or to appease administrators. Youth-led and youth-centered writing needs to become a common practice that is embedded constantly in the classroom. There are two components that need to be commonplace when implement-

ing this practice. Teachers must: hold time and space—whether in classrooms, community centers, or virtually—to support youth literacies listen to and place value on the perspectives of youth writers (Haddix, 2018, p. 10).

In accomplishing these components, teachers must first show that they themselves are writers and therefore, must also model the practice for students. Secondly, teachers must honor and respect youth-led and youth-centered writing practices. This includes being open to hear students' voices, even if they differ from the teacher's. Lastly, all of these components need to be done with the protection of a safe environment. A safe classroom environment honors students' own perspectives and biases as well as allows them to express themselves without worry, punishment, condemnation, or disrespect.

In order to create and navigate these writing spaces for and with students, teachers must examine and tackle the “why” and “how” of their work. Teachers can ask themselves, “Why should I incorporate youth-led and youth-centered writing practices into my class, and how?” Undoubtedly, students should be at the forefront of these teaching practices and decisions. In addition to recognizing the challenges that exist and impact students across different spaces, teachers must be proactive in addressing them.

Youth-led and youth-centered writing is informed by critical race theory. Critical race theory explores how both privilege and power function within a culture and society, and in turn, impact the lived experiences and realities of all racial, social, and cultural groups. Not only is this theory grounded in questioning white, male, and heteronormative ways of knowing, but it also calls for understanding how different

are diverse and applicable to all students, but most importantly, they are culturally relevant. They encourage students to consider the intersections between their identities and the world around them, and examine and challenge social and systemic structures. Through the following prompts, teachers and students alike recognize the value that each individual's story presents.

Handsfield & Palinscar (2016) highlight the theory's attempt to identify and dismantle “color blind” ideologies, and in this case, teaching practices and writing. “The value placed on the voices and realities of those who have been marginalized also relates to CRT's critique of color blindness, which erases the voices of people of color under a false pretense of assumed sameness” (p. 95). Youth-led and youth-centered writing intends to demonstrate the contrary and exemplify the ways in which students, particularly students of color, do not stand under an umbrella of shared experiences. They each have a unique narrative to write about and share, despite similarities across race, culture, and language.

As students create works of writing based on their lives and experiences, they are dismantling the false veil of color-blindness and reclaiming their voice and agency in their narratives (Handsfield & Palinscar, 2016, p. 95). They also begin to associate themselves with writing and embrace their work, primarily because it is presented to them in a culturally relevant manner. Students develop their identities as writers within their classrooms and communities, and as intended, they come to realize that we all write. Not only can youth-led and youth-centered writing provide opportunities for social transformation, but it can also provide opportunities for healing.

Incorporating youth-led and youth-centered writing in the classroom allows students to claim and share their narratives, especially those that are not privileged or dominant within society

people construct unique understandings of “truths” in response to the world around them (Handsfield & Palinscar, 2016, p. 92). Through youth-led and youth-centered writing, teachers and students alike inspect the intersections between their identities and their work.

Incorporating youth-led and youth-centered writing in the classroom allows students to claim and share their narratives, especially those that are not privileged or dominant within society. As Handsfield & Palinscar (2016) state, “Critical race theorists question how and why some stories, or ideologies, become dominant and assumed to be coherent. In addition, this prompts those informed by CRT to place a high value on stories, in particular those told by people who have been marginalized” (p. 95). The writing prompts we provide

Writing to Heal & Transform

Youth-centered writing is a healing practice, and the healing journey for young writers begins when they examine and understand their identities and positionalities in the classroom and beyond. Students can begin by transforming their experiences into action and expressing how they feel through their writing. In writing about their culture and personal journeys, students will also explore and confront aspects of their identity and experiences that may generally be overlooked or silenced. This contributes to students' healing, as they embark on their journey of creating and finding themselves.

When educators implement lessons that focus on students' experiences and cultural relevance, students will

have the opportunity to heal. Sociocultural-historical theory opens doors for students to write about their experiences and helps other individuals understand the importance of diversity in writing. Educators should include writing that relates to cultural and historical activities. When teachers provide a culturally inclusive classroom, students will see themselves represented in a more positive light rather than negative.

The healing process is important in youth-led and youth-centered writing because it builds connections across communities and stems from supportive environments. This collective component of healing is important because the healing process may open up the doors to uncomfortable conversations about issues such as racism, criminalization, and oppression in different spaces. While the writing is centered on the individual student, the healing process can begin at the intrapersonal level but extend beyond.

Healing in youth-led youth-centered writing is important because it acknowledges the wounds that students are facing each and every day. Teachers can provide healing to students by embedding students' voices in spaces that are creative and safe for every student. Healing continues when schools provide a curriculum that uses a wide array of texts and incorporates writing activities that relates to students' backgrounds. The final step in the healing process is to transform students' wounds through their writing and action. Students can transform themselves by telling their own stories through youth-led and youth-centered writing.

Conclusion

Teachers, administrators, and parents may read about this practice and provide pushback on how this is positioning teachers. They may ask, "Where is the focus on grammar?" as well as, "How will this improve students' grammar?" The ideas of youth-led and youth-centered writing are stressed by Haddix (2018), who argues, "Students must have opportunities to write in multiple ways, for multiple purposes, and in multiple genres (p. 11)." It is through the practice of writing in multiple ways and for multiple purposes that teachers can focus on grammatical rules and sentence structure. As students write about their experiences, teachers will be able to teach grammar in a way the student can understand.

Youth-led and youth-centered writing opportunities must be available to all students and engage them in critical thinking and action. Through these opportunities, students can claim and explore their identities as writers, partake in social transformation, and set forth on a journey of healing. To incorporate these writing opportunities, it is fundamental for teachers to create and incorporate culturally inclusive material. This is key for students to embrace their identities and experiences, and examine and expose systems of oppression. Just as the classroom serves as a community in which they

participate, teachers and students also form part of larger networks and systems. For these reasons, and in the name of collective healing, transparency in the classroom is fundamental. When students' identities and experiences are acknowledged, valued, and respected, that is when the healing process can begin.

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Appendix A

General Introductory Prompts

These prompts can be used to create a classroom culture of transparency as well as provide opportunities for students and teachers to understand each other.

Implementation & Goal(s): Since the prompts are applicable to various contexts, they can be implemented for different purposes and at various points of the year, such as the beginning of the school year or a unit. They can be used to prepare students for a particular lesson, establish and cultivate a classroom community, and encourage teachers and students to learn about everyone's experiences and perspectives.

- Based on your experiences, do you think school is important? Explain why you feel this way.
- Do you consider yourself a writer? Why or why not? Who would you define as a writer?
- Do you think it is harder to be a kid now than it was 50 years ago? Explain why you feel this way.
- Name a time something or someone made you feel really happy or excited. What made you feel this way? What made this experience special? Explain.
- Name a time something or someone made you feel really mad or angry. What made you feel this way? How did you react? Explain.
- Based on your experiences, describe the physical and figurative spaces in which you have felt seen, valued, and respected. What did the space look like? Who was present?

Racially/Culturally Specific Prompts

These prompts can be used to explore students' ideas of race and culture in the classroom. These questions are by no means a stopping point, but they are designed to promote students' voices in the classroom and create a culture of transparency.

Implementation & Goal(s): Since these prompts may require more complex and thoughtful responses, teachers and students can dedicate generous class time to them. The prompts can be used and answered in conjunction with a text, a film, or a historical event. The goals are for students to identify their positionality within our society and examine and discuss race, gender, and power dynamics in the United States and around the world.

- Based on your experiences, do you believe that racism can be eliminated?
- Why do you think there is poverty in this country? Explain your thoughts.
- Based on your experiences, do you think schools treat girls of color unfairly?
- Based on your experiences, why do you think Black and Brown students are more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts?
- Have you ever wondered why minority students' stories are not generally embedded in school literature?

Current Event Prompts

Events are always unfolding and writing activities should reflect these changes. These prompts are not only designed to continually promote a culture of transparency but to incorporate events that happen daily and have students respond.

Implementation & Goal(s): These prompts can be used with and adapted to any current events. Teachers can implement these prompts to discuss and debrief with students on what is occurring in the country or the world. The goal is for students to write about the event—their thoughts, opinions, feelings, experiences—as they are unfolding in real time. The prompts are meant to encourage students to identify and process what is occurring and how they are responding to it.

- Based on your experiences, do you think police do more good than bad? Explain your thoughts.
- Based on your experiences, what has been the hardest part about the year 2020?
- Do you believe there should be a law in place that forces people to wear a mask in the COVID-19 pandemic? Explain why or why not.
- What was your first thought when Donald Trump was elected President in 2016? Why did you feel that way?
- What was your first thought when Joe Biden was elected President in 2020? Why did you feel that way?

Content Specific Prompts

These prompts are designed to get teachers to think of ways to engage students in their content area. The prompts are student-centered and should allow students to voice their opinions and experiences. These questions may lead to greater social issues in education and are designed to reveal students' thoughts and emotions in their responses.

Implementation & Goal(s): These prompts can be implemented across different content areas and can be modified to the classroom context and students' grade level. The goal is for students to articulate and share their stance on these topics. Teachers can implement these goals to gauge students' stances and complement learning materials.

- Do you think reading is fun? What is your favorite book?
- Based on your thoughts, will learning algebra help you in your future?
- Based on your thoughts, is it "cool" to be good at math? Explain why or why not.
- Based on your thoughts, should physical education be removed from schools? Explain why you feel this way.
- Based on your thoughts, will science help save our environment? Explain why you feel this way.
- Based on your thoughts, does United States history focus on people of color? Explain why or why not.

Word Sharing That Fed Our Souls

Shelley Maxwell

Songs and poems helped generations of my family survive what seemed to be hell on earth and hold onto cultural gems.

Even the sounds associated with music like whistling carryover and cloak hidden messages and systems of communication that allow for oral stories that might otherwise be forgotten. When we lose each other at a Walmart or another large venue, the family whistle helps us assemble. That whistle alerts us to a safe reconnection. This has been passed down for many generations.

Raising children in public housing at the height of the crack wars in Chicago could have thrown our family into disarray. Fortunately, we were and are thinking people. We talked about where others lived and how they seemingly lived in peace when we had to dodge bullets almost daily. My oldest son's 6th grade class lost most of the boys to gun violence. He and my other children knew why they could not have normal freedoms like walking to the store or playing outside. They constantly craved the freedoms I could not grant. But I gave them song.

We also had a religious war. The war of the good we believed God was teaching warring against the horrible realities we worked so hard to cope with and resist.

I was a happy person. I grew up in tough circumstances with a mother plagued by the

difficulties of her childhood. She loved me as much as she could make room for. She had to develop a stern heart to survive the game. There were ills she could not share for the better part of my youth. When I learned her issues, all was forgiven.

With all the weights my mom carried, she still gave me the gift of loving all kinds of music. She sang with me on some of our darkest days but mostly as a routine of happy sharing. We would sing:

Frank Sinatra "Strangers on the night exchanging glances."

Nancy Wilson "The very thought of you,

And I forget to do,

The little ordinary things
That everyone ought to do."

Victor Johnson

"After dark in the ghetto, no one walks the street, in the ghetto after dark...but what you gonna do when you're young and you're lonely and you are very very blue...on a warm summer, things should be right, but there never right in the ghetto after

Shelley Maxwell has supported UIC Center for Literacy and Chicago Department of Family and Support Services Family Engagement partnerships along with the Chicago Public Library for more than 20 years. She believes parents want the best for their children and, with a little help, can achieve any learning or career goal.

dark...screams can be heard like a scary and unwary night bird..in the getto after dark...I should be bright, not filled.. with fright...but fear is part of the ghetto after dark."

A few breaths later, we would move on to BB King, Elvis, or Dinah Washington. I might be able to sing a few lyrics from every popular song from the 40's to the 70s.

Was this a road to literacy? I believe this process opened my mind to words and their meanings in a way the classroom never could.

My mom knew she was doing something special for me but she did not realize the tunes she exposed me to and sang to me were packing my head with vocabulary and ideas and a cultural richness that no one else could give me. We sang and discussed lyric. I learned that words conveyed meaning beyond their meaning. Words presented in one way could express love and longing and, at the same time, share cloaked frustrations. I easily transitioned what I knew to learning in school and in life.

From their first kick inside me, I sang to my babies; old songs, new songs, and many specific compositions to help us cope. One family favorite was "We're waiting on the bus and we're cold, cold, cold." We had to wait on buses in minus zero weather. We had to. We had no car. Our family members had no car. In brutal weather conditions before there were bus shelters and transit that was anything but rapid, you had to find a way to help your babies manage their struggle. My children love the bus song to this day.

We sang our way through the years in public housing. We performed the entire Little Mermaid movie for friends. We got a car when my youngest was ten years old. After buying a car, we only had enough money for gas. We

couldn't really go many places. And so we went to music. We drove and sang from 57th and Lake Shore Drive to Wilson avenue and back again.

We performed old songs at family gatherings and volunteer events. My son got into poetry. He wanted to share some of his poems at these events. He wrote so much that he wrote in his sleep. The anthologies poured out of him. He and I developed a poetry workshop for the library. The anthology for this workshop was called Echoes.

I read books to my children. I read the Bible with them. But I believe music inculcated a love for words and what they mean and how they should be expressed. This was the best of me as it was the best of my mom.

My children sang to their babies.

I was also fortunate to receive genuine and guiding love from teachers, counselors, librarians and community centers which took the foundations my mom shared to new and wonderful places.

I don't think our story is unique. I hear African-American families engage music this way all the time be it with popular or religious music.

I believe the literacy tool of song exchange in families warrants further examination. It feeds the soul as it shares the words.



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UIC CENTER FOR LITERACY

The UIC Center for Literacy works with families and communities to promote educational equity through multi-generational literacy programming, research, and advocacy.

The CFL was established in 1991 through a joint effort by the University of Illinois at Chicago and the City of Chicago to build a partnership that serves racially and linguistically diverse families through research-based multigenerational literacy education that is asset-based and culturally relevant. Since its founding, the CFL has had a strong partnership with Head Start programs and the Department of Families and Social Services.

The CFL is known for its rootedness in the community it serves; many staff are former volunteers and/or participants in the programs. The CFL is also recognized as a distinguished center for research application and evaluation and has published numerous scholarly work that has been translated to practical community applications.

Each year, we serve over 5000 Chicago families in the South and West sides through a range of programming, including Family Start (FAST) parent workshops in financial literacy and digital literacy, GED courses, ESL classes, teacher and volunteer training, and support for families of children with autism and developmental delays.

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